

Holding Authorities Accountable



**Cross-country advocacy review of ADRA's
Action for Social Change Program**

Rwanda, Uganda and Malawi

May – June 2014



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ADRA staff invested weeks and weekends into the review – and every staff involved showed a very high level of commitment and professionalism.

A special thanks, therefore to all ADRA staff members in Denmark, Uganda, Rwanda and Malawi for their contribution to the review process and for making it a learning exercise that may provide inspiration for the future work.

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Executive Summary

Action for Social Change is a program with a strong focus on advocacy as a tool for social change. The program is developed based on experiences and lessons learnt from projects in Malawi, Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi and DR Congo. The first phase of the program was initiated in Uganda in 2009 followed by Rwanda in 2010 and Malawi in 2011.

Advocacy remains a relatively new working approach to many of ADRA Denmark's local partners. Many are still exploring the most effective way for them to promote social change using different means of advocacy, identifying how advocacy best fit their organizational identity or figuring out how they can best make use of a variety of advocacy tools without bringing their own organization at risk.

To support this process ADRA Denmark decided to review the ASC program's advocacy approach, its added value and the preliminary impact of advocacy activities conducted in 3 Action for Social Change Programs, including Uganda, Rwanda and Malawi.

The review focused on three key elements:

- If and how the program as operated until now has contributed to social change (impact),
- The relevance and the effectiveness of the advocacy approaches and methods applied.
- The sustainability and organizational capacity of local ADRA offices to conduct advocacy program activities.

Key findings

The ASC program in Uganda, Rwanda and Malawi relies mainly on a citizen centered advocacy approach, which has as its main objective to promote government accountability and compliance with *existing* laws, policies and government development schemes. It aims to build the capacity of men, women, children and youth in communities to advocate on their own behalf, to express their own needs and concerns and to hold relevant local authorities accountable to their responsibilities as law implementers.

A citizen centered advocacy approach departs from the immediate issues and concerns identified by communities themselves. This may include a diversified range of issues, such as cattle raids and the conduct of local police, rehabilitation of bridges, long distances to the local school or destruction of crops and livelihood assets by wild animals living in a neighboring national park. Other issues relate to access to local government support and funding or health care facilities. Concerns, which often represents tangible obstacles to self-reliance, economic and social development in local communities.

The review finds that the hands-on citizen based advocacy approach matches well with ADRA's rights based approach in which concerns for citizen's rights to education, livelihood and health is key. The fact that ADRA manages to turn a rights based approach – which may appear abstract to most communities – into specific points of action that are relevant to local communities' day-to-day encounters with local authorities is a methodological strength.

The program's contribution to social change

The review finds that the ASC program approach contributes to social change in two ways:

- By offering trainings in numerous issues, such as livelihood skills and training on how to analyze one's own situation and causes of suffering, define joint solution, identify and address relevant external stakeholders and authorities in a non-confrontational way. The program contributes to emphasize participants' own responsibilities and capacities as citizens with rights and entitlements and the capacity built enables groups to solve issues of concern to their own lives and to engage local authorities in the process. The most mature groups met expressed that they would be capable of continuing this work even without ADRA's support.
- The program contributes to reinforce the role and responsibilities of duty bearers (local government officials). Through training and encounters with local traditional leaders, local government officials and extension workers, the program contributes to reinforce the role and responsibility of local duty bearers to address and defend the needs of local communities in front of other duty bearers at the district or national level.

As a result of the increased capacity of local communities to address local officials, and the increased receptiveness of local officials, communication between local community representatives and local officials is improved and needs and concerns of importance to community members are addressed.

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'Before we got the training (by ADRA), we didn't have any direction. People lived in fear. The training changed this. We have now learnt about human rights issues and where to take problems and to be courageous when facing or pursuing advocacy issues'. Reflect group in Malawi explaining the value of ADRA's training.

The relevance and effectiveness of the methodology applied

As mentioned above, the aim of ADRA's advocacy approach is to promote government accountability and compliance with *existing* laws, policies and government development schemes. It aims to build the capacity of men, women, children and youth in communities to advocate on their own behalf, to express their own needs and concerns and to hold relevant local authorities accountable to their responsibilities as law implementers.

To do so, the ASC program sees it as its main role to build capacity of communities and facilitate encounters between communities, decision makers and policy implementers at all levels. The program facilitates encounters through community dialogue meetings that ADRA assists organizing, through community-theater and through radio programs broadcasted through national radio and paid by the ASC program. Citizens are interviewed about their problem and its consequences during the radio programs, and responsible authorities get a chance to explain what could be done to solve the problem.

Although radio programs contributes to pressure local authorities to find solutions to problems expressed by communities, authorities interviewed in general expressed appreciation of the radio programs too. Officials interviewed felt that radio programs enabled authorities to access larger constituencies and explain the issues in question from their point of view.

The review found that radio contributes to

- Strengthen government accountability as authorities who have pledged a solution 'on air' are held accountable to their promises more easily.
- Create a 'sense of urgency' since issues broadcasted are now widely known by authorities and citizens alike.
- Make citizens interviewed feel that they are heard and that their 'voices counts'. This reinforces the empowerment process and the feeling of 'citizenship' that the ASC training facilitates.
- Set a 'political agenda' locally (sector and district level). This contributes to facilitate a local priority setting that is in line with the needs and priorities expressed by local community groups (e.g. to prioritize a new bridge in next year's local budget).

The TV program run by the ASC program in Malawi (Tikuferanji) serves a similar purpose of setting agendas and articulating issues and concerns of common interest to large parts of the population. Founded originally as a program to break taboos about HIV and create awareness about the disease the program's main target remains the general population at large. While the program seems to play a very important and effective role in Malawi in terms of raising public attention to common issues of importance to the entire country, its purpose is appears to be less that of holding authorities accountable than to be that of pointing at issues that needs public and political action.

While the review found radio and TV programs strongly relevant and effective, the review was not able to conclude if radio programs are *indispensable* to ensure local government accountability. Due to high broadcast expenses and long distances to the nearest radio station, radio was not used extensively in Uganda. Yet, the local authorities' accountability to issues raised by Ugandan communities did not appear to be less than that of local authorities in Rwanda and Malawi where radio played a key role. One reason for this may be the very close – and perhaps closer – cooperation/coordination between the program staff in Uganda and local officials.

The ASC program was implemented in a context and in communities where members' understanding of their own rights, entitlements and responsibilities as citizens, let alone their skills and understanding of their own situation and the opportunities they have to live a better life was limited. Despite social and cultural differences between the 3 settings reviewed (Rwanda, Uganda and Malawi), the approach was found to be effective in terms of empowering community groups to access local government officials – particularly at the sub county and district level – and in terms of building their capacity to do so on their own.

The numerous examples presented to the review team of government authorities being accountable to concerns of local communities, and of communities who had got the courage to speak out, leads to the conclusion that the methodologies applied (training of communities, encounters with decision makers, radio programs) are all relevant and effective in terms of promoting government accountability.



'In the beginning we feared to approach the local police and the army. But we have learnt that when you talk to them rightly (e.g. in a non-confrontational way red.) then these people are for us and we can work together'. Community group in Karamoja, Uganda, explaining how they filed a complaint to the local police about the release of a suspect without further explanations)

The sustainability and organizational capacity of local ADRA offices to conduct advocacy program activities.

Based on this, the review finally concludes that the approach applied is sustainable (community groups met expressed confidence that they were now able to operate without ADRA's support), and that national ADRA offices have organizational capacity to facilitate citizen-centered advocacy. The purpose of this advocacy work is to hold local government officials accountable to existing policy frameworks and respect the rights and needs of poor and marginalized population groups accordingly.

Even the most empowered community group may not be able to solve all issues of importance to livelihood and local development by holding governments accountable to existing laws, however. And sometimes laws and policy frameworks are found to be unjust or inappropriate to capture recent developments. To address this

challenge, ADRA offices are taking steps to engage in policy advocacy with the aim to change national legislation and policy frameworks and to address national decision makers. ADRA Uganda and ADRA Malawi has formulated advocacy strategies to address national policy issues and ADRA Rwanda has formulated an overall advocacy policy describing its overall approach to advocacy. Adra Rwanda has taken steps to engage in an advocacy coalition too.

Engaging in and advocating for national policy change (rather than policy implementation and local accountability) is a discipline that requires resources skills and expertise, which are different from those needed when facilitating citizen-centered advocacy.

Engaging in policy advocacy is a long-time, strategic intervention that entails the presence of staff who can analyze policy developments, network with policy officials and build alliances with other likeminded NGOs. It may also entail the capacity to analyze and present legal drafts and to mobilize the support of broader constituencies for an organization's advocacy call for proposal. As such, policy advocacy is an 'organizational team work' that may require cooperation and coordination between many parts of an organization.

Engaging in policy advocacy may also expose an organization to public criticism from stakeholders who may question the legitimacy of the organization to raise its voice. To cope with such a treat, organizations engaged in policy advocacy do need to be prepared to answer to such criticism.

The review finds that scope remains, both within ADRA Denmark and within its African counterparts, to clarify how it may want to engage in policy advocacy and to develop its capacity to do so.

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Key questions to consider in this respect may include but are not limited to the following:

- What do African ADRA offices and ADRA Denmark consider as their key 'added value' and main strength in policy advocacy (what is it that we can do better than others)? Is it to share community needs with policy advocacy organizations who possess an expertise to lobby national decision makers? The advocacy work and coalition building in Rwanda suggests this? Or would it be to bring issues identified among communities to the attention of broader public audiences as the TV and radio programs in Malawi suggests?
- How risk averse is ADRA to public criticism? And how would we want our 'brand' to be among church constituencies and decision makers?
- What methodologies would we want to apply in policy advocacy (documentation, media and public awareness raising, lobbying, alliance building, based on our main strengths and resources)?
- How can we work in alliance with others, what do we want to gain from working in an alliance, and what can we contribute with in an alliance?
- What resources do we need to have to be effective in our policy advocacy and what skills do we need?

Further, the review finds that to engage effectively in policy advocacy there is a need to further specify the advocacy strategies/policies developed or being developed in Rwanda, Uganda and Malawi in order to clarify the specific policy change or changes that the programs wish to contribute to. A key issue to consider in this respect is *'what would we want a certain policy framework to include (in terms of wording) or a certain policy implementation to look like (and why is this important (to fulfil the needs and rights of poor and marginalized groups ')).*

Next, the programs should develop theories of change to clarify a) how the programs think they can contribute to this desired change and b) why they think that interventions chosen will take them in the right direction.

1. Background and purpose

ADRA Denmark and its African partners have worked to introduce the Action for Social Change (ASC) Program approach to development in poor and vulnerable communities since 2009. The overall aim is to support the development of *civil societies that can contribute as dynamic actors in social, political and economic development processes locally and nationally*. Ultimately, with the purpose of reducing poverty and promoting sustainable livelihoods and rights among poor and marginalized population groups.

The ASC program represents a rather fundamental shift from service delivery towards capacity building and advocacy. The aim is to empower communities to analyze their situation, to identify their needs and interests and to advocate for a fulfilment of these needs. This is done through a bottom-up approach of facilitation, training and dialogue sessions where vulnerable groups become aware of their own situation in society, gain sense of citizenship and rights, and are able to identify issues and problems that need to be changed in order to improve their lives and initiate social change.

The aim is to:

- Influence a change in policies and practices of individuals and institutions that exercise power and influence over poor and excluded people to their disadvantage and exclusion
- Empower rights-holders to access their rights to a life of dignity; and
- Mobilize solidarity amongst citizens and civil society to act to counter poverty

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Mass media, including radio and TV plays a key role in the ASC approach too. Mass media aims to create awareness and mobilize community members to participate in change processes nationally. In addition, the program use mass media to influence local political agenda setting and discussions about budget priorities at district level, and to make local communities aware of particular problems in their area.

Action for Social Change is a program with a strong focus on advocacy as a tool for social change. Based on experiences from projects in Malawi, Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi and DR Congo and initiated in Uganda in 2009, followed by Rwanda in 2010 and Malawi in 2011, advocacy remains a relatively new working approach to many of ADRA Denmark's local partners. Many are still exploring the most effective way for them to promote social change using different means of advocacy, identifying how advocacy best fit their organizational identity or figuring out how they can best make use of a variety of advocacy tools without bringing their own organization at risk.

To support the process ADRA Denmark decided to review the approach, its added value and preliminary impact of advocacy activities conducted in 3 Action for Social Change Programs, including Uganda, Rwanda and Malawi.

Findings should contribute to strengthen the effectiveness of ADRA's strategic approach and interventions in the future, as well as the capacity of ADRA's offices to advocate for social change.

The review focused on three key elements:

- If and how the program as operated until now has contributed to social change (impact),

- The relevance and the effectiveness of the advocacy approaches and methods applied.
- The sustainability and organizational capacity of local ADRA offices to conduct advocacy program activities.

This report includes the main findings and recommendations from review activities of the ASC program in Uganda, Rwanda and Malawi, carried out during the period 12 May – 18 June 2014. The report includes general findings, lessons learnt and recommendations common to all three ASC countries reviewed. Recommendations specific to each of the 3 countries, are outlined in debriefing notes individual to each country.

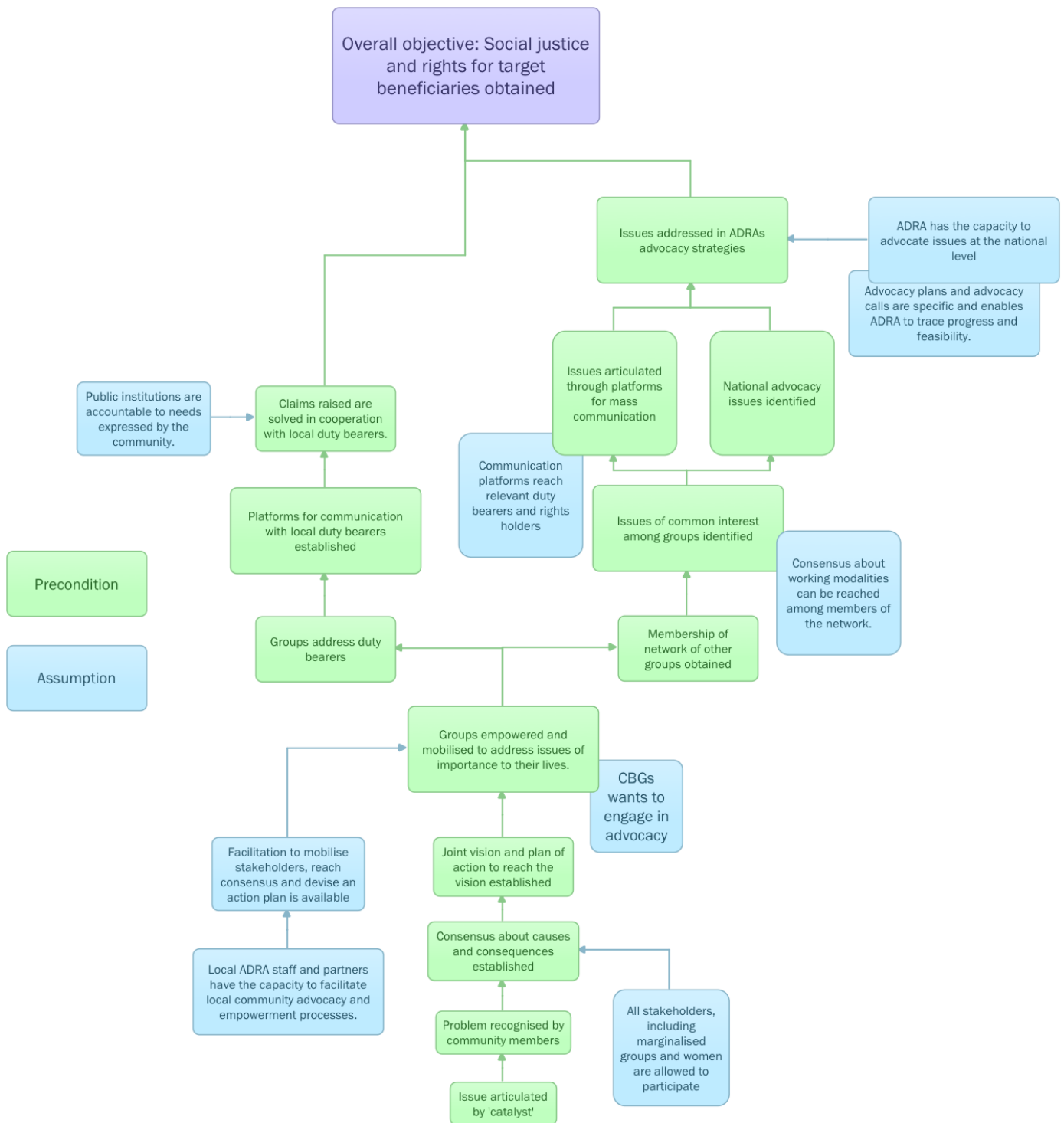
2. Methodology

2.1 Assessing process: Measuring feasibility, relevance and effectiveness of ADRA's advocacy approaches and methods.

Measuring advocacy often presents methodological challenges such as the project's attribution to a certain outcome, the need to apply and adopt shifting strategies so that the program approach remains relevant under changing conditions.

To counter for these challenges the review used a theory-based approach. A theory based review aims to find and articulate the (implicit) intervention strategy/theory of a program or a project and its underlying assumptions and to test it against the project context (and initial results). The relevance or likely effectiveness of the approach is tested against the viability of the program's assumptions and its applicability to the project context as well as the intermediate program outcomes/results produced during the course of the project.

The theory-based approach implied that the review paid attention to how the ASC program thought it would reach its desired objectives and the underlying assumptions that guided the thinking. A draft outline of ADRA's generic 'Theory of Change' for its ASC program and key assumptions was therefore developed based on a review of relevant program documents and discussions with ADRA Denmark staff member. The TOC is presented below.



Read from bottom-up, the illustration shows how the ASC approach aims to mobilize and empower community members to identify and claim their rights and needs in front of local duty bearers, including governmental service providers, NGO providers of services and local politicians.

Local mass media platforms are used in this process both to create awareness and mobilize a 'critical mass' in support of claims raised by local communities and in order to influence the local agenda setting when issues cannot be solved through direct encounters and dialogue with government officials

2.2 Identifying and checking viability of assumptions as a means to assess program feasibility and effectiveness

The ASC program intervention logic builds on a set of assumptions that are critical to the program's effectiveness and ability to reach the desired change. Critical assumptions include (but may not be limited to) the following:

- ADRA field staff have capacity to facilitate local community empowerment and advocacy processes (advocacy by communities)
- Community groups include voices and interests of marginalized groups when advocacy issues and needs are identified.
- Community groups have time and are motivated to engage in advocacy.
- Radio programs reach relevant community constituencies and decision makers, mobilize public support and influence local policy agenda setting/Mass media play a crucial role in influencing agenda setting
- Public institutions are accountable to needs and claims expressed by communities.
- ADRA national staff has the capacity to advocate issues identified at the national level (advocacy for communities)

To assess the viability of the assumptions, the review used of the following data collection methodologies:

Interviews with key informants.

A number of individual interviews and meetings with decision makers targeted by the program, officials and ADRA staff members were conducted to assess:

- The advocacy capacity and practices of ADRA partners and local ADRA offices.
- The perception and attitude of authorities and decision makers towards ADRA's work
- The opportunities and challenges represented in the advocacy environment, which has an impact on program performance and which would contribute to shape the space available to apply different advocacy tools and strategies.

Participatory advocacy self-assessment workshop with ADRA staff and partners

To utilize the opportunities for joint learning that a review exercise offers, a participatory self-assessment workshop with local ADRA staff was conducted in all 3 countries.

The purpose of the workshops was to provide a learning space for participants to reflect on:

- a) The process of social change for communities enrolled in the program, including the link between capacity building and empowerment and the interest and motivation of community groups to engage in local advocacy.
- b) The advocacy approaches used by ADRA and its partners in the 3 countries, their strengths and weaknesses.
- c) The organizational capacity of local ADRA offices and partners to conduct advocacy.
- d) The progress made and the extent to which activities conducted has contributed to the desired changes.

Focus group discussions/semi-structured interviews

Finally, focus groups discussions were conducted with community groups and radio listener's clubs in each of the 3 countries targeted so as to assess

- The ability of the program to mobilize and build capacity of community based groups to advocate their own needs, concerns and interests in front of decision makers.
- The effect that capacity building has had on the attitudes and trust in community members that they themselves can make a difference (empowerment)
- The advocacy approach applied with community groups and the likelihood that community groups will be able to defend their own concerns and interests without ADRA's and local partners' support in the future (sustainability).

A list of community groups, officials, program staff members and other resource persons met is outlined in annex I. A copy of the question guide is attached in annex 2. A full elaboration of the review methodology, including the selection of key informants can be found in the review's inception report.

3. Main findings

3.1 ADRA's approach to advocacy

There are many ways to describe 'advocacy' – just as there are many shades of the color 'blue'. Yet they all have in common a set of skills and actions to influence policy makers and policy implementers to make decisions that benefit those with less power or fewer resources.

While decision-makers do not always have to be people working in government, they often are. Advocacy is therefore usually about influencing public policies and practices such as introducing or amending laws and regulations that influence government budgets, programs and services, or holding authorities accountable to laws and policies already passed.

Advocacy is often associated with public mobilization, demonstrations and media campaigns or the 'beneath-the-radar' efforts of lobbyists to engage and influence national decision makers on policy formulation.

Many advocacy efforts has a much lower profile, however. These are the day-to-day encounters between local officials and citizens over the delivery of government services and support to which citizens are entitled.

While advocacy practices can be described in almost as many ways as there are advocacy initiatives, most practices fall within the following four categories¹:



Public Interest Advocacy: Is interventions aimed at defending larger public interests, mobilising widespread support for a cause across broader constituencies. Public interest advocacy played a key role in the 'Arab Spring' when CSOs used social media to mobilize men, women and youth to go in street to claim for democracy.



Political advocacy: Is closely linked to lobbying for policy and legal reforms. Unlike public interest advocacy it is often conducted by a few group of experts or representatives acting on behalf of a larger group of people. To ensure legitimacy of claims raised, polity advocacy is often linked with public interest advocacy and the mobilization of larger groups in support of the course raised.



Citizen centered advocacy: Is based on grassroots everyday needs and concerns and perceptions of what constitutes desirable social change. It aims at building capacity of grassroots to advocacy on their own behalf and is often – but not always – targeting local decision makers who are accountable for service delivery to local population groups.



Participatory advocacy: Aims at engaging population groups in larger policy discussions to ensure that advocacy claims raised are legitimate and representative of the concerns and interests of the population. Engaging communities in issues around the content of a future constitution or national legislation on women's rights would be examples of participatory advocacy.

The review found that the citizen centered advocacy approach is the main approach used by the ASC program. The citizen centered advocacy approach used departs from the immediate issues and concerns identified by communities and citizens themselves. This may include a diversified range of issues, such as cattle raids and the conduct of local police, rehabilitation and construction of bridges, long distances to the local school or destruction of crops and livelihood assets by wild animals in a neighboring national park. Other issues relate to access to local government support and funding or health care. Concerns, which often represents tangible obstacles to improve self-reliance, community development and fulfilment of basic rights.

The citizen centered advocacy approach adopted by ADRA's ASC program aims to promote government accountability and compliance with existing laws, policies and government development schemes, rather than

¹ John Gaventa (1999). Citizen Knowledge, Citizen Competence and Democracy Building

promoting new laws. It aims to build the capacity of men, women, children and youth to advocate on their own behalf, to express their own needs and concerns and to hold relevant local authorities accountable to their responsibilities as law implementers in local communities.

As mentioned, the citizen centered advocacy approach is the main approach used. However, the formulation of advocacy strategies in Uganda and Malawi and recent initiatives to form coalitions with likeminded NGOs in Rwanda reflects a wish to engage in policy advocacy too and to influence legal frameworks related e.g. to indigenous people's rights and access to education. The ASC program's radio and TV programs in Malawi constitutes elements of public interest advocacy too, when they raise public attention to and seek to mobilize larger population groups in support of a public course.

3.1.1 Alignment of the approach with Danida's Policy on support to Civil Society

Danida defines advocacy as *'a process by an individual or group, which aims to influence public policy and resource allocation decisions within political, economic, and social systems and institutions'*. (Policy for Danish Support to Civil Society, 2014)

The citizen centered advocacy approach applied by ADRA and ADRAs efforts to engage in policy advocacy is in line with Danida's definition of advocacy as it seeks to build capacity of local communities to influence public policy and resource allocation decisions locally. As mentioned, this could for instance be around issues such as the construction of a bridge that will improve market access, the renovation of a school that will enable learning and access to education or the repair of a fence around a national park that will prevent wild animals from destroying crops or attacking children on their way to school. The local scope of the program's advocacy efforts is a reflection of the interests and concerns of local people – who may find it hard and of little interest to engage in policy issues that do not affect their lives directly. In addition, the local advocacy focus reflects the fact that policy implementation rather than policy formulation is a key concern in all 3 countries reviewed. Several informants interviewed expressed a general satisfaction with the legal frameworks in their country while implementation of policy frameworks – both nationally and locally – were lagging behind. Engaging local communities in advocacy for law implementation is a response to this challenge.

ADRA's national policy advocacy efforts were found to be in line with the civil society policy too. These efforts address issues of a national interest such as school feeding programs and affirmative action towards indigenous people's rights.

The program's citizen centered advocacy approach is in line with Danida's emphasis on capacity building of civil society actors as a means to promote rights based development too. Danida's policy defines capacity as *the ability of people, organisations and society as a whole to manage their affairs successfully*. *Capacity includes a wide range of factors from skills to systems, processes, ability to relate to others, leadership, values, formal and informal norms, loyalties, ambitions and power. Capacity is the 'ability to' and 'power to' do something and to be something/someone.*

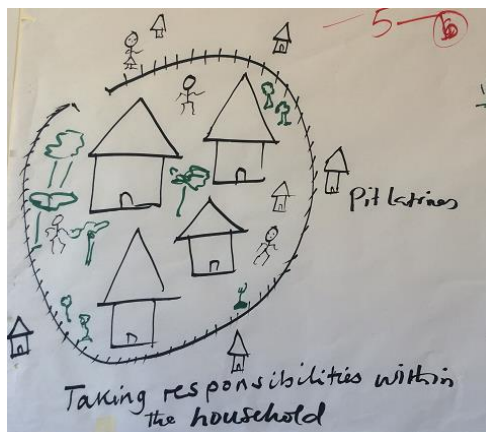
Capacity building and advocacy are closely interlinked in the ASC program. As explained below, capacity building related to self-perception, norms and values, leadership and working together, managing money, negotiating and solving conflicts are considered preconditions for community groups to take responsibility to solve issues of concern to their own lives and engage in encounters and advocacy targeting officials (see section 3.2 below).

3.2 'Reflection' as a step towards empowerment and advocacy

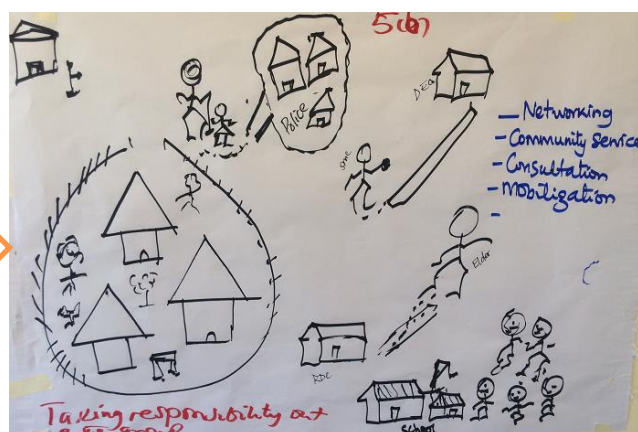
The ASC program is based on an approach that uses principles from Reflect and other Rural Participatory Appraisal (RPA) methodologies in which reflection are key elements. The program facilitates and builds the capacity of community members to reflect on and analyze their own situation and devise and initiate relevant solutions themselves. Through a process of self-reflection and analyzing one's own situation, participants begin to take responsibility to improve their own situation in areas such as health, safety, money saving and livelihood production and come to know about the relationship between their own actions, the way they feel and the life they live.

With the program's training and this new sense of ownership of and capacity to master their own situation, community members develop the courage to address and respond to issues beyond their immediate household, to network with other stakeholders, and to mobilize others in support of community development and address decision makers whenever needed.

The relationship between personal empowerment and the capacity to engage in advocacy was graphically illustrated during a staff workshop with ADRA staff members in Uganda as follows:



Taking responsibility for one's own life and household is first step towards engaging in community development



When empowered to 'manage their own lives' community group members get the courage, power and strength to engage in other community activities and address authorities whenever needed.

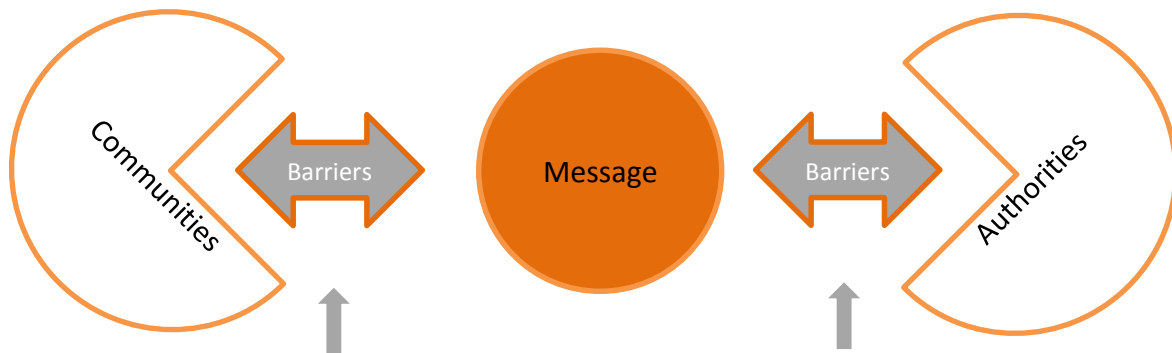
3.3 Removing barriers to communication for social change

The reflection approach and the ASC program builds on an assumption that communication *between* community members is a precondition to improve the understanding between community members about their situation, to identify joint solutions and to formulate objectives to improve the situation of participants. Yet, another precondition for accountability and social change is that communication *between* communities now aware of their own needs and concerns *and local authorities* take place. This communication is often hampered by the low self-esteem, limited capacity and knowledge of communities to speak out.

The review finds that the training of community based groups in combination with the program's emphasis on a close and non-confrontational cooperation with local government officials is very efficient in terms of removing key mental and logistical barriers to communication and encounters between local communities and

officials. A communication, that is essential if needs of communities are to be articulated, heard and responded to. The barriers to communication that the ASC program helps remove can be graphically illustrated as follows:

Barriers to communication for social change



Barriers for community members:

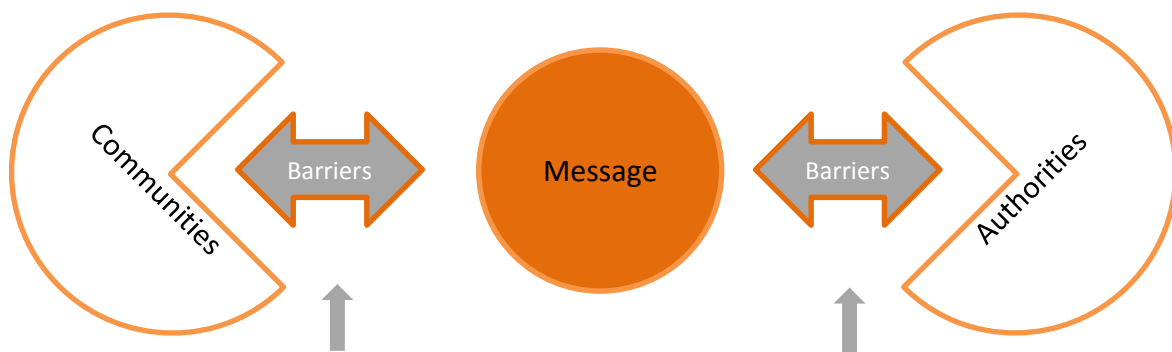
- Self-esteem: can I speak out?
- Self-censorship: Do I have the right and do I dare to speak out?
- Knowledge: Who should I speak to – and how?

Barriers for authorities:

- Access: How do I access my audience?
- Self-perception: what is my role?
- Knowledge: How can I make my message understood?

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Removing Barriers – ADRA's contribution



ADRA's contribution

- Training
- Coaching
- Accompanying
- Providing platforms for communication (radio, community dialogue)

ADRA's contribution

- Offering accessibility through communication platforms.

3.4 Cooperation with local officials and traditional leaders

In general, ADRA implements the ASC program in close cooperation with traditional leaders and officials at the district and sub-county level. In Uganda, sub-county officials participate in the identification of community groups and the training offered by the program, and ADRA staff facilitates that officials come to meet with community groups to discuss issues of concern to the community. As such, program activities contribute themselves to create the links and encounters between authorities and community groups that is the purpose of the training itself.



District education advisor sympathizing with a community's claim for a nearby school in Malawi. She doesn't have the budget nor the power to allocate resources to meet the claim, however.

The review found that the trust building and cooperation with local officials was of huge value to the program. As human beings we are more inclined to meet the needs and request of people that we like and trust compared to people that we don't like and trust. Thus, trust building, as opposed to confrontational advocacy and blaming, increases the receptiveness of local officials to the needs and concerns raised by local communities themselves – and thereby remove barriers to communication as illustrated in section 3.3 above.

Choosing a non-confrontational advocacy approach is therefore always to prefer and should be replaced by more confrontational approaches only if deemed ineffective.

Building trust is also important because local officials rarely have authority to make decisions on their own but

can act as messengers of local communities to decision makers with more power. To motivate them to do so, communities (and ADRA) do need to ensure that local officials become allies and that they are prepared to advise and 'open doors' to other, more powerful, officials. Cooperation and trust building is key in this respect.

Cooperation with traditional leaders

In addition to the cooperation with local officials, at least two of 3 ASC programs have taken steps to engage in a closer cooperation with traditional and religious leaders and to build their capacity to act as representatives of their constituencies.

Traditional leaders are appointed or 'inherit' their position. They can therefore hardly claim to be democratic institutions in the functioning of African states. However, they do hold important functions as community representatives and most rural communities consider them a legitimate and unavoidable factor in local decision-making.

Building capacity of traditional leaders to fulfil their function as community representatives and community leaders/opinion makers in a context where not only their role and importance, but also governance is under transition, may therefore represent an important contribution to the ASC program in terms of promoting government accountability to national policies and the needs and rights of local communities.

The case of Uganda clearly demonstrated the importance of including traditional leaders in contexts characterized by weak government structures and a simultaneous weakening of traditional decision making structures. Here the program worked with traditional leaders to assist them identify issues and present their case, introduced skills for networking, enhancing group dynamics and organizing themselves as a group. The training seems to have enabled traditional leaders to play a more active role in terms of defending the rights and interests of their tribes and in terms of managing and mobilizing tribe members to follow joint decisions.

This, in turn, seems to have contributed positively to recent efforts to reduce cattle raids and intertribal conflicts in Karamoja and to protect the rights and interests of the Karimojong to access land, which was otherwise to be expropriated, by the government or powerful individuals with close government ties.

4. Assessment of the viability of assumptions that are critical to the program

The review's inception phase identified assumptions that were critical to achieve the program's overall objective (see section 2.1 above). The viability of assumptions is analyzed in this section.

Assumptions were:

4.1 ADRA field staff have capacity to facilitate local community empowerment and advocacy processes.

This assumption was verified in all three contexts reviewed. Despite skepticism when the ASC approach was first introduced, staff expressed conviction that the approach, which relies solely on *'delivery of words but no physical handouts'* was effective and would lead to sustainable change. The level of literacy and analytical skills is generally low in communities addressed. Teaching community groups to analyze their own situation, define objectives, identify stakeholders and engage authorities can therefore be a very cumbersome process at times. Despite so, staff members met all expressed commitment to the task and a thorough understanding of the approach.

Critical program assumptions

- ADRA field staff have capacity to facilitate local community empowerment and advocacy processes (advocacy by communities)
- *Community groups include voices and interests of marginalized groups when advocacy issues and needs are identified.*
- Community groups have time and are motivated to engage in advocacy.
- Radio programs reach relevant community constituencies and decision makers, mobilize public support and influence local policy agenda setting/Mass media play a crucial role in influencing agenda setting
- Public institutions are accountable to needs and claims expressed by communities.
- ADRA national staff has the capacity to advocate issues identified at the national level (advocacy for communities)

It may be questioned, if local staff could and should do more to assist community members follow-up on issues presented to local authorities. In some cases community groups had waited for more than a year to receive an answer from local authorities on issues such as getting a registration for their group so that they could access commercial loans or a permission to sell their products, complaints about a health facility or the status of the renovation of a bridge or a school. Without withdrawing the responsibility from community groups to process their cases themselves, it may be discussed, if field staff could do more to remind groups that 'frequency and regularity' in encounters with officials is indeed part of an effective advocacy process.

4.2 Community groups include voices and interests of marginalized groups when advocacy issues and needs are identified.

Community groups formed are generally open to all community members who would agree to the group's objective and be prepared to volunteer their time (in groups engaged in community work and local awareness raising) or who would contribute to the saving and lending scheme run by some groups.

While this seemed to allow most community members interested to join a group, *'those members trapped between poverty and disease'*² seems to be left out. This would for instance apply to elderly community members (who would sit and watch the group's meeting with the review team from a distance) or other members who would either not be able to contribute due to disease or physical disability or who for one reason or another was disregarded by other group members.

The fact that poor and food insecure households, people living with HIV/Aids as well as female-headed households participated in the groups indicates that the approach is poverty oriented and capable of incorporating many – although not all – vulnerable groups. The fact that ADRA manages to implement the approach successfully even in a Karimojong context characterized by very low literacy rates, chronic food insecurity and limited experiences of what it means to be a citizen in a state underlines this fact.

4.3 Community groups have time and are motivated to engage in advocacy.

A citizen centered advocacy approach departs from the immediate issues and concerns identified, shared and owned by communities themselves.

Community groups met expressed that advocacy was indeed important and something that they would prioritize, even though the process could be cumbersome and slow. Several groups indicated that not only a positive outcome (for which some groups were still waiting), but also the process itself contributed to motivate and engage them in the work. The experience they got that they could access decision makers, make a claim, listen to their own voice or the voice of other members in the radio or mobilize and engage other community members in discussions of common concern contributed to build their self-esteem and feeling of empowerment.

As such empowerment and advocacy seemed to be mutually reinforcing: Personal empowerment (the feeling that I can manage my own life, feed the family and pay the school fees) seems to enforce the capacity to engage in advocacy and issues outside the household as described in section 3.2. Yet, engaging in advocacy activities seems to reinforce personal empowerment and self-esteem too.

² Traditional community leader, Mulanje District, Malawi

Interviews with external informants as well as ADRA staff indicated, that the presence of donor projects that provided handouts as ‘an easy but unsustainable way out’ in the same areas as the ASC program did constitute a threat to the motivation of communities to engage in the program. In areas where service delivery projects and handouts were provided side by side with the ASC program, staff had experienced that communities lost interest in the ASC program approach because the ASC program approach demands ‘more hard work’ by community members themselves. The deep satisfaction of experiencing that improved wellbeing and livelihood is ‘the fruit of my own efforts’ as one young, former cattle raider expressed it in Karamoja – comes only after several months of years of working with the program.

To reduce the risk of being adversely affected by handouts and service delivery program of other projects ADRA (Denmark as well as Africa) may therefore consider to raise the issue of the effect and sustainability of service delivery (micro loans, seeds, food parcels) with other donors and development agencies.

4.4 Public Media programs reach relevant community constituencies and decision makers, mobilize public support and influence local policy agenda setting/Mass media play a crucial role in influencing agenda setting

Assessing impact of public mass communication is a challenge as it can be hard to trace not only the number of receivers but also their reaction to the message received. In addition, it is often very difficult to verify the attribute of a certain action to a certain message (here: radio and TV program).

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Despite so, community groups in Rwanda in general expressed appreciation of the radio programs and felt that issues aired did influence local authorities’ accountability and willingness to react to certain issues. The fact that the radio programs were used to create a *process for dialogue* in which local authorities got the chance to share their points of view and were represented to previous pledges may have contributed to this.

The radio programs in both Rwanda and Malawi contributed to give communities a voice and to empower community groups to speak out. One community group interviewed attributed a growing number of group members in their group to the fact that their issue had been aired on radio. This had sent a signal to other community members about the importance of the group’s work.

Radio programs seems to have contributed to influence local policy agendas and local government accountability specific to issues of concern to local communities (a bridge, a school, misconduct of officials etc.). The TV program in Malawi (Tikuferanji) seems to play a slightly different role, however. Founded originally as a program to break taboos about HIV and create awareness about the disease, the program’s main target remains the general population at large. As such Tikuferanji’s key contribution seems to be its huge popularity among the population at large and its ability to raise public attention to common issues of importance to the entire country. Thus, its role appears to be less that of holding authorities accountable to specific issues than to be that of pointing at issues that needs public and political action. A role that it fulfils effectively thanks to its popularity and widespread legitimacy.

4.5 Public institutions are accountable to needs and claims expressed by communities.

The advocacy context differed in the three countries participating in the review. In Uganda, political space for NGOs to participate in policy discussion and address national authorities on issues of concern is narrowing, corruption is rampant and so is impunity for officials misusing public funds.

In Rwanda, the space for NGOs to provide suggestions to national decision makers on issues related to social and economic development and the country's development goals seems fairly broad, as long as NGOs make sure they operate within the discourse and overall priorities determined by the government. Other issues such as those related to ethnic conflict and division of power remains 'closed areas' for NGOs to address however.

With the recent election of a new president in Malawi, the space available is yet to be determined although ADRA Malawi believes that the change of president is likely to increase the space for NGOs to articulate needs and concerns related to all spheres of life in the country.

Despite the different political spaces available at *national* level in the three countries, the space available for communities to engage with authorities and raise claims or concern to local communities *at the local level* appeared to be similar. Community groups empowered by the program did have access to local authorities and authorities were responsive to claims raised. This seems to indicate that power dynamics and political space for people centered advocacy at grassroots level differ from the dynamics and political space for policy advocacy at national level. Influence at grassroots level seem to be less affected by external, national policy processes and agendas and to depend more on interpersonal relationship and informal links of cooperation. (See section 3.4 on the dynamics of trust and relation building).

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Although full accountability was not reached (and would be hard to expect), the review team was left with the overall impression that the non-confrontational and cooperative advocacy approach taught to local community groups and practiced by ADRA staff themselves contributed to create a positive environment in which many local government officials aimed to be accountable to needs and concerns raised. At least as long as it did not interfere with their own personal interests and as long as scarce financial resources and budgets allowed them to do so.

The radio programs aired on issues that got stuck in public administrations seemed to motivate authorities to be accountable too, as the programs contributed to create a sense of urgency and a potential 'threat' of 'public blaming' in situations where authorities could not provide a proper answer or solution to the problem.

4.6 ADRA national staff has the capacity to advocate issues identified at the national level (advocacy for communities)

The review finds that as far as the citizen centered advocacy approach and the focus on public accountability and implementation of existing laws and policy/budget schemes is concerned, ADRA national staff do have the capacity to advocate issues at the national level. This is done, not least through the radio/tv programs aired which invites other speakers from national authorities and national experts on the issue to be discussed. (Malawi and Rwanda)

ADRA's capacity to create awareness and influence public attitudes at large is also strong – particularly in Malawi where around 6 million viewers watches ADRA's TV program 'Tikuferanji' on a weekly basis. It may be discussed if this activity can be termed advocacy, however, or if this is rather an activity of public education and awareness raising aimed to motivate other national actors to address advocacy issues that needs their attention.

Advocacy policies developed by ADRA Uganda and ADRA Malawi (and discussed with ADRA Rwanda) is an indication of an ambition to engage in policy advocacy too and to contribute to change of laws and national policy agendas.

The review doubts that national ADRA offices at large have this capacity at present. Engaging in policy advocacy would entail that national ADRA offices have the capacity and human resources to

- Develop in-depth expertise, analyze and follow policy developments within the advocacy topics chosen.
- Engage in strategic alliances with like-minded partners and contribute strategically to the work of the alliance(s).
- Network with national and international stakeholders on the issues identified
- Develop advocacy proposals and legal drafts for decision makers to consider.

However, there is little doubt that national ADRA offices can develop such capacity within a few years, provided that funds and not least human resources are made available, and that (part of) these capacities are represented by individual staff members already. However, the review finds little evidence that the capacity needed are present in the organizations as such and reflected in the working structure, procedures and activities governing work in ADRA Uganda, Malawi and Rwanda.

5. Recommendations

5.1 Revise program descriptions and objectives to clarify the program's strong focus on accountability and policy implementation

The ASC program's strong focus on citizen-centered advocacy for local government accountability is hardly reflected in the program descriptions. Although not clearly and consistently expressed in all 3 program LFAs, the documents do leave the impression that the ASC program may engage in national policy advocacy within thematic areas related to indigenous people's rights, food security, health and education – an impression that is reinforced by the advocacy policies developed by ADRA Uganda and ADRA Malawi.

The review found that little had been done to pursue this focus systematically while, at the same time, the documents hardly reflects the program's focus on local accountability actually pursued. .

It is therefore recommended that the program LFAs are revised to reflect what the ASC program really does – and does well.

5.2 Clarify if – and how – the ASC program would want to engage in policy advocacy – or focus on the citizen centered advocacy mainly

At the same time, the review recommends that the ASC programs in Malawi, Uganda and Rwanda clarify if indeed they would want to engage in policy advocacy for policy reforms within the ASC program's thematic areas of health, food security and education.

If so, it is recommended that each ASC program identifies a maximum of 2-3 policy issues that it wants to pursue. Detailed stakeholder analyses for each issue, power mappings, policy briefs and advocacy calls for proposals should be developed and a policy officer responsible to pursue the issues systematically, build relationships with stakeholders and follow policy processes closely should be assigned accordingly.

If ADRA programs want to engage in policy advocacy it is further recommended that allies are identified so that issues are pursued in close cooperation with other, likeminded organizations.

When defining how the ASC program works with advocacy, the review finally recommends that the ASC program clarifies its definition of what is advocacy and what is not.

Under circumstances as those found in both Malawi, Rwanda and Uganda, it can be hard to convince citizens about the soundness and legitimacy of 'well established rights' such as children's right to education. It is therefore hardly surprising, that the ASC program adopts a very broad definition of advocacy, which includes sensitization and awareness raising among large population groups about their rights – and the rights of their children.

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However, to avoid misunderstandings in communication with donors who are likely to have a more narrow definition of the concept, it is recommended that ADRA Denmark and its partners agree on a common definition of the term "Advocacy". This could for instance entail that advocacy is defined as '*a strategic set of activities aimed to persuade **authorities** that the needs and concerns of communities are in line with their interest and concerns*'.

5.3 Revise the ASC program's framework for monitoring and documentation of results

More and more donors require documentation of results as a precondition for continued support. At the same time, ADRA's current reporting formats and practices do not seem to appreciate fully the important results created by the ASC program. Consequently, opportunities to communicate and share results and their importance with external and internal stakeholders remain untapped.

The review recommends that ADRA Uganda revise its monitoring system to strengthen reporting on the following results: creation of self-reliant groups and effect of radio programs:

5.3.1 Creation of self-reliant groups

The review finds that empowered community based groups whose members are confident that they can act on their own and approach local authorities whenever needed, and who have a vision and a plan they can follow to improve their lives, is the most important result produced by the ASC program.

First: This result is the outcome of continuous training and coaching of group members, typically during a period of 3-6 years. During the training participants are brought from a feeling of isolation, helplessness and worthlessness to a situation where they trust their own capacities. They get the skills to work together, are capable of borrowing and managing the little money and other resources they have, form groups, vote in their own leadership, formulate a vision, make a plan, identify relevant stakeholders and authorities to address and follow their plan. .



'Before I could not speak in public and I stayed away from others. Today I know that it is my right to speak, and I know who I shall speak to, to solve my issues. I also know that I can borrow money and pay them back. Although I am physically weak, my brain is strong'. While all community groups met presented such strong statements about impact and social change during meetings, the current monitoring system leaves little room to trace this journey from disempowerment and despair to empowerment and being in charge.

Second: This result (empowered community groups) is a precondition for the numerous examples produced by the ASC program of community groups that take the courage to address local authorities over concerns or interests that they have.

The review recommends that the ASC program develops a monitoring and results documentation system with empowered community groups at its core. The system should trace the inner journey of groups themselves and of individual group participants from feeling disempowered and without a purpose - to the state where members themselves express that they feel empowered and capable of proactively addressing issues of concern to their lives and the group with which they work – even without ADRA's support.

Such monitoring system will satisfy the need to document progress and results and to assess when groups have matured to a degree where they may graduate from the program (see section 5.4 below). In addition, it will take into account that groups do not progress at the same pace: While some may be ready to graduate in 3 years others will mature in 6 years only.

It is recommended that such system is developed in a cooperation between ADRA Denmark and ADRA field staff so that the system satisfies ADRA Denmark's reporting requirements and makes sense to staff members who will use it to determine the progress of their groups. (see annex 1 for more details on this).

5.3.2 Measuring effects of radio and TV programs

Airing TV and radio programs is an important part of the ASC program in Malawi and Rwanda. Yet the effect of the programs remains undocumented.

It may be impossible to verify the attribution of radio programs to policy decision. Yet, the review finds that the ASC program is yet to exhaust opportunities to document the likely contribution of radio programs to policy processes and agenda setting.

The fact that other media (radio, TV, and newspapers) refer to program's aired by ADRA, or the fact that issues aired by ADRA is discussed among decision makers within a reasonable time from the issues was aired are two important indicators of the radio program's contribution to change. Other indicators may be relevant too

It is therefore recommended that the ASC program identifies and incorporates such indicators into its monitoring and reporting framework so as to better assess and learn from the effects of the radio and TV programs and so as to document and share results accordingly.

5.4 Develop a 'graduation strategy' for mature groups who have declared that they can operate without ADRA's support

Many groups met during the review expressed confidence that they were now able to engage with local authorities and solve issues at the local level. Most felt that that they would still need support if issues were to be taken beyond the district level however.

The review therefore recommends that ADRA develops a 'phase out' or graduation strategy for groups who express confidence that they can handle issues locally without ADRA's support, but who may need occasional advice and support on specific issues related to advocacy or cooperation in the group.

Establishing an association for mature groups may be one approach to consider. This would enable ADRA to mark the termination of a relationship of extensive support and training, and the beginning of a new relationship where membership of the association would entitle member groups to receive ad hoc but less frequent support from ADRA's field advisors over issues beyond the district level and share experiences and ideas with other mature groups. In return, members should be obliged to share their knowledge and experiences with other, newly started or less mature groups in the area.

In this way, ADRA would be able both to capitalize on the emotional attachment and devotion that groups expressed to ADRA's work and respect the needs felt by groups not to abandon ADRA completely.

5.5. Build capacity of local traditional leaders to represent rights and concerns of local communities

The role of traditional leaders is under transition everywhere in Africa. Yet, they still enjoy widespread legitimacy among local community members and play a key role in local decision making and consensus building. The issues of the role of local leaders was not addressed intensively by the review. Yet, meetings with traditional leaders and other key informants in Uganda and Malawi did suggest, that accountability of authorities towards communities may improve, if traditional leaders understand their role in a changing society and have the capacity to represent and defend the rights and interests of local communities in encounters with local authorities.

It is therefore recommended that the ASC program consider the relevance of building capacity of local traditional leaders as long as this activity contributes to strengthen the capacity of traditional leaders to reflect on their own role in a changing society and to represent the interests of communities in policy processes and budgeting processes within and outside local communities.

Likewise it is recommended that the program continues to systematically engage local authority officials in the ASC program's planning and implementation as this contributes to build trust, increase their receptiveness to claims raised by local communities and increases their commitment to pass claims on to officials with more decision making power.

6. Conclusion

Development practitioners have hailed capacity building and empowerment to act and take responsibility for one's own development as 'best practice' for decades. Yet 'walking the talk' may be more difficult. During the review, the team was presented with several examples of how communities refused to take responsibility for construction of infrastructure in their own area, once food for work programs had come to an end. How seed banks built by foreign donors had been happily inhabited by bats or how pit latrines had turned into homes for hens and chickens as the intended beneficiaries saw no better use for them.

Each time, the reason for the lack of ownership and community engagement and responsibility was the same: Too little time and effort had been spent to create a real demand in the communities for the services that donors wanted to offer, or to create a broader understanding among community members about why such services would benefit them.

What the ASC program shows, is, that creating that understanding and demand for change does pay off. The ASC program does that by investing time and – at times – lengthy, frustrating and difficult encounters between community groups and ADRA field facilitators. By training community groups to analyze and understand their own situation. By assisting them identify solutions that would work for them, by helping them set objectives and identify relevant stakeholders and authorities. And by encouraging them to implement their plans.

Communities met in all three countries participating in the ASC advocacy review expressed their strong appreciation of the approach. They were proud of their progress and the achievements that they made – be it holding police accountable to corruption, pushing for the renovation of a school or having bought mattresses or rabbits for all group members thanks to new cooperative agricultural practices. And they expressed that to a certain extent and at the district level they now felt that they could operate without or with limited support from ADRA.

At its onset this change may rather be empowerment than advocacy. However, as the review demonstrates, empowerment and the citizen-centered advocacy approach goes hand in hand. Empowerment is when people get a sense of ownership to their own lives. When they feel they can manage their household, make a budget, set an objective for themselves, pursue it and feed the children. Empowerment is also when they get the courage to speak to other people, skills to cooperate and the knowledge about the causes of their suffering. It is with this acquired feeling of empowerment that community members, men and women, get the energy, motivation and courage to engage in issues beyond their own household, claim their rights and hold authorities accountable. This is when development aid becomes more than a matter of distributing aid, but becomes a process where poor people gets the capacity to feed themselves, to grow and develop, and the courage to hold governments accountable for providing the context that will enable them to do so. And this is what the citizen centered advocacy approach is all about.

Annex I Resource Persons Met

Rwanda

I. List of Duty Bearers

1. Telesphore Ngonga, Conservation Division Manager, Rwanda Development Board (national level)
2. Rebson Dzala Washe, Business Development Manager, YES RWANDA
3. Chaste Karangwa, Male Circumcision Officer, Rwanda Biomedical Centre.
4. Mulinzi John, Infrastructure Officer, Nyagatare District
5. Alexis Karengera, Karama sector Executive Secretary, Nyagatare District
6. Michel Kayiranga, District Education Officer, Karongi District
7. Abdul Nizeyimana, Health Director, Karongi District
8. Jean Baptiste Ngezahimana, HIV Prevention Officer, Karongi District
9. Eloi Munyankindi, Mahembe Sector Executive Secretary, Nyamasheke district
10. Arthemo Kayitere, Mahembe Sector Agronomist
11. Marie Nyirabashyirahamwe, Mahembe Sector Education Officer
12. Jeanne Mukamusabyimana, Mahembe Sector Registrar

II. List of CBGs

1. KOAI pineapple growing CBG, Karama Sector, Nyagatare District
2. Musongati Primary School PTA
3. IREBERO rice growing CBG
4. NTANGARUGERO beekeeping CBG, Mahembe sector Nyamasheke District
5. Impinduramatwara maize growing CBG, Mahembe sector, Nyamasheke
6. Twugarire ANTI-AIDS CLUB (youth out of school), Murambi sector, Karongi district
7. GIRA UBUZIMU Anti-AIDS Club (out of school)
8. Gabiro Primary School Anti AIDs club

Uganda

Duty bearers met

1. Deputy CAO, Mark Luching (Kotido):
2. District Education Officer, Simon Peter (KAABONG)
3. District Education Officer, Kotido
4. LC 5 officials Kotido
5. Community district officers, Kotido and Kaabong
6. Security Officer, Kotido

CBGs

1. Biafra Atousoto CBO
2. DADO (Kaabong)
3. Lomodocho Primary School (PTA + SMC) - Kaabong
4. Engarakinos Womens Peace group (CBO) – Kaabong
5. Koromwai Womens group (CBO) - Kotido

Other key informants

1. ADRA Kampala, Kotido, Kaabong and Abim
2. Advisory group representative ADRA (Kristine, Kaabong)
3. Advocacy Team representatives, ADRA (Esther, Pascal, Veronica, James, Siri)
4. CAPASCO (Kampala)

Malawi**CBGs**

1. Farmer's association Machinga
2. Radio Listeners' club, Machinga
3. Grand Coalition, machinga
4. Chimbalanga Reflect circle
5. Village Saving and Lending Club, Mulanje (experienced)
6. Village Saving and Lending Club, Mulanje (less experienced)
7. Tiyasode youth network, Mulanje

Duty Bearers

1. Community education officer, Machinga

National stakeholders

MBC Joy Radio, Blantyre
Cisanet (Lilongwe)
Luanar (Lilongwe)
Reforma (Lilongwe)
Manaso (Lilongwe)

Other key informants

ADRA field staff, advocacy officer, M&E officer and management

Annex 2- Question Guide

ADRA Crosscutting advocacy review

Rwanda, Uganda and Malawi

Question guides

The questions listed in the question guide are made to assess the validity of the assumptions what is the focus of the crosscutting review and which are described in detail in the inception report page 5-7.

The question guide is a *guide* only to thematic issues that will be raised during interviews. As discussions unfold, improvised questions, follow-up questions and content related issues may be raised too.

Questions for ADRA staff (field staff)

Factual questions	Duration of employment with the ASC program
	Job responsibilities
	Formal education and experiences
Content questions	What is the training methodology used with CBGs
	What are the success criterias of your work: When do you feel that you succeed in your work? What does your superior consider a success? (asking about perceptions of 'what counts')
	How would you describe your own role and main responsibilities in facilitating that CBGs conduct advocacy.
	What do you think of this role?
	What are the challenges that you face when working with CBGs on advocacy? (including e.g. perceptions of groups, advocacy environment, own skills and resources)
	If you were to conduct your work even better, what kind of support, inputs or resources would you need.
Relational questions	In what ways do you cooperate or coordinate with other staff members (field staff, content managers, advocacy staff etc.) in your work with community groups?
	Frequency of encounters? How does this benefit your work?
	To what extend and in what ways do you feel that needs and concerns raised by CBGs are reflected in advocacy issues raised by ADRA at the regional or national level?
	Which other NGOs do you cooperate in your advocacy work and how would you describe your cooperation with such organizations?
	What do you gain from the cooperation – and what do you contribute with?

Questions for ADRA HQ and advocacy staff (advocacy processes and procedures)

What are the main advocacy issues raised and addressed by ADRA currently?, regionally, nationally
How would you describe your own role and main responsibilities in facilitating ADRA's advocacy work?
How do you plan and organize your work
In what way does the ASC program contribute to your overall advocacy strategy?
What are the relationships and links between advocacy in the ASC program and other ADRA advocacy initiatives
What do you do to keep yourself updated on the positions and attitudes of key decision makers (and shapers) and of recent policy developments
What are the main results and achievements of your advocacy work so far?
What do you do to assess and document progress and lessons learnt from your advocacy work?
What do you do to keep yourself updated about the needs and priorities of CBGs
What do you do to assess progress and learn from your work? (incl procedures for information sharing)
What are the resources available for advocacy?
What do you do to keep yourself updated about legal frameworks that you aim to change
What do you do to create or maintain relationships with media representatives
Which other NGOs do you cooperate in your advocacy work and how would you describe your cooperation with such organizations?
What do you gain from the cooperation – and what do you contribute with?

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Questions for community based groups

Factual questions	No of members
The intention with these questions are to gather information about the representation, working modalities and power relations of the groups. Do the groups represent all community members or are some members left out? Are some group members more influential than others and what does the group do to represent the concerns and interests of all members?	Age of groups
	Who can be members – and who cannot not
	Frequency of meetings
	Issues addressed by the group
	Means of decision making and conflict resolution in the group
Importance of group to its members	Why and how did you become a member of this group?
The intention with these questions are to know more about why members join the group, how membership affects their perception about their own role in development as well as their livelihood.	What are the benefits of being a member of the group? (value of being a member)
	In what way does ADRA contribute to the work of your group
	In what way has being a member influenced you (asking about change of perceptions' about one's own role in development)
	In what way has being a member influenced your livelihood or contributed to solve problems that you face or have faced?

<p>Advocacy</p> <p>The intention with these questions is to gather information about the actual advocacy work done, group members' attitudes towards advocacy and the challenges they face.</p> <p>The intention is also to assess the role of communication platform in advocacy work (in which way does it contribute to the capacity and motivation of members to engage in advocacy) and to assess how and to what extend advocacy by CBGs is linked to other (national) advocacy initiatives done by ADRA.</p>	In what way does your group work to influence decision makers?
	What has been the result of this work so far?
	What did you think about engaging in such work, when you were to do it for the first time (asking about mental barriers, fears, concerns and perceptions)
	What do you think about it now? (asking about change in perceptions).
	What do other people in your community think about you engaging in such work?
	What do you perceive as the main challenges when addressing decision makers and/or local media?
	In what way does ADRA provide assistance to your advocacy work/ dialogue with decision makers/ local leaders and in addressing these challenges?
	In what ways do platforms for public communication facilitated by ADRA contribute to your advocacy work (radio, theater, community dialogues)
	To what extend do you cooperate with other CBGs in your efforts to influence decision makers.
	Describe cooperation – Frequency of encounters, procedures for decision making and conflict resolution, added value and main challenges. Role of ADRA
	Are you familiar with other initiatives aiming at influencing decision makers supported by ADRA apart from what you are engaged in yourself – if so – which?
	Would you like to be informed about such initiatives – if so, why?
	In terms of ADRA's work to influence decision makers and local and national leaders or its support to you: what would you want ADRA to do (more of) if you were to decide?
	If you were to look into the future: what would your group and work look like in 3 years from now (asking about visions)



Annex 3

Holding Authorities Account. - Debriefing Note, Rwanda



1. Introduction

ADRA Denmark and its African partners have worked to introduce the Action for Social Change (ASC) Program approach to development in poor and vulnerable communities since 2009. The overall aim is to support the development of *civil societies that can contribute as dynamic actors in social, political and economic development processes locally and nationally*. Ultimately, with the purpose of reducing poverty and promoting sustainable livelihoods and rights among poor and marginalized population groups.

The ASC program represents a rather fundamental shift from service delivery towards capacity building and advocacy. The aim is to empower communities to analyze their situation, to identify their needs and interests and to advocate for a fulfilment of these needs. This is done through a bottom-up approach of facilitation, training and dialogue sessions where vulnerable groups become aware of their own situation in society, gain sense of citizenship and rights, and are able to identify issues and problems that need to be changed in order to improve their lives and initiate social change.

The aim, as spelled out in ADRA Rwanda's 'Advocacy for Good Governance Framework' is to:

- Influence a change in policies and practices of individuals and institutions that exercise power and influence over poor and excluded people to their disadvantage and exclusion
- Empower rights-holders to access their rights to a life of dignity; and
- Mobilize solidarity amongst citizens and civil society to act to counter poverty

Initiated in 2009 in Uganda and gradually expanded to other ADRA partner countries in Africa, advocacy remains a relatively new working approach to many of ADRA Denmark's local partners. Many are still exploring the most effective way for them to promote social change using different means of advocacy, identifying how advocacy best fit their organizational identity or figuring out how they can best make use of a variety of advocacy tools without bringing their own organization at risk.

To support this process ADRA Denmark decided to review the approach, added value and preliminary impact of advocacy activities conducted in 3 Action for Social Change Programs, including Uganda, Rwanda and Malawi. The review focused on three key elements:

- If and how the program as operated until now has contributed to social change (impact),
- The relevance and the effectiveness of the advocacy approaches and methods applied.
- The sustainability and organizational capacity of local ADRA offices to conduct advocacy program activities.

This debriefing note describes the main findings and recommendations from the review conducted in Rwanda 12-16 May 2014, visiting community based groups and representatives from national, district and sector authorities in Kigali and 3 districts: Karongi and Nyamasheke in the Western Province and Nyagatare District in the Eastern Province.

2. Findings

The ASC program primarily adopts a ***citizen centered advocacy approach***. This approach focuses on building capacity of men, women, children and youth to advocate on their own behalf and express their own needs and concerns in front of relevant authorities.

A citizen-centered approach addresses the immediate day-to-day pains , interests and concerns expressed by citizens, such as getting a registration for a business so that one can access loans, the need to repair physical infrastructure to access the local market, the need to replace the roof of a school so that schoolchildren are protected against sun or rain etc. Concerns that are a direct consequence of lack of accountability and absence of developmental rights and with represent tangible obstacles to improve self-reliance and development in their communities.

Its aims to encourage citizens to approach relevant and responsible – most often local – authorities over such issues and to teach them the skills and build their capacities to do so. The training helps remove fears, acquire skills and encourage citizens to speak out.

A citizen-centered approach focuses primarily on policy *implementation* and accountability issues as the local level. It targets citizens and civil servants (policy implementers) more than policy makers at the national level.

The review team found that the citizen centered advocacy approach adopted by the ASC program was very effective in terms of assisting community groups access local government support and in terms of building their capacity to do so on their own. As such, the approach was found to contribute to social change.

In addition, the hands-on citizen based approach matches well with ADRA's value- and rights based approach in which concern for citizens rights to education, livelihood and health is key. The review team finds that the fact that ADRA manages to turn the rights based approach – which may appear abstract to ordinary people struggling to make ends meet – into specific points of action for advocacy is indeed a methodological strength

The radio programs were found particular effective in terms of providing access to authorities in this respect when citizens 'get stuck' on an issue or are unable to get an answer. In such situations, ADRA facilitates to set up radio programs on the issue. Citizens are interviewed about the problem and the consequences it causes them, and responsible authorities get a chance to reply about what could be done to solve the problem.



Empowerment and advocacy goes hand in hand: Before I could not speak in public and I stayed away from others. Today I know that it is my right to speak, and I know who I shall speak to, to solve my issues. I also know that I can borrow money and pay them back. Although I am physically weak, my brain is strong.

Radio is the key most important media with the widest coverage in Rwanda and according to the informants met, broad casting a radio program on issues of importance to communities have the following effects:

- It increases accountability as authorities who have pledged a solution 'on air' are held accountable to their promises more easily.
- It creates a 'sense of urgency' since the issue is now widely known by authorities and citizens alike
- It makes citizens interviewed feel that they are heard and that their 'voices counts'. This reinforces the empowerment process that the ASC training facilitates.
- It sets a 'political agenda' locally (sector and district level) and contributes to facilitate a local priority setting that is in line with the needs and priorities expressed by local community groups and the national strategies and programs (e.g. to prioritize a new bridge in next year's budget).

Although radio programs contributes to pressure on local authorities to find solutions to problems expressed by communities, authorities in general expressed appreciation of the programs and ADRA's work. Speaking 'on air' enabled authorities to access larger constituencies and explain the issues from their point of view.

ADRA's work also helped them access information about the needs and concerns of local communities. This was important since addressing such needs was in line with authorities' own performance contracts that they are held accountable for each year.

On this basis, the review concludes that key assumptions about the ASC approach, which was identified for the review exercise, are unproblematic:

- Community groups *are* interested in engaging in advocacy activities as advocacy is introduced to them as a natural part of the skills they need to improve their livelihood and opportunities in health, education and livelihood
- Radio programs *do* contribute to set the agenda, particularly in sector and district areas, where radio remains the main means of mass communication.
- ADRA staff *does* have the capacity to facilitate that community groups engage in advocacy initiatives that are of concern to them.
- Public institutions at the district and sector level *do want to* and demonstrates accountability to needs and claims expressed by communities. This is due to a supportive advocacy environment.
- The review further concludes that although ADRA national staff does appear have the capacity to facilitate consensus building among networks of CBGs and to advocate issues identified at the national level (advocacy for communities), scope remains to further systematize and enlarge networking and cooperation between CBGs (see recommendation 2 below).
- The review was not able to conclude the extend to which community groups include voices and interests of marginalized groups when advocacy issues and needs are identified. However, the reflect program which provides literacy training for illiterate community members indicates that this may be the case for some community members.

3. Main recommendations and potential areas for growth

The review team found that the citizen centered approach adopted by the ASC program in ADRA Rwanda was effective and relevant in terms of contributing to social change in the communities that ADRA works with.

The team therefore strongly recommends that the ASC program continues this approach.

Yet, the team also found that for the ASC program to remain effective and capable of producing results, ADRA should formulate a strategy to 'phase out' mature groups who do no longer need intensive support and training.

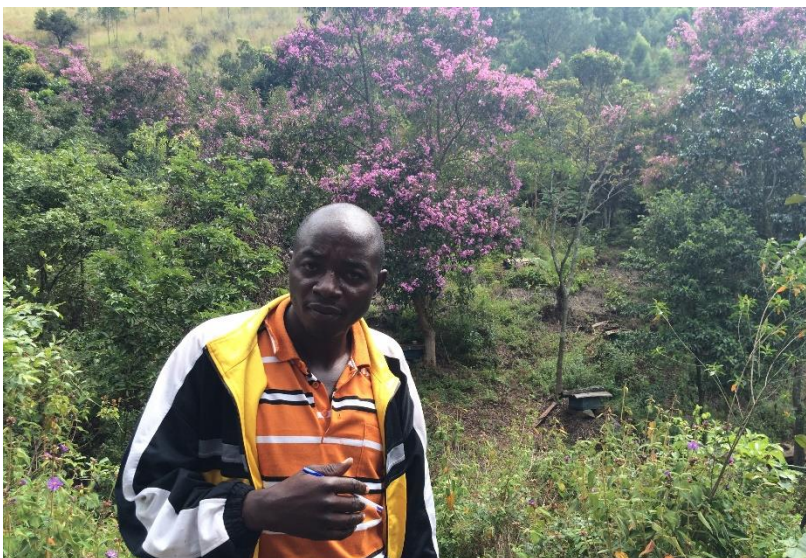
It was also found that the program has potential to capitalize on the numerous community groups trained by building a 'network' or 'association' of mature groups that can serve as a source for inspiration for other, less developed groups, and which can contribute to identify advocacy issues that ADRA should address and discuss with policy makers at the national level.

The review team therefore suggests the ASC program to consider the following recommendations:

1. Formulate and implement criteria for 'phasing out' mature CBGs

Several community based groups visited expressed that, with ADRA's support, they now feel much more comfortable addressing local authorities at district and sector level. Now they know who, when and how to contact authorities on issue of importance to their life and economic affairs, for instance when having to get a registration for their cooperative, when lobbying for the renovation of a nearby bridge or when wildlife destroyed their crops.

Several CBGs also expressed that they had plans for the coming years related to the development of their businesses or the continued development of the local school.



Visualizing the future: In 3 years from now we will have our registration, we will be able to process the honey before selling it and we will sell it all over the district. And if you come again, I will wear a suit!

As CBGs interviewed demonstrated confidence and capacity to implement plans and defend their needs and concerns in front of local communities, it is recommended that ADRA Rwanda develops clear criteria for phasing out and ceasing regular support to 'mature' groups, so that new groups could be enrolled in the ASC program and cooperation with these groups can be established.

2. Formulate a 'membership strategy' to support ADRA's continued legitimacy in national advocacy

It is further recommended that ADRA develops a membership strategy whereby mature CBGs are offered membership of the ASC program in return of being prepared to share their experiences with less developed CBGs.

This would satisfy the wish of CBGs to remain in contact with ADRA and to access advice on an ad hoc basis. In addition, it would satisfy the ASC program's wish to capitalize on the 'good example' and source of inspiration that mature CBGs may be for other groups. Finally, it will increase ADRA's legitimacy in advocacy and be a clear demonstration that ADRA talks on behalf of a wider constituency.

A membership strategy should include issues such as

- Criteria for members of the association
- Entitlements and obligations of members
- Benefits of being a member
- How decisions are reached at
- To what extent members' participate in deciding which advocacy issues ADRA may want to raise nationally

3. Formulate a vision for ADRA's future work and role in advocacy

In parallel with the formulation of a membership strategy, it is recommended that ADRA formulates a vision for its future advocacy work. This should include but not limit itself to describe

- how ADRA can "lift" generic issues and concerns shared by many community groups to a more strategic level to address the need for sustainable solutions,
- how community groups will be engaged in wider advocacy issues
- how and when other advocacy approaches such as policy advocacy targeting national policy formulation will be applied.

The strategy may include a description of how advocacy issues that needs national attention will be identified, and how ADRA intends to cooperate with other likeminded agencies in alliances to achieve national advocacy objectives.

4. Develop a system for monitoring and documentation of results

More and more donors require documentation of results as a precondition for continued support. At the same time, current reporting formats and practices do not seem to fully appreciate the important results created by the ASC program. Consequently, opportunities to communicate and share results with external and internal stakeholders remain untapped. It is therefore recommended, that ADRA Rwanda revise its monitoring system to strengthen reporting on results.

The review team finds that community based groups whose members are confident that they can act on their own and approach local authorities whenever needed, and who has a vision and a plan they can follow to improve their lives, is the most important result produced by the ASC program.



Knowing how to work in the best interest of their school. Parent's-Teacher's Association tell about their work to persuade sector authorities to complete the renovation of their school.

First: This result is the outcome of continuous training and coaching of group members. A training in which participants are brought from a situation of feeling isolated, stuck and worthless to a situation where they trust their own capacities, work together, are capable of borrowing and managing the little money and other resources they have, formulate a vision, make a plan and follow it.

Second: This result (empowered community groups) is a precondition for the numerous examples produced by the ASC program of community groups that take the courage to address authorities to achieve their objectives and solve an issue.

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The review therefore recommends that the ASC program develops a monitoring and results documentation system with empowered community groups at its core. The system should trace the inner journey of group participants from feeling disempowered and without hope to feeling empowered and able to proactively address issues of concern to their lives and the group with which they work³.

Such monitoring system will both satisfy the need to document progress and results, the need to learn and share learning with others (ASC programmes and partners) and the need for clear criteria that will help the ASC program determine, when groups are sufficiently mature to become 'members' of the ASC program.

It is recommended that ADRA Denmark participates in the process of developing this monitoring system so that the system satisfies ADRA Denmark's reporting requirements and those of the donors.

5. Consider the added value and effectiveness of all sector coordinators staying in the sector in which they work

During the review process, the review team learned that living in the community in which you work is likely to produce the desired results (see recommendation 4 above) much faster than when sector coordinators commute between several sectors.

³ A separate note on a possible methodology will follow

The reason for this is that living in and with communities contributes to create a relationship of trust and 'being together' that is key to the learning process.

It is therefore recommended that ADRA aims to consistently apply an approach of 'one coordinator pr. sector' in order to enforce effectiveness and results for the community groups that ADRA works with.

While this approach is more expensive than having coordinators commute between several sectors, the review team recommends that ADRA explains the difference to potential donors so that donors understand the added value of a 'one coordinator per sector approach'. This will enable the donor to make an informed choice between a less expensive and less effective approach of commuting and a more costly and more effective approach of staying and living with communities.

6. Revise the LFA to better reflect the target and the citizen centered approach applied by the ASC program

The current LFA's objective 3 – which relates to the advocacy component of the ASC program – could be more specific in terms of clarifying both the target for advocacy (district and sector officials) and the number of community based groups that are supposed to 'graduate' from the ASC program (approximately 200)

It is recommended that the ASC program and ADRA Denmark revise the LFA's objective 3 to better reflect this context. Indicators of achievement may be revised in line with recommendation 4 too

Annex 4

Holding Authorities Account. - Debriefing Note, Uganda



4. Introduction

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The ASC program represents a rather fundamental shift from service delivery towards capacity building and advocacy following the Rights Based Approach towards Development. The aim is to empower communities to analyze their situation, to identify their needs and interests and to advocate for a fulfilment of these needs. This is done through a bottom-up approach of facilitation, training and dialogue sessions where vulnerable groups become aware of their own situation in society, gain sense of citizenship and rights, and are able to identify issues and problems that need to be changed in order to improve their lives and initiate social change. The aim, as spelled out in ADRA Rwanda's 'Advocacy for Good Governance Framework' is to:

- Influence a change in policies and practices of individuals and institutions that exercise power and influence over poor and excluded people to their disadvantage and exclusion
- Empower rights-holders to access their rights to a life of dignity; and
- Mobilize solidarity amongst citizens and civil society to act to counter poverty

Initiated in 2009 in Uganda and gradually expanded to other ADRA partner countries in Africa, advocacy remains a relatively new working approach to many of ADRA Denmark's local partners. Many are still exploring the most effective way for them to promote social change using different means of advocacy, identifying how advocacy best fit their organizational identity or figuring out how they can best make use of a variety of advocacy tools without bringing their own organization at risk.

To support this process ADRA Denmark decided to review the approach, added value and preliminary impact of advocacy activities conducted in three Action for Social Change Programs, including Uganda, Rwanda and Malawi.

The review focused on three key elements:

- If and how the program as operated until now has contributed to social change (impact),
- The relevance and the effectiveness of the advocacy approaches and methods applied.
- The sustainability and organizational capacity of local ADRA offices to conduct advocacy program activities.

This debriefing note includes the main findings and recommendations from the review conducted in Uganda 18-23 May 2014, visiting community based groups and representatives from district and local authorities and members of the Steering Committees and Advisory group in Karamoja (Kotido and Kabong Districts) and meetings with ADRA staff.

5. Findings

After more than 50 years of armed conflict, isolation, droughts and food insecurity, 'governance' and 'civil society' – the ground pillars for an healthy and accountable relationship between 'rights holders' and 'government authorities' has been forced very recently to be built from scratch in the Karamojong area.

Most Karamojongs enjoy a culture and a lifestyle leaning on agro-pastoralism, often in remote areas. Males spend weeks or months staying in the "bush", looking after cattle or raiding cattle of other tribes. The literacy rate among the Karamojongs is 12 percent and school enrolment around 20% of all children in the area. After 50 years of droughts and armed conflict, and a disarmament process that involved heavy fights with government soldiers, the Karamojong people in general have no sense of what it means to be a 'citizen' in a state and that they have 'rights' to claim. The understanding that whatever governance may be represented in their area can be 'held accountable' for providing services, or that there are certain laws that they themselves should abide to remains equally low.

An equally weak sense of 'government responsibilities' is found in local governance. Local leaders, traditional leaders as well as government officials are often poorly organized. Their visions of their own role as leaders, their responsibilities as 'representatives of government' vis a vis local citizens, their notion of what they want to achieve and how they should achieve it, how they can coordinate with other actors and in which way they can present and lobby issues internally in their own governance system remains weak.

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Facilitating advocacy processes and encounters between 'government officials' and 'citizens' in a context where neither citizens nor officials or leaders have a clear idea of their roles, responsibilities and entitlements is therefore a huge challenge.

A citizen-based approach to advocacy

Despite this, the Ugandan ASC program aims to build groups of community members who are capable of analyzing their own situation, identify problems for themselves and their community that they would want to address, cooperate together as a groups, network and mobilize other community members, engage and liaise with local government officials. All with the purpose of engaging people in sustainable and people-driven processes of development.

The approach is far from the mainstream policy approach to advocacy which most development practitioners come to think of when talking about 'advocacy'. A policy advocacy approach aims at policy change and targets decision makers nationally or internationally. However, the ***citizen centered advocacy approach*** adopted by the ASC program aims to build the capacity of men, women, children and youth to advocate on their own behalf, to express their own needs and concerns and to hold relevant local authorities accountable to their responsibilities as law implementers.

A citizen-centered advocacy approach departs from the immediate issues and concerns identified by communities themselves. In Karamoja these issues often relate to land entitlements, cattle raids, disarmament and arrests by the local police. Other issues relate to access to local government support and funding, health care, and local infrastructure. Concerns, which often represents tangible obstacles to improve self-reliance and development in local communities.

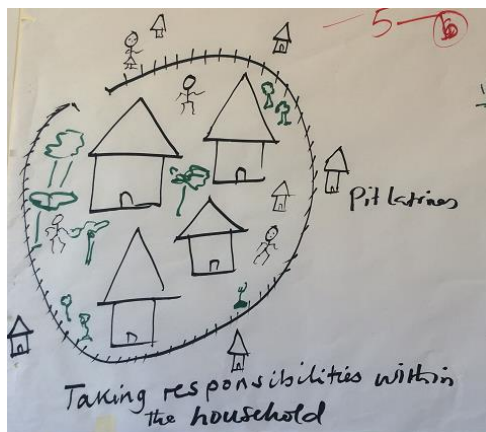
The ASC program in Uganda implements its citizen centered advocacy approach in close cooperation with officials at the sub-county level. Sub-county officials participate in the identification of community groups and the training offered by the program. As such, program activities contribute themselves to create the links and encounters between authorities and community groups that is the purpose of the training.

The ASC program is closely linked with the REFLECT approach which facilitates and builds the capacity of community members to reflect and analyze their own situation and devise and initiate relevant solutions themselves. Through that process, participants begin to take responsibility to improve their own situation and come to learn, that there is a relationship between their own actions, the way they feel and the life they live.

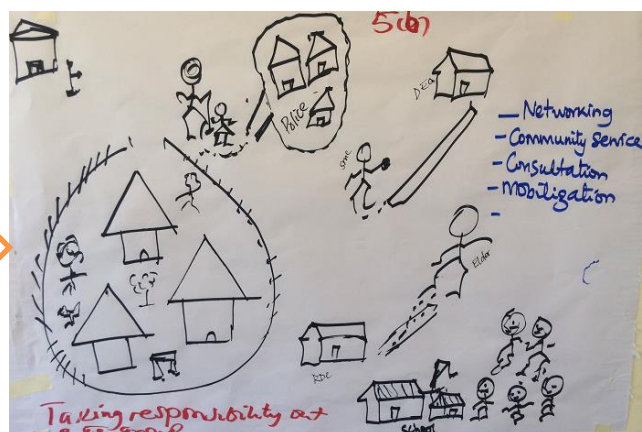
With this sense of ownership of and capacity to master their own situation, community members develop the courage to address and respond to issues beyond their immediate household, to network with other stakeholders, and to mobilize others in support of community development and address decision makers whenever needed.

Participants are also encouraged to identify and approach relevant – most often local – authorities, which are sensitized and responsible stakeholders in solving their issues during the training process. Participants also learn communication skills to do so. The training given helps remove fears, acquire skills and encourage citizens to speak out. In addition, it provides a basic understanding of rights – and therefore claims that can be justified when approaching local authorities.

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Taking responsibility for one's own life and household is first step towards engaging in community development



When 'managing their own lives' community group members get the courage, power and strength to engage in other community activities and address authorities whenever needed.

The review found that the citizen centered advocacy approach adopted by the ASC program was very relevant in a context, where community members have very little understanding of their own rights, entitlements and responsibilities as citizens, let alone skills and understanding of their own situation and the opportunities they have to live a better life. The approach was also found to be effective in terms of assisting community groups access local government officials – particularly at the sub county and district level and in terms of building their capacity to do so on their own. As such, the approach was found to contribute to social change.



'In the beginning we feared to approach the local police and the army. But we have learnt that when you talk to them rightly (e.g. in a non-confrontational way red.) then these people are for us and we can work together'. Community group explaining how they filed a complaint to the local police about the release of a suspect without further explanations)

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In addition, the hands-on citizen based approach matches well with ADRA's value- and rights based approach in which concern for citizen's rights to education, livelihood and health is key. The review team finds that the fact that ADRA manages to turn the rights based approach – which may appear abstract to most communities – into specific points of action in local communities' day-to-day encounters with local authorities is a methodological strength.

The review further finds, that the approach makes a very valuable contribution to 'state building' and conflict resolution in an area where governance has been next to absent in the lives of citizens for decades, and where communities' understanding of their own 'rights, entitlements and responsibilities as citizens in the state of Uganda' remains limited.

The approach was appreciated by officials spoken to during the review as they felt that it helped them access communities otherwise difficult to reach and that communities had 'opened up' and become much more active during community meetings arranged by sub-county and district officials.

Leadership training – where the citizen centered advocacy approach has its limitations

The citizen centered advocacy approach has its limitations too, however. Particularly in a context characterized by rampant corruption and stakeholder interests into issues such as cattle raiding across borders, land rights and gazetting of lands.

To address such issues, ADRA has worked systematically with local traditional leaders, district leaders and Community Development Officers to build their capacity to present and 'push' issues at the national and governmental level. Traditional leaders have learned how to identify issues and present their case, the importance of networking, group dynamics and how to organize themselves as a group. As such they seem to

be playing a more active role in terms of defending the rights and interests of their tribes and in terms of managing and mobilizing tribe members to follow joint decisions.

The trainings seem to have contributed positively to recent efforts to help reduce cattle raids and intertribal conflicts and to protect the rights and interests of the Karimojong to access land which was otherwise to be expropriated by the government or powerful individuals with links to the government.

Training decision makers and engaging them in community trainings also seems to increase their receptiveness and openness to local communities who approach them over various issues – thereby facilitating and smoothing the encounter between citizens and local authorities.

On this basis, the review concludes that key assumptions about the ASC approach, which was identified in the inception report, are unproblematic:

- Community groups *are* interested in engaging in advocacy activities as advocacy is introduced to them as a natural part of the skills they need in order to improve their livelihood and opportunities in health, education, livelihood and other aspects of life.
- ADRA staff *does* have the capacity to facilitate that community groups engage in advocacy initiatives that are of concern to them. As illiteracy rates are high in the groups, and many participants never have gone to school, much time and effort is spent on group trainings and on coaching groups in how to apply the knowledge and skills that they have been taught.
- Public institutions at the district and sector level *do want to* and *do* demonstrate accountability to needs and claims expressed by communities – at least to the extent where doing so does not collide with their own personal and economic interests. Corruption remains a huge challenge in terms of promoting a culture of accountability in Uganda, including at the level of local governance. However, as expressed by one of the groups talked to during the review: *'Corruption and bribery is there and cannot be easily reduced, but it is only if we report the incidents that we can reduce it'*.
- The review also finds that although ADRA national staff does appear to have the capacity to facilitate consensus building among networks of CBGs, scope remains to further systematize and enlarge networking and cooperation. Both between mature CBGs (who demand exposure to the work of other groups), and with organizations, who hold an advocacy profile that may complement ADRA's own, citizen centered advocacy approach. (See recommendations below).
- Radio programs does not seem to have played a huge role in the ASC program in Uganda in the recent year. The review is therefore not able to judge the extent to which mass media contributes to set the agenda, particularly at sector and district areas, where radio remains the main means of mass communication. One community group that the review team met with expressed their appreciation of radio programs as a way to speak out and feel *'as good as those that teach us in the radio'*. It has been difficult for the ASC program to access mass media on the local level partly due to the high costs of the private owned radio stations in the area (there are no public radio stations). Although it has been difficult for the ASC program to access mass media, particularly at the national level, it may be worthwhile to explore how that access can be improved and to further invest in relation building with relevant media representatives.

- Finally, the review was not able to establish to what extent community groups include voices and interests of marginalized groups when advocacy issues and needs are identified. In one group visited, elderly community members were not part of the group and placed themselves outside the circle of meeting participants – although sufficiently close to be able to listen to the conversation. One such elderly women expressed appreciation of the support and care that group members provided to her and said, that she felt that their growing income benefitted her too. Exclusion was clearly present in another CBG met with. During the meeting, a community member who was not part of the group but clearly wanted to, was denied the right to speak and ridiculed by the members.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Be true to the program's uniqueness and ADRAs core competencies – and revise the LFA accordingly

Introducing 'advocacy' in a context where citizens are hardly prepared to defend or even accept that they themselves or others have rights, and where local governance is still to take root, is a huge challenge. The fact that the ASC program is able to create a notion of citizenship and rights, and to establish a framework for fruitful encounters between communities and local authorities under such circumstances is admirable.

Yet, when reading the program's LFA, one may get the impression that the program description aims to fulfil perceived back-donor expectations that ADRA engages in *policy advocacy*. As a result, the LFA and the program description is not capable of fully communicating the uniqueness of the programs' citizen-based advocacy approach and ADRAs role as facilitating advocacy done by local people targeting their local authorities.



Community Group trained by the ASC program in Kabong: Because of our good track record we have a good and mutual relationship with the town

It is therefore recommended that the program description and the LFA is revised to better reflect.

- a) The unique results that the program creates in terms of community groups (especially women who are one of the most marginalized groups in the Karimajong society) that are confident and capable of engaging with local authorities, and leaders that are capable of defending rights and concerns of their constituencies.

- b) The role that ADRA partly does and can play in terms of *facilitating* that issues that should be addressed in and beyond sub-county and district levels are addressed by other relevant stakeholders, including NGOs with a key expertise in policy advocacy.

Annex I includes a draft ToC that reflects the Uganda ASC program's main approach. This may serve as a source of inspiration when revising the LFA.

Recommendation 2: Agree on a common definition of 'advocacy' in cooperation with ADRA Denmark.

Under circumstances where citizens can be hard to convince about the soundness and legitimacy of 'well established rights' such as children's right to education, it is hardly surprising, that the ASC program adopts a very broad definition of advocacy which includes sensitization and awareness raising among large population groups about their rights – and the rights of their children.

However, to avoid misunderstandings in communication with donors who are likely to have a more narrow definition of the concept, it is recommended that ADRA Denmark and ADRA Uganda agree on a common definition of the term "Advocacy". This could for instance entail that advocacy is defined as '*a strategic set of activities aimed to persuade **authorities** that the needs and concerns of communities are in line with their interest and concerns*'.

48 ***Recommendation 3: Continue training of local leaders to represent and be receptive to the interests of local communities***

After more than 50 years of armed conflict, isolation, drought and food insecurity, 'governance' is needs to be built from scratch in the Karimojong area. As traditional culture and lifestyles are in transition, the role of elders and traditional leaders is unclear – and weakened – too.

It is therefore recommended that the ASC program continues to train as well traditional as official leaders as long as this training can contribute to

- Strengthening the capacity of leaders to represent the interests of the Karimojong in policy processes and budgeting processes within and outside Karamoja.
- Strengthening the understanding of leaders of on their own roles and responsibilities vis a vis the roles and responsibilities of the citizens and thereby strengthen their receptiveness to encounters with citizens of Karamoja.

Recommendation 4: Strengthen and systematize ADRA's role as 'facilitator of advocacy opportunities' for local communities beyond the Karamoja area

ADRA Uganda considers its main role to be that of building the capacity of communities to speak for themselves. While this role is pursued consistently within the district of Karamoja – and with positive results, scope remains to facilitate that voices of the Karimojong people is heard at the national or international level.

In respect of ADRA Uganda's preferred role as advocacy facilitator, it is recommended that the ASC program works more systematically to

- Identify and link groups of Karimojong to advocacy organizations and alliances with a record of national and international policy advocacy. Copasco, Acode - with whom ADRA Uganda has a MoU already – and the ACT alliance may serve as relevant examples in this respect.
- Facilitate encounters between members of the parliament/government representatives and community based groups on relevant budget and policy issues which is being discussed in parliament/is processed in line ministries.
- Network with representatives from national media and offer stories and insights into issues that are relevant to the media agenda – but from a Karamoja perspective.



Former cattle raider talking about challenges that even the best CBG cannot solve: 'The rain has become so unpredictable, so it is difficult for us to know when to plant'.

Recommendation 5: Specify 1-2 advocacy objectives and policy processes relevant to Karamoja

While ADRA Uganda's advocacy policy provides a thorough description of ADRA's vision, overall approach and thematic focus areas for its advocacy work, a detailed strategy describing specific objectives for interventions into specific policy processes to be targeted is necessary to ensure efficiency in ADRA Uganda's advocacy work. As a result it is therefore recommended, that as a start

- a) The ASC program identifies 1-2 issues, advocacy objectives and policy processes as a focus for its advocacy work.
- b) Identifies relevant allies to cooperate with on the issue identified
- c) Explains how the cooperation between allies is likely to contribute to the advocacy objective identified
- d) Explains ADRA's role within the alliance/cooperation.

Advocacy issues for the Karamoja area could for instance be:

Livelihood and climate change: Climate change adds an extra layer of vulnerability to Karamoja as weather unpredictability affects crop production and pasture for livestock. ADRA Uganda could consider to join the ACT alliance in its efforts to increase the global community's financial support to climate adaptation (e.g.

introduction of drip irrigation) and mitigation in developing countries as part of the annual COP meetings and to provide access to voices from Karamoja to this forum.

Education: Around 20 percent of eligible children are enrolled in schools in Karamoja and only 25% complete the 7 years of primary education. Yet, education – and the knowledge that follows with it – is key to empowerment, improved livelihood and active citizenship – not only in Karamoja. ADRA Uganda could consider to provide access to the Karamoja Parliamentary Group for voices from Karamoja, to lobby for increased funding for awareness raising about the importance of school enrolment among parents and increased investments in schools, teachers housing and teachers training (especially Karimajong teachers who can teach in the children's own language as stipulated by the Thematic Curriculum in Ugandan Education).

Land Entitlements: Land is likely to be the next cause of conflict in Karamoja. To prevent conflicts and ensure the Karimojongs' continued access to communal land and farmland, ADRA Uganda could engage more actively in working together with ACODE and other development and advocacy organizations in a joint effort to ensure land entitlements for the Karimajong.

Recommendation 6: Develop a system for monitoring and documentation of results

More and more donors require documentation of results as a precondition for continued support. At the same time, current reporting formats and practices do not seem to fully appreciate the important results created by the ASC program in Uganda. Consequently, opportunities to communicate and share results with external and internal stakeholders remain untapped.

It is therefore recommended, that ADRA Uganda revise its monitoring system to strengthen reporting on results.

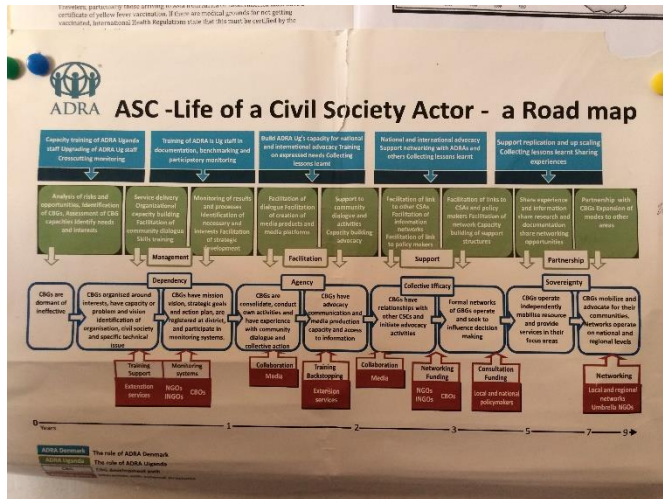
The review finds that empowered community based groups whose members are confident that they can act on their own and approach local authorities whenever needed, and who have a vision and a plan they can follow to improve their lives, is the most important result produced by the ASC program.

First: This result is the outcome of continuous training and coaching of group members. A training in which participants are brought from a feeling of isolation, being helpless and experiencing a sense of worthlessness to a situation where they trust their own capacities, work together, are capable of borrowing and managing the little money and other resources they have, start up their own constituencies, vote in their own leadership, formulate a vision, make a plan and follow it.

Second: This result (empowered community groups) is a precondition for the numerous examples produced by the ASC program of community groups that take the courage to address authorities over concerns or interests that they have.

The review recommends that the ASC program develops a monitoring and results documentation system with empowered community groups at its core. The system could trace the inner journey of groups themselves and of individual group participants from feeling disempowered and without a purpose - to feeling empowered and

able to proactively address issues of concern to their lives and the group with which they work⁴. The ToC developed for the ASC 1, which describes the stages that groups go through to become independent of ADRA's support, may also be a source of inspiration. See also annex I for more inspiration.



Such monitoring system will both satisfy the need to document progress and results, the need to learn and share learning with others (ASC programmes and partners) and the need for clear criteria that will help the ASC program determine, when groups are sufficiently mature to graduate from the ASC program.

51 It is recommended that ADRA Denmark participates in the process of developing this monitoring system so that the system satisfies ADRA Denmark's reporting requirements as well as those of the donors.

Malene Soenderskov, 29th May 2014

⁴ A separate note on a possible methodology will follow

Annex 5

Holding Authorities Account. - Debriefing Note, Malawi



1. Introduction

ADRA Denmark and its African partners have worked to introduce the Action for Social Change (ASC) Program approach to development in poor and vulnerable communities since 2009. The overall aim is to support the development of *civil societies that can contribute as dynamic actors in social, political and economic development processes locally and nationally*. Ultimately, with the purpose of reducing poverty and promoting sustainable livelihoods and rights among poor and marginalized population groups.

The ASC program represents a rather fundamental shift from service delivery towards capacity building and advocacy. The aim is to empower communities to analyze their situation, to identify their needs and interests and to advocate for a fulfilment of these needs. This is done through a bottom-up approach of facilitation, training and dialogue sessions where vulnerable groups become aware of their own situation in society, gain sense of citizenship and rights, and are able to identify issues and problems that need to be changed in order to improve their lives and initiate social change.

The aim, as spelled out in ADRA Denmark's 'Advocacy for Good Governance Framework' is to:

- Influence a change in policies and practices of individuals and institutions that exercise power and influence over poor and excluded people to their disadvantage and exclusion
- Empower rights-holders to access their rights to a life of dignity; and
- Mobilize solidarity amongst citizens and civil society to act to counter poverty

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Initiated in 2009 in Uganda and gradually expanded to other ADRA partner countries in Africa, advocacy remains a relatively new working approach to many of ADRA Denmark's local partners. Many are still exploring the most effective way for them to promote social change using different means of advocacy, identifying how advocacy best fit their organizational identity or figuring out how they can best make use of a variety of advocacy tools without bringing their own organization at risk.

To support this process ADRA Denmark decided to review the approach, added value and preliminary impact of advocacy activities conducted in 3 Action for Social Change Programs, including Uganda, Rwanda and Malawi. The review focused on three key elements:

- If and how the program as operated until now has contributed to social change (impact),
- The relevance and the effectiveness of the advocacy approaches and methods applied.
- The sustainability and organizational capacity of local ADRA offices to conduct advocacy program activities.

This debriefing note describes the main findings and recommendations from the review conducted in Malawi 10 – 17 June 2014, visiting community based groups, media representatives, NGOs and representatives from sector authorities in Lilongwe, Blantyre, Mulanje and Machinga.

2. Findings

The ASC program primarily adopts a ***citizen centered advocacy approach***. This approach focuses on building capacity of men, women, children and youth to advocate on their own behalf and express their own needs and concerns in front of relevant authorities.

A citizen-centered approach addresses the immediate day-to-day pains , interests and concerns expressed by citizens, such as getting a registration for a business so that one can access loans, the need to repair physical infrastructure, the need build new schools or protect communities and crops against wild animals. Concerns that are a direct consequence of lack of accountability and absence of developmental rights and which represent tangible obstacles to improve self-reliance and development in their communities.

Its aims to encourage citizens to approach relevant and responsible – most often local – authorities over such issues and to teach them the skills and build their capacities to do so. The training helps remove fears, acquire skills and encourage citizens to speak out.



'Before we got the training (by ADRA), we didn't have any direction. People lived in fear. The training changed this. We have now learnt about human rights issues and where to take problems and to be courageous when facing or pursuing advocacy issues'. Reflect group in Machinga explaining the value of ADRA's training

A citizen-centered approach focuses

primarily on policy *implementation* and

accountability issues as the local level. It

targets citizens and civil servants (policy

implementers) more than policy makers

at the national level.

The review team found that the citizen centered advocacy approach adopted by the ASC program was very effective in terms of assisting community groups access local government support (when budgets were available) and in terms of building their capacity to do so on their own. As such, the approach was found to contribute to social change.

In addition, the hands-on citizen based approach matches well with ADRA's value- and rights based approach in which concern for citizen's rights to education, livelihood and health is key. The review team finds that the fact that ADRA manages to turn the rights based approach – which may appear abstract to ordinary people struggling to make ends meet – into specific points of action for advocacy is indeed a methodological strength

2.1 The role of public media

Radio and TV are the most important media in Malawi and the radio and TV programs produced by ADRA serves two purposes:

At the national level, ADRA's programs serve to create popular awareness among large population groups on key developmental issues. ADRA's programs are broadcasted through the national Radio and TV channel NBC

and has earned ADRA a reputation of being relevant, entertaining and informative on issues that people can relate to and identify with. With up to 6 million weekly viewers ADRA's TV program Tikuferanji (Why we are dying) seems to be particularly popular and contributing to change public attitudes towards sensitive and difficult issues in the population at large.

At the local level, radio programs produced by radio listeners clubs (who are trained and supported by ADRA), serves to bring attention to needs and concerns raised by local communities. In the programs that are aired either on local or national radio, citizens are interviewed about the problem and the consequences it causes them, and responsible authorities get a chance to reply about what could be done to solve the problem. These programs were found effective in terms of creating awareness in communities and bring local developmental issues to the attention of local authorities.

According to the informants interviewed, radio programs done by radio listeners' clubs on issues of importance to them have the following effects:

- It re-enforces the seriousness of an issue and therefore impact discussions and priority setting in the District Development Committee.
- It creates a 'sense of urgency' since the issue is now widely known by authorities and citizens alike
- It makes citizens interviewed feel that they are heard and that their 'voices counts'. This reinforces the empowerment process that the ASC training facilitates.
- It sets a 'political agenda' locally (sector and district level) and contributes to facilitate a local priority setting that is in line with the needs and priorities expressed by local community groups and the national strategies and programs (e.g. to prioritize a new bridge in next year's budget).

On this basis, the review concludes that key assumptions about the ASC approach, which was identified for the review exercise, are valid:

- Community groups *are* interested in engaging in advocacy activities as advocacy is introduced to them as a natural part of the skills they need to improve their livelihood and opportunities in health, education and livelihood
- Radio programs *do* contribute to set the agenda, particularly in sector and district areas, where radio remains the main means of mass communication.
- ADRA staff *does* have the capacity to facilitate that community groups engage in advocacy initiatives that are of concern to them (see recommendation 5 for further details).
- Public institutions at the district and sector level are accountability to needs and claims expressed by communities – to the extent that funds are allocated for the thematic areas in the District development budget. This will depend on priorities set by ministries, however.
- Community groups include voices and interests of vulnerable groups when advocacy issues and needs are identified. Groups met included representatives from PLWAs, food insecure households as well as female headed households. Households trapped between poverty and disease seemed not to have the energy to participate in the groups' work, however.

The review was not able to establish if ADRA national staff have the capacity to facilitate consensus building among networks of CBGs and to advocate for policy issues identified by local communities at the national level. The reason for this is that so far the ASC advocacy program seems to focus on holding authorities accountable locally and create awareness raising among the population nationally. NGO informants interviewed stressed the need for increased cooperation and coordination between

3. Main recommendations and potential areas for growth

The review team found that the citizen centered approach adopted by the ASC program in ADRA Malawi was effective and relevant in terms of contributing to social change in the communities that ADRA works with.

The team therefore strongly recommends that the ASC program continues this approach.

Yet, the team also found that for the ASC program to remain effective and capable of producing results, ADRA should formulate a strategy to 'phase out' mature groups who do no longer need intensive support and training but who may need occasional support now and then.

It was also found that the program has potential to capitalize on the numerous community groups trained by building a 'network' or 'association' of mature groups that can serve as a source for inspiration for other, less developed groups, and which can contribute to identify advocacy issues that ADRA should address and discuss with policy makers at the national level.

The review team therefore suggests the ASC program to consider the following recommendations:

7. Formulate and implement criteria for 'phasing out' mature CBGs

Community based groups visited expressed that, with ADRA's support, they now feel much more comfortable addressing local authorities. Now they know who, when and how to contact authorities on issue of importance to their life and economic affairs, for instance on issues of building a bridge, complaints about a health clinic or the building of a school.

As CBGs interviewed demonstrated confidence and capacity to implement plans and defend their needs and concerns in front of local communities, it is recommended that ADRA Malawi develops clear criteria for phasing out and ceasing regular support to 'mature' groups, so that new groups could be enrolled in the ASC program.

8. Formulate a 'membership strategy' to support ADRA's continued legitimacy in national advocacy

It is further recommended that ADRA develops a membership strategy whereby mature CBGs are offered membership of the ASC program in return of being prepared to share their experiences with less developed CBGs.

This would satisfy the wish of CBGs to remain in contact with ADRA and to access advice on an ad hoc basis. In addition, it would satisfy the ASC program's potential to capitalize on the 'good example' and source of inspiration that mature CBGs may be for other groups. Finally, it will re-enforce ADRA's legitimacy in advocacy and be a clear demonstration that ADRA talks on behalf of a wider constituency.

A membership strategy should include issues such as

- Criteria for members of the association
- Entitlements and obligations of members
- Benefits of being a member
- How decisions are reached at
- To what extent members' participate in deciding which advocacy issues ADRA may want to raise nationally

9. Clarify ADRA Malawi's future work and role in advocacy

The ASC program's strong focus on people centered advocacy for local government accountability and policy *implementation* is hardly reflected in the program description and LFA. These documents rather leaves the impression that the ASC program may engage in national *policy* advocacy/policy formulation – an impression that is reinforced by ADRA Malawi's advocacy policy 2011 – 2014.

It is therefore recommended that the program LFA is revised to reflect what the ASC program really does and that ADRA Malawi's new advocacy strategy is developed accordingly.

57 ADRA (Malawi and Denmark) may consider a focus on the effect and sustainability of service delivery, targeting national and international donors, if ADRA wishes to engage in policy advocacy. The adverse effects of service delivery by government and donors and the way it was politicized by parliamentarians was mentioned by several informants in Malawi as well as in Uganda and Rwanda. Informants not only expressed concern that 'handout projects' implemented by other NGOs in an ASC Area would tempt communities to choose the 'easy solution of handouts'. They also expressed concern that handouts and service delivery in general is an obstacle to sustainable development, and that it re-enforces dependency and passivizes communities.

The review therefore recommends that ADRA Malawi and Denmark consider the relevance of this issue as a joint advocacy theme.

10. Agree on a common definition of 'advocacy' in cooperation with ADRA Denmark.

When citizens are hard to convince about the soundness and legitimacy of 'well established rights' such as children's right to education, or the importance of family planning, it is hardly surprising, that the ASC program adopts a very broad definition of advocacy. A definition, which in the case of ADRA Malawi includes sensitization and public awareness raising.

However, to avoid misunderstandings in communication with donors who are likely to have a more narrow definition of the concept, it is recommended that ADRA Denmark and ADRA Malawi agree on a common definition of the term "Advocacy" that is less broad and less likely to confuse donors. This could for instance

entail that advocacy is defined as ‘a strategic set of activities aimed to persuade **authorities** that the needs and concerns of communities are in line with their interest and concerns’.

11. Develop a system for monitoring and documentation of results

More and more donors require documentation of results as a precondition for continued support. At the same time, current reporting formats and practices do not seem to fully appreciate the important results created by the ASC program. Consequently, opportunities to communicate and share results with external and internal stakeholders remain untapped. It is therefore recommended, that ADRA Malawi revise its monitoring system to strengthen reporting on results.

The review team finds that community based groups whose members are confident that they can act on their own and approach local authorities whenever needed, and who has a vision and a plan they can follow to improve their lives, is the most important result produced by the ASC program.

First: This result is the outcome of continuous training and coaching of group members. A training in which participants are brought from a situation of feeling isolated, stuck and worthless to a situation where they trust their own capacities, work together, are capable of borrowing and managing the little money and other resources they have, formulate a vision, make a plan and follow it.

Second: This result (empowered community groups) is a precondition for the numerous examples produced by the ASC program of community groups that take the courage to address authorities to achieve their objectives and solve an issue.

The review therefore recommends that the ASC program develops a monitoring and results documentation system with empowered community groups at its core. The system should trace the inner journey of group participants from feeling disempowered and without hope to feeling empowered and able to proactively address issues of concern to their lives and the group with which they work⁵.

Such monitoring system will both satisfy the need to document progress and results, the need to learn and share learning with others (ASC programmes and partners) and the need for clear criteria that will help the ASC program determine, when groups are sufficiently mature to become ‘members’ of the ASC program.

It is recommended that ADRA Denmark and ADRA Malawi field staff participates in the process of developing this monitoring system so that the system satisfies ADRA Denmark’s reporting requirements and makes sense to field staff who are to apply the system.

12. Strengthen or maintain cooperation with local authorities on the planning and implementation of the program

The review was not able to determine exactly how much ADRA Malawi engaged local authorities in implementing the program. However, planned meetings with community groups and an improvised meeting

⁵ A separate note on a possible methodology will follow

with the District Education Advisor in Machinga district indicated that scope remained for a stronger cooperation with local authority representatives.



District education advisor sympathizing with a community's claim for school closer to the community in Machinga district. She doesn't have the budget nor the power to allocate resources to meet the claim, however.

Cooperation in general is a key contributor to trust building. In advocacy, trust generally increases the receptiveness of local officials to the needs and concerns raised by local communities. Thus, by informing and engaging local officials in ADRA's work, field staff automatically paves the way for local community groups when they are ready to approach local officials.

Second, local officials rarely have authority to make decisions on their own. However, they play a key role as gate keepers and messengers to decision makers with more power. To motivate them to do so, communities (and ADRA) do need to ensure that local officials become allies and that they are prepared to advise and 'open doors' to other, more powerful, officials. Cooperation and trust building is key in this respect.

To the extent that this cooperation does not take place already, it is therefore recommended that ASC field staff prioritize to inform and engage local officials in their work.

13. Consider building capacity of local traditional leaders as community representatives

The role of traditional leaders and counsellors is under transition everywhere in Africa. Yet, they still enjoy widespread legitimacy among local community members in Malawi and play a key role in local decision making and consensus building. The issues of the role of local leaders was not addressed intensively by the review. Yet, meetings with traditional leaders and other key informants suggested, that accountability of authorities towards communities may improve, if traditional leaders understand their role in a changing society better and have the capacity to represent and defend the rights and interests of local communities in encounters with local authorities.

It is therefore recommended that the ASC program consider building capacity of local traditional leaders to reflect on their own role in a changing society and to represent the interests of communities in policy processes and budgeting processes within and outside local communities.

Malene Sønderskov, 16th June 2014

