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Consultancy**

End Evaluation of ADRA's Action for Social Change Programme in Malawi



October 2021

Acknowledgements

The evaluation team would like to thank the staff of ADRA Malawi who volunteered their time to be available for the harvesting interviews. We greatly appreciate their enthusiastic engagement even though they are working for different organisations now. We are also grateful for the partners of the ASC Malawi programme for their participation in the data collection as well as to the substantiators for providing their feedback on the outcomes.

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Annexes

Annex I: Outcome database (separate document)

Acronyms

ADRA	Adventist Development and Relief Agency
ASC	Action for Social Change
CBG	Community Based Group
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
FFS	Farmer Field Schools
FMS	Farmer Market School
GBV	Gender-based Violence
HRBA	Human Rights-Based Approach
IGA	Income Generating Activity
LC	Local Council
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OH	Outcome Harvesting
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
REFLECT	Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques
SMC	School Management Committee
ToC	Theory of Change
VSLA	Village Savings and Loan Association



Executive Summary

1. Executive Summary

In cooperation with ADRA Denmark, ADRA Malawi implemented the Action for Social Change (ASC) programme, which ended in 2020 after almost 10 years. The overall objective of the programme was to “empower people living in poverty to participate and contribute to realise their right to sustainable development”. The ASC programme used a bottom-up approach, seeking to support the creation of a vibrant civil society in Malawi, contributing to social, political and economic development processes locally and nationally, reducing poverty through the promotion of sustainable livelihoods, and strengthening participation and rights among poor and marginalised groups. The programme empowered people living in poverty to analyse their situation, identify problems, needs and interests and to advocate for change to improve their lives. Traditional, patriarchal systems in Malawi often limit the space for women to engage in democratic and decision-making processes, hindering their ability to earn an income and gain economic independence. ADRA worked with community groups to question these norms and challenge the role they played in limiting the capacity and opportunities of women and girls.

Users and evaluation questions

The **primary users** of the evaluation are the ADRA Denmark programme team who will use the findings to produce evidence for the Danida SPA application in terms of documentation of good practice/track record/success stories. In addition, it will be used for learning purposes to make sure that ADRA Denmark is putting its efforts in the right place, including applying ASC experiences in other countries and with other partners for future programming.

Based on this use, there were **five evaluation questions** which addressed 1) the overall trends and patterns in the outcomes; 2) Outcomes related to civil society advocacy and the role the media played in that; 3) Outcomes related to gender norms and practices; 4) Outcomes related to livelihood and 5) Sustainability of the ASC outcomes.

Outcome Harvesting approach and scope

The evaluation was conducted between August 2021 until the end of October 2021. Outcomes were collected in the three regions in Malawi where the programme was implemented: Machinga, Mzuzu, Lilongwe. Although the programme was implemented over a period of 10 years, it was decided to look back at outcomes since 2016 when the ToC was updated.

Outcome Harvesting was used as the evaluation method, focusing on collecting (harvesting) the changes in behaviour of the duty bearers as a result of the advocacy efforts from the communities. The outcomes from the ASC programme were harvested through interviews and focus groups with ADRA Malawi staff and partners and a sample of these outcomes was substantiated with external third partners.

Findings and conclusions

Evaluation question 1: What outcomes have been achieved since 2016 and with what partners?

A total of 94 outcomes were harvested most of which occurred in 2018 and 2019. The trends and patterns in the outcomes show that the ASC programme design was fit for purpose. The programme was designed to strengthen the dialogue and interaction between rights-holders and duty bearers at the local level in particular. The outcome data confirms that communities were able to use the

capacity that was built through the programme to hold their duty-bearers to account. Most harvested outcomes were indeed related to duty bearers responding to community demands. The communities chose the priorities for their advocacy based on needs that arose in their communities. The outcomes show that the issues they chose to address were mainly related to public services and mostly in the field of health and education. Hence most change was achieved in area A of the ToC of the programme (Communities articulate concerns and claim their rights). This corresponds with where most of the funds of the programme were invested in the case of Malawi. ADRA Malawi coordinated the work and was the main contributor for the 9 national outcomes. On the local level, the REFLECT Circles and CBOs were the main partners involved in achieving the outcomes.

Evaluation question 2

a) To what extent has the media played a connecting role between local and national level advocacy?

The ASC programme was designed to work primarily with CBOs and CBGs on the local level and it is therefore logical that the number of national level outcomes was limited. Nevertheless, we observed a strong link between the issues identified and addressed by local CBOs and CBGs and the 9 national level outcomes produced by the ASC programme. This linkage was facilitated by the media component of the ASC programme, more specifically the Tikuferanji and Zatonse radio and TV programmes. They broadcasted community issues and through that, managed to contribute to changes at the national level, for example in relation to corruption.

b) What have communities gained from their advocacy interventions? Have duty-bearers started to react differently as a result of the changed behaviour of community groups?

The main focus of the ASC programme in Malawi was to enable community-based groups and organisations to do advocacy and hold duty bearers to account. The outcomes demonstrate that this has been achieved, since 55,5% of the outcomes are related to either authorities, traditional leaders, private sector actors or NGOs / UN actors responding to demands put forward by CBOs and CBGs based on community needs and requests.

Advocacy was by far the main strategy used to achieve outcomes (58%). The advocacy process leading to outcomes followed this process: communities identify a need, CBGs and CBOs pick up the issue often in collaboration with traditional leaders and / or the Area Development Committee (ADC). After that a process of meetings with government officers, District Council members, the local Member of Parliament (MP), company officials etc. follows until the issue is solved. In the cases of anti-corruption activities, the advocacy process also includes inspection of building sites, looking into money-flows and other evidence gathering.

Local Authorities were the main actor influenced (32% of all outcomes) and mostly around providing additional or improved public services related to health and education. Local grassroot organisations such as CBO networks and REFLECT Circles have been the key partners when looking at advocacy results, and the investment of the ASC programme in strengthening the capacity of these community-based partners was crucial for producing the 49 outcomes on improved public services, anti-corruption and changes in legislation and policies. Moreover, the analysis showed that advocacy was a crucial part of producing results regarding livelihoods along with the training and mobilisation in the more technical aspects of improving skills and income.

Evaluation question 3: To what extent do the outcomes relate to gender equality / social norms as well as changes in community practices in this regard and how did the programme strategies contribute to those outcomes?

A good portion of outcomes (21%) reflects a positive change in social norms and community practices leading towards greater equality between genders. These changes include an increase in girls' education, termination child marriages and GBV and women's empowerment / women taking leadership as well as VSLA related outcomes which indicate economic empowerment of women.

The various strategies used in the ASC programme positively contributed to these gender equality outcomes with the REFLECT methodology being the main strategy used (relevant for 41% of total outcomes). An important part of the REFLECT methodology is literacy classes, which has been referred to as a contributing factor in 10 outcomes. Thus, such participatory learning approaches, which take their point of departure in discussing the issues affecting the participants and their communities, seems to be an important factor behind the changes in gender norms. CBOs and CBGs also carried out awareness campaigns which contributed to the broader norm changes in the communities. VSLAs were instrumental in improving the financial literacy and socio-economic status of women. Media also proved powerful in raising issues of concern negatively affecting women and girls on a local level to a national level platform where laws and practices could be changed.

Evaluation question 4: How have the programme strategies of Farmer Market Schools and VSLAs influenced the livelihood of the target group?

The outcomes harvested indicate that VSLAs and FMS have been powerful structures for improving the socio-economic status of community members. A total of 12 outcomes out of 94 are in the livelihoods area which is around 12%. Compared to the Advocacy, Awareness Campaigns and Empowerment strategies, which are the strategies behind 88% of outcomes, this may seem low. However, the funding for the livelihood component was also much less. Some of the livelihood related outcomes are not categorised under the livelihoods related strategies but rather as an outcome of advocacy interventions. The overlap of programme elements and linkages between livelihoods and advocacy strategies shows that over time, the ASC programme has developed into a holistic programme that covered various aspects of vulnerable people's lives. It is also an important learning point to bring in the role of advocacy interventions when designing programmes aiming at improving vulnerable people's livelihoods.

Evaluation question 5: Have the approaches used within the ASC programme contributed to ongoing action by community groups even after the end of the programme?

Although the question was originally designed to only look at the outcomes that took place after the end of the project, the evaluators and users decided to also analyse if indications for sustainability could be found in the other outcome statements. Since this was not part of the original design, not every single outcome was verified in terms of its lasting effects during data collection and many more outcomes may have lasting effects. The 8 outcomes that manifested after the end of the project are a good indication that the capacities developed by CBOs and CBGs are still being used without the support of ADRA Malawi and that the programme not only gave them the knowledge, but also the confidence to hold their duty bearers to account. Another 23 outcomes reflect a social change that is still ongoing after the ending of the project or that led to a significant and permanent social change across the different types of changes indicating that sustainable outcomes were achieved across the programme.

Recommended points for consideration:

Collaborate with other organisations

ADRA could build stronger connections with other organisations in areas in which they have less expertise or less funding. This could for example be the case for the livelihood component, the media work and some of the policy issues taken up by the communities.

Define sustainability

ADRA Denmark could benefit from defining what sustainability means in the design of the programme. This would make it easier to focus on it during implementation as well as to measure sustainability during implementation.

Guide on alternative ways to achieve the results

In a few cases, the process to get to the results took a long time. Field facilitators could guide the groups more in finding alternative ways, without pushing them into a certain direction.

Advocacy interventions are important for improving livelihoods

The outcomes harvested on improved livelihoods are not only associated with the strategies of FMS and VSLAs. It turned out that also advocacy interventions were producing improved livelihoods for people living in poverty. Thus, it is important to bring in the role of advocacy when designing programmes aiming at improving vulnerable people's livelihoods.

Interview VSLA members individually

Outcomes on changes by VSLAs were formulated in groups during the data collection for this evaluation. To harvest more outcomes from related to VSLAs, it might be better to interview VSLA members individually or to give them time after the group work to also reflect individually.



Methodology and findings and conclusions

2. The Action for Social Change programme in Malawi

In cooperation with ADRA Denmark, ADRA Malawi implemented the Action for Social Change (ASC) programme, which ended in 2020 after almost 10 years. The overall objective of the programme was to “empower people living in poverty to participate and contribute to realise their right to sustainable development”. For the past 10 years, the programme in Malawi was centred around three major change areas:

1. Community structures that permit community members to communicate their needs, concerns and rights are in place
2. Community members have the knowledge and skills to claim and realise their rights and utilise their livelihoods opportunities
3. Communities have access to markets that enable them to sell their products and purchase goods of necessity for their livelihoods

The ASC programme used a bottom-up approach, seeking to support the creation of a vibrant civil society in Malawi, contributing to social, political and economic development processes locally and nationally, reducing poverty through the promotion of sustainable livelihoods, and strengthening participation and rights among poor and marginalised groups. The programme empowered people living in poverty to analyse their situation, identify problems, needs and interests and to advocate for change to improve their lives.

The ASC programme abided by a human rights-based approach (HRBA) to development, seeking to achieve a positive transformation of power relations between rights-holders and duty-bearers. This approach also targeted informal duty-bearers, such as heads of families and religious leaders to support the fulfilment of rights for marginalised groups, particularly women. Traditional, patriarchal systems in Malawi often limit the space for women to engage in democratic and decision-making processes, hindering their ability to earn an income and gain economic independence. ADRA worked with community groups to question these norms and challenge the role they played in limiting the capacity and opportunities of women and girls.

With facilitation from ADRA, Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) groups became powerful structures for women to gain greater socio-economic power. The majority of members of the VSLAs in Malawi were women, and VSLAs created a compelling space for women to save, access loans, establish small businesses and gain capacity to contribute to the improvement of their own lives. These spaces contributed to improvements in gender equality through economic empowerment processes, directly impacting the self-esteem and confidence of women to engage in public spaces for dialogue. With the addition of the REFLECT approach, women became more confident in using their voice and speaking up. The REFLECT for literacy approach centers around words and issues that are central to the members. As they discuss their health, their crops, their villages, etc., all kinds of other issues come up and they look with new eyes on their way of life.



While having a strong focus on advocacy and the use of mass media, livelihoods was an important element integrated in the programme through capacity building the CBGs on technical matters such as livelihood activities or the creation of VSLAs. However, there is a lack of structured information

that documents the real impact of the programme on social and economic changes among communities and community members.

The programme ended abruptly in June 2020 after a breakdown in the partnership between ADRA Denmark and ADRA Malawi, ending almost 30 years of development cooperation in Malawi.



3. Objectives, users and uses and evaluation questions

At the end of the long-term presence of the ASC programme in Malawi, it was decided to carry out an end-of-programme review with a focus on capturing the main outcomes of the programme and to learn from successes and failures.

It was also intended that through this process, ADRA Denmark staff will gain the necessary capacity to conduct similar assessments in the future using the Outcome Harvesting methodology. As such, the assignment included several mentoring/coaching processes to build the capacity of relevant ADRA staff.

The objectives of the evaluation as defined in the ToR were as follows:

1. Assess and document the impact that the ASC programme has had on the gender/social norms and practice in the communities where the programme was implemented.
2. Assess and document the impact that the ASC programme has had on the livelihoods of the beneficiaries.
3. Document successful experiences and results of community-led advocacy efforts.
4. Document any other unexpected outcomes produced by the ASC programme.

5. Document key successes and failures of the implementation of the ASC programme in Malawi.
6. Build ADRA Denmark's capacity to utilise the Outcome Harvesting methodology for similar assessments in the future.

During the design, the users however decided to leave out Objective 4. Since the focus was put on harvesting the changes on the level of the duty bearers and not the communities, it was hard to say which changes were expected or not, as the choice of issues for advocacy were decided upon by the communities during the implementation of ASC interventions and not necessarily planned ahead.

3.1. Users and uses

Outcome Harvesting is based on Utilisation - Focused evaluation as developed by Michael Quinn Patton (2008). Following this approach, we identified the primary and secondary users of this evaluation:

Primary users and use:

The primary users of the evaluation are the ADRA Denmark programme team in order to produce evidence for the Danida SPA application in terms of documentation of good practice/track record/success stories. In addition, it will be used for learning purposes to make sure that ADRA Denmark is putting its efforts in the right place, including applying ASC experiences in other countries / with other partners for future programming.

Secondary users and use:

As a secondary user, ADRA Malawi can use the evaluation for learning and documentation and possibly for fundraising from other donors. Another secondary user is the ADRA Denmark communication unit which can use evidence from the evaluation to communicate to the Danish public how ADRA produces results.

Audience:

In turn, Danida -the funder of the project- may read the report to inform themselves about the work of ADRA Denmark.

A **user committee** was from ADRA Denmark formed which consisted of:

- Helene Ellemann-Jensen, Programme Director
- Bjorn Johansen, Programme Coordinator for Malawi
- Ashton Mandrup, Assistant Programme Director
- Karen Ansbæk, MEAL Advisor

The evaluation team:

This evaluation was partly carried out internally, but under the guidance of an external consultant. The team consisted of:

- Goele Scheers: External consultant and OH expert. Goele was the lead-evaluator for this evaluation.
- Emma Jakobo: Local consultant, carried out the data collection in the different regions of the ASC programme.
- Ashton Mandrup and Karen Ansbæk: ADRA Denmark Staff, carried out the document review, part of the online interviews and analysis and interpretation. They were also responsible for the management of the evaluation.

3.2. Evaluation questions

Based on the use of the harvest, the evaluation questions were defined:

- 1) **OVERALL:** What outcomes have been achieved since 2016 and with what partners (CBGs, CBOs, national level partners)?
- 2) **CIVIL SOCIETY ADVOCACY:**
 - a) To what extent has the media connected local level advocacy and national level advocacy through the project?
 - b) What have the communities gained from their advocacy interventions? Have duty-bearers started to react differently as a result of the changed behaviour of community groups?
- 3) **GENDER:** To what extent do the outcomes relate to gender equality / social norms as well as changes in community practices in this regard and how did the project strategies contribute to those outcomes?
- 4) **LIVELIHOODS:** How have the programme strategies of Farmer Market School and VSLAs influenced the livelihood of the target group?
- 5) **SUSTAINABILITY:** Have the approaches used within the ASC programme contributed to ongoing action by community groups even after the end of the programme?

3.3. Scope and limitations of the evaluation

The evaluation was conducted between August 2021 until the end of October 2021. Outcomes were harvested in the three regions in Malawi where the programme was implemented: Machinga, Mzuzu, Lilongwe. Although the programme was implemented over a period of 10 years, it was decided to look back at outcomes since 2016. In late 2015, the theory of change for the programme was updated, new indicators were developed and strategies redefined. Hence it made sense to start the harvest from the first year of these changes being implemented.

As mentioned in the introduction, ADRA Denmark ended the partnership with ADRA Malawi in June 2020. This meant that, during the evaluation period, there were no established partners in Malawi who could support with the evaluation. The risk was that it would be hard to engage former staff and partners in the process without this support. To mitigate this risk, a former employee of the ADRA Malawi office was hired as a local consultant to do the data collection. Nevertheless, since all informants volunteered their time, we had to make sure to keep the time for data collection and substantiation limited.

VSLAs were included in the focus groups, were they defined outcomes together. This was decided in order to save time during the field work. However, most likely more outcomes would have been recorded on changes achieved by VSLAs if they would have been interviewed separately.

COVID-19 is of course a challenge which cannot be overlooked these days. No international travel took place for this evaluation. All data collection was done by a local consultant, following COVID-19 regulations. Although this did not greatly influence the data collection, the substantiation process could have been strengthened if it would have been carried out by the external consultant or ADRA Denmark team.

4. Methodology and evaluation process

ADRA Denmark chose Outcome Harvesting as an approach for his evaluation, because it would allow them to build a database of outcomes and to categorise and analyse outcomes to provide an overall picture of the programme results as well as dive into specific components of the programme for learning purposes.

Outcome Harvesting is a monitoring and evaluation approach that helps to identify, formulate, analyse and interpret outcomes in order to answer the evaluation questions. During the data collection phase, Outcome Harvesting does not start from pre-defined results. Instead, it collects (harvests) all the outcomes achieved by the programme and works backwards to determine how the programme contributed to the change. Outcome Harvesting is a participatory evaluation approach requiring the engagement of the users and sources.

Outcomes in Outcome Harvesting are defined as the changes in the behaviour (relationships, policies, practices and activities) of the actors that the programme managed to influence. These actors are called 'social actors'. The approach recognises that social change is rarely brought about through the work of one single actor, but rather by various actors and factors. That is why Outcome Harvesting focusses on contribution and not attribution. The contribution of the programme to the outcome can be big or small, direct or indirect.

An outcome statement in Outcome Harvesting typically consists of 3 elements:

- a) The outcome description describes the change observed in the social actor as well as when and where this change took place.
- b) The significance description explains why this change is important.
- c) The contribution description details the activities and outputs of the programme that contributed to the change.

Example of an outcome statement from the ASC programme:

Outcome description:

In 2020, the Ministry of Health through the District Health Office posted a Health Surveillance Assistant (HSA) to Luhomero Health facility TA Mtwaro, Mzimba North [41].

Significance:

The health facility in Kapondero has never had a Health Surveillance Assistant (HSA). The HSA does the day-to-day community health surveillance and ensures sanitation and identified health hazards are addressed. The absence of the HSA meant that issues of disease outbreaks for example were difficult to deal with. Poor sanitation and hygiene practices were not addressed, there was poor nutrition practices and many malnourished under-five children, and mobile clinic services were not conducted as regular as it was supposed to be.

Contribution:

Through the programme, ADRA trained the community through the different CBGs in communication and advocacy. The trained community used knowledge and skills gained in these trainings to lobby the District Health Office to send them an HSA so that their right to health is attained. Meetings were conducted among the CBGs which included the REFLECT circle, the Village District Council, the support group, Health Advisory Committee (HAC) and their traditional leaders for action planning. They organised and through the HAC, the community sent their request to the district council who in turn sent the HSA to the community.

The Outcome Harvesting approach consists of six steps which were adapted to the context of the ASC programme:

1. **Design the harvest:** An evaluation design was developed by the users during a design workshop.
2. **Review documentation and draft outcomes:** this step was done by ADRA Denmark. All relevant documents were screened for outcomes, and these were put into a template. They formed the basis of the further engagement with the sources of information.
3. **Engage human sources:** During this step, the outcomes from the document review were refined and additional outcomes were harvested from the ADRA Malawi staff and beneficiaries. The harvesting was done in country by a local consultant, Emma Jakobo. Emma had worked for ADRA Malawi as the Programme Manager of the ASC programme. Given that the project ended abruptly and staff of ADRA Malawi had moved on to other jobs, it was crucial that the local consultant was someone who knew the programme and was able to mobilise the staff and partners that had been part of the ASC programme. The ADRA Malawi staff were engaged through online interviews by the different members of the evaluation team. The harvesting of outcomes with partners took place during 2.5 weeks of key informant interviews and focus group discussions in the 3 districts that were part of the programme: Machinga, Mzuzu, Lilongwe and were carried out by the local consultant. All the outcomes were reviewed by the external consultant, Goele Scheers, to make sure they adhered to the Outcome Harvesting quality standards.
4. **Substantiation:** During the substantiation step, a sample of the outcomes was checked by independent third parties or substantiators. Substantiators are people who are independent of the course, but knowledgeable about the outcome statements. They were asked to confirm whether they agree with the outcome, significance and contribution.

Process and criteria: The substantiation was also done through key informant interviews in the different districts. Based on the uses of the evaluation and the limitations of the evaluation mentioned above, the consultant and users decided to select a sample of 10% of the outcomes out of the total set of outcomes for substantiation. The criteria for the selection of these outcomes were: a) equal spread between districts and evaluation questions b) outcomes with missing information c) most significant ones (benefitting a lot of people, having a long-term effect). For each of the selected outcomes, confirmation was sought from one substantiator.

The substantiation of an outcome led to one of the following conclusions:

- The outcome is fully substantiated and there is no need to make any change in the outcome statement.
- The outcome is mainly substantiated if the substantiator indicated they only 'partially' agreed with the outcome, significance or contribution or their comments indicate that one or more minor details need to be adapted. These minor details did not touch or change the core of the outcome or the contribution.
- The outcome is not substantiated if core elements of either the outcome itself and/or of the contribution are not confirmed and/or require adaptation. These outcomes would not be included in the analysis.

Threshold:

- If 90% of the outcomes selected for substantiation are either fully or mainly substantiated, the whole batch of outcomes would be considered substantiated

- If fewer than 90% of the outcomes are substantiated, then the whole batch of outcomes are considered as not credible enough.

Result:

Out of the 9 outcomes selected for substantiation in the different regions, 8 were fully substantiated and only one outcome was partially substantiated. This outcome concerned outcome [10] harvested in Lilongwe that described that the DHO gave an ambulance to the Kang'oma Health Centre, in TA Tsabango. The substantiators corrected that the ambulance was not residing at the health centre, but the DHO could release it on request. As the comment of the substantiator did not touch the core of the outcome, it was changed based upon this feedback from the substantiators, so that it could be included in the dataset. The evaluators hence considered the outcomes sufficiently credible evidence to be used in the data analyses to address the evaluation questions.

5. **Analysis and interpretation:** The categorisation of the outcomes was done by ADRA Denmark under the guidance of the external consultant. The interpretation of the data was done by the external consultant and ADRA Denmark.
6. **Supporting the use of findings:** A sensemaking workshop was organised by the external consultant to discuss the findings and deepen the understanding of the trends and patterns in the outcome data to facilitate the use of findings.

5. Findings and conclusions

In this chapter we describe the answers to the five evaluation questions. To be able to answer these questions, the outcome statements were categorised according to a variety of categories, for example social actors, time, type of change. We created graphs to visualise the trends in terms of outcome numbers per category. These numbers, of course, do not provide the full picture. We therefore analysed each outcome statement in terms of its content and how it relates to the other outcomes. Each section describes the answers to a specific evaluation question and ends with a conclusion on that question. When referring to specific outcomes, the number of the outcome is shown between brackets as follows: [14].

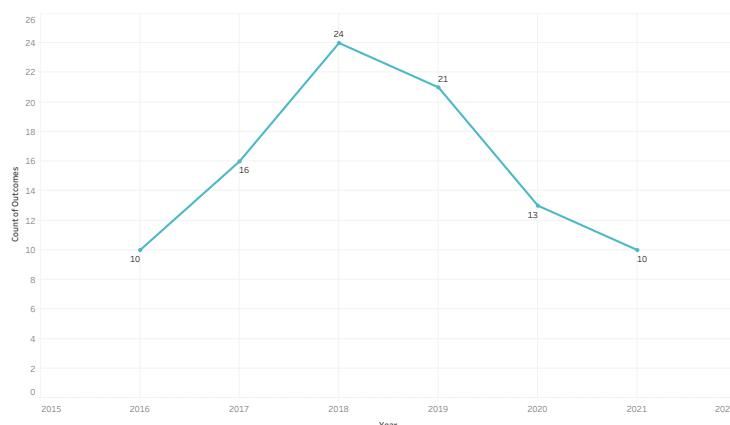
5.1. General trends and patterns

Evaluation question 1: What type of outcomes have been achieved since 2016 and with what partners?

To start, evaluation question one aims to give a broad insight into the trends and patterns of the outcome data. We analysed the outcomes in terms of the social actors that were influenced, the time when they occurred, the specific type of change that was achieved, region, theory of change and strategies used.

5.1.1. Number of outcomes over time

We harvested a total of 94 outcomes. Most of the outcomes that were harvested manifested in 2018 and 2019. One factor that may influence the lower number of outcomes for 2016 is that it is



harder for interviewees to think back about the changes that took place in earlier years, compared to the following years. The programme abruptly ended in June 2020, after challenges in the partnership between ADRA Denmark and ADRA Malawi. Funding and therefore activities in 2020 were limited (first half of 2020 was the phase-out period). Nevertheless, 10 outcomes took place in 2021 after the programme ended (see 5.5 on Sustainability).

Figure 1 Number of outcomes per year

For this evaluation we mainly focussed on the positive changes achieved by the ASC programme due to the use of the evaluation as defined in the evaluation design. We nevertheless harvested one negative outcome [65] (see 5.5 Sustainability for more information about this outcome).

5.1.2. Geographic spread of outcomes

Outcomes were harvested in the three programme districts of Malawi: Mzuzu, Machinga and Lilongwe. The highest number of outcomes were harvested in Machinga. The reason for this may be that it is closer to the head office than for example Mzuzu, which is quite remote. Machinga also had a strong implementing team with few staff changes, whereas in Lilongwe and Mzuzu staff turnover was higher. This indicates that the quality of input from local staff members is essential for the success of a programme like ASC, which focuses on advocacy and capacity development. Thus, it seems that the consistent support from a well-qualified team was crucial for the attainment of the many outcomes in Machinga.

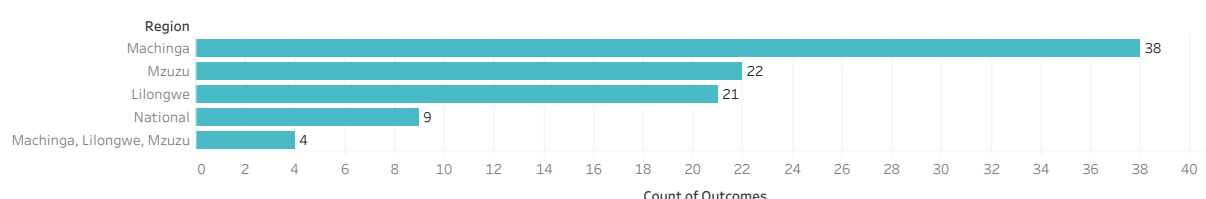


Figure 2 Number of outcomes per region and national

5.1.3. Social actors

If we look at the actors who were influenced as a result of the programme, we can see that the majority of outcomes indicate a change in the behaviour of local authorities and communities. This was anticipated since the focus of the ASC programme was designed to strengthen the dialogue and interaction between rights-holders and duty bearers at the local level in particular. The lowest number of outcomes per social actor are the NGO / UN actors [20, 40, 47, 52] and CBOs [79, 80]. This can be explained by the fact that NGOs are not the primary duty bearers in the settings under scrutiny, as the programme has been implemented in a stable context where the government is expected to deliver public services. It was therefore expected that in many cases government would deliver on citizens' rights and only in few cases NGOs or UN actors would be relevant as the social actor. There is a low number of changes related to traditional leaders, because many of these changes are also included in the outcomes of the communities of which these leaders are part. These changes took place with the consent / collaboration of the local chiefs as was often described in the contribution descriptions to these outcomes.

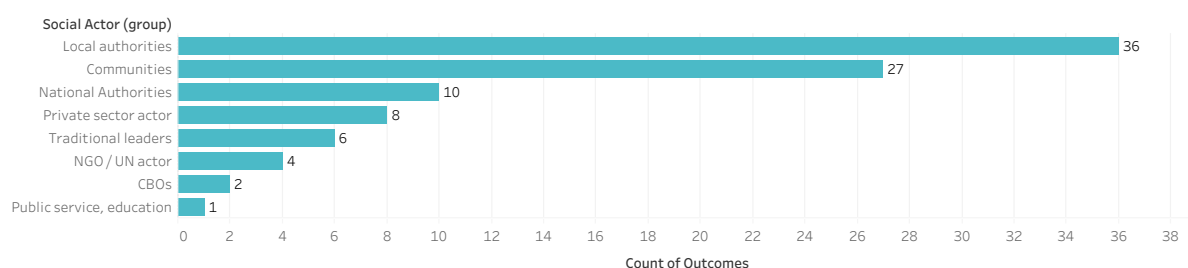


Figure 3 Number of outcomes per social actor

To understand figure 3, it is important to note that the Outcome Harvesting design has focussed on capturing the outcomes which have resulted from the actions of CBOs and CBGs, as these results

have led to significant improvements in the lives of the community members. However, if we go one step below that, it is clear that the CBOs and CBGs have started doing advocacy and awareness raising activities as a result of the ASC programme. To say it differently, the CBOs and CBGs have also changed their action / behaviour / practices as a social actor when looking at the 82 outcomes produced by local level advocacy, awareness raising and empowerment strategies. For this evaluation however, we focussed on the results more upstream and less on process results. The changes in the CBOs and CBGs are recorded in the contribution descriptions. For the two outcomes captured where CBOs are the social actor, one is about a CBG sharing the methods they have learned during the ASC project implementation to another community group [80]. The other one [79] concerns an outcome from 2021 where the advocacy process is still taking place so the response from the duty bearer has not yet been recorded. Although these two outcomes are about the process and not the final result, they have been included in the analysis since they indicate the sustainability of the project and the ripple effects that it has produced.

5.1.4. Types of changes

We analysed the outcome statements according to the type of change that took place. As pictured in figure 4 below, the types of changes achieved by the ASC programme are varied, but the biggest category concerns improved public services (33 outcomes). This category can be subdivided into sectors: health (14), education (12), agriculture (4) and water (2) and will be further discussed in 5.2 on advocacy. The second biggest category concerns improvement in livelihood and will be analysed in more depth in 5.4.

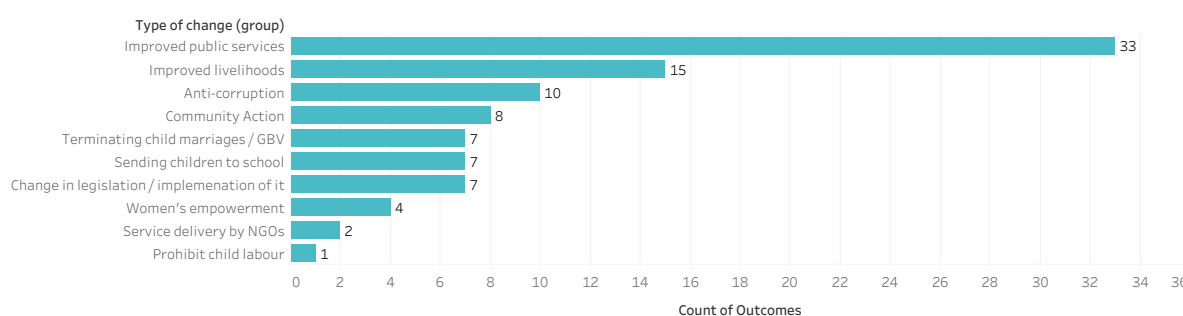


Figure 4 Number of outcomes per type of change

5.1.5. Strategies used

The various strategies used in the ASC programme to produce results include advocacy, awareness campaigns, empowerment and for the livelihoods part mainly the methods of Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) and Farmer Market schools (FMS). As mentioned, the ASC programme was designed with an emphasis on local level advocacy with the aim to hold duty bearers to account for delivering on community priorities. Thus, it is an affirmation of this strategy that out of the 94 outcomes, 58 (62%) are related to advocacy. The livelihoods component constituted strategically and financially a smaller part of the ASC programme and thus a lower number of outcomes have been harvested here.

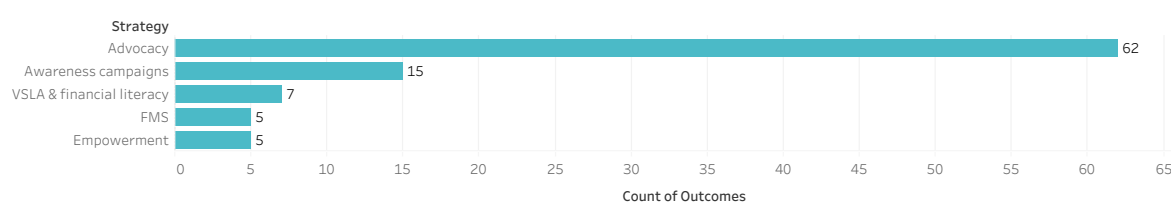


Figure 5 Number of outcomes per strategy

If we analyse these strategies according to the types of changes they contributed to as shown in figure 6, we can see that all 33 outcomes related to improved public services were achieved through advocacy. This will be analysed further in section 5.2 on advocacy.

The outcomes related to improved livelihoods were achieved through VSLAs, FMS and advocacy. This will be further explained in section 5.4.

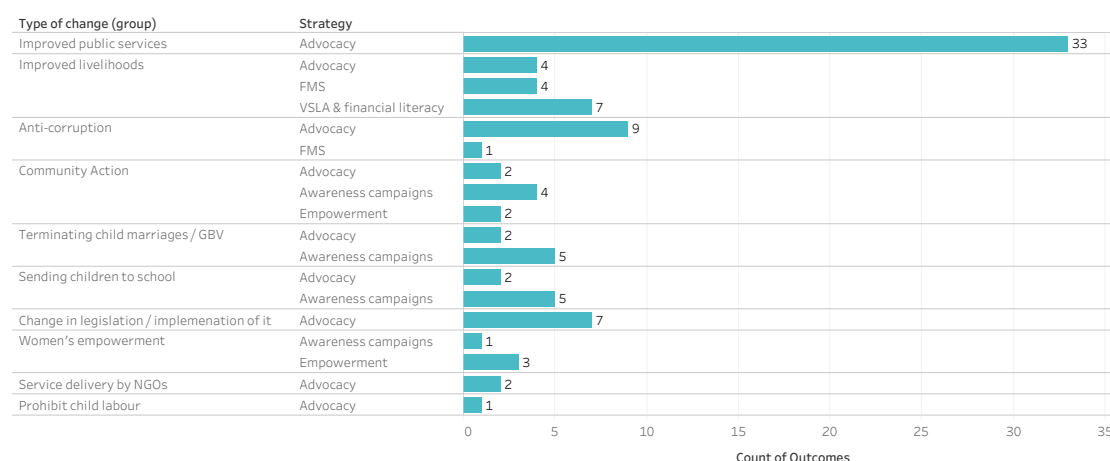


Figure 6 Number of outcomes per strategy and type of change

Looking at the **awareness campaigns** as a programme strategy, these are predominantly carried out by the CBGs and CBOs to sensitise and mobilise communities on their responsibilities as citizens and motivate the community members and traditional leaders to take action. Behind this lies a cohort of training e.g. in literacy, human rights and gender. An example of an outcome produced by awareness campaigns is the outcome where community members were mobilised by Chiyangira and Mdondwe REFLECT Circles and built a shelter for Mobile Clinic services (Under-five clinic, Antenatal clinic, Family Planning Clinic and Health Advisory Committee meetings) in Tsabango, Lilongwe [11]. Many of the outcomes brought about by awareness campaigns (enrolment of children in school, abolishing child marriage etc.) are related to change of social norms as elaborated on in 5.3 on gender.

The programme strategy categorised as **empowerment** actually consists of two different approaches. The term has been used to categorise those outcomes where the strategies were neither advocacy, awareness campaigns nor livelihoods related strategies. Three of the outcomes in this category, is about empowerment of women, more specifically results related to an increase of women in the leadership of various community-based groups [23, 67, 106]. The activities that have led to these outcomes include literacy classes and trainings in gender and human rights. These types of trainings have also contributed to outcomes within the categories of advocacy and awareness raising combined with other types of training and mentoring, as described above.

The two remaining outcomes in this category are about CBGs becoming empowered and being active players in society in their own right. One is Luhomero Youth group which was organised and trained by the ASC programme to take action and was linked to the District Youth Office to get recognised as an official youth group that the District Youth Office could work with. This led to the group being picked by the Forestry Office for a forest project that generated income for the youth [36]. The other outcome is about Mangamba REFLECT Circle who managed to cascade the methods they learned through the ASC programme to a local pressure group, Galamukani group, which was ready to use violence and threatened to beat up the chiefs and the Liwonde National Park officials on the issue of elephants escaping the park. This was peacefully solved due to the

intervention of Mangamba REFLECT Circle [80]. Here we cannot refer to particular types of training or other activities which have produced these changes, but rather a more general increase in self-confidence of the community groups and a sense of responsibility for the whole community. It has been the ambition of the ASC programme to facilitate this sense of citizens having rights (in the interaction with duty bearers) as well as responsibilities, in other words establishing or strengthening the social contact between citizens and their government. However, formulating indicators and documentation of such intangible results are difficult, which makes it even more important to capture outcomes like these, and it could be prioritised more in future Outcome Harvesting exercises and M&E processes.

5.1.6. Theory of Change areas

Five areas of change were identified in the Theory of Change of the ASC programme:¹

- A. Communities articulate concerns and claim their rights
- B. Community members utilise knowledge, skills and structures to pursue livelihood opportunities
- C. Local and national duty-bearers have the capacity, resources and willingness to respond to needs and claims raised by citizens
- D. Communities have access to markets that enable them to sell their products and purchase goods of necessity for their livelihoods
- E. National and local legal and policy frameworks promoting and protecting citizens' rights are in place and implemented.

The ASC programme was implemented in different countries and not every country had the same emphasis. In the case of Malawi for example, the main focus was on change area A. The other areas received less funding and for change area C no specific activities were implemented in terms of training and capacity building of local and national government officials.

By categorising the achieved outcomes according to these change areas, we can see that the majority indeed relate to change area A (68 outcomes). These are primarily connected to the strategies of advocacy and awareness campaigns.

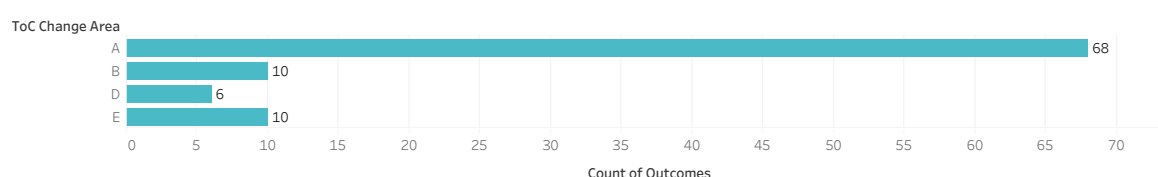


Figure 7 Number of outcomes per change area

For Change Area B and D around livelihoods, there are less outcomes due to these areas receiving less funding and some of the outcomes (15) being 'sum-ups' (ref. 5.4).

And finally, Change Area E on national and local legal and policy frameworks promoting and protecting citizens' rights comes out with 10 outcomes (7 outcomes on change in legislation / its implementation + 3 in anti-corruption). Almost 11% of outcomes within this area is as a bit above expectation as these outcomes reflect structural changes with long-lasting positive effects. This proportion is significant due to the complicated, long-term nature of change processes in relation to legal and policy frameworks.

¹ Action for Social Change – Strategic approach, theories of change and framework for Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning, p.2, ADRA Denmark, 2015

5.1.7. Partners involved

If we look at the partners who helped achieve these outcomes, we can see that the REFLECT Circles contributed to 39% of the outcomes and CBOs to 25% of the outcomes. The difference between the two categories is that CBOs are registered and a bit more formalised, they usually comprise of community representatives from several villages / locations. The 'Other' category mainly comprises of other types of community groups and associations. Thus, CBOs and CBGs have been the main partners, which is not surprising since this was the intention during the design of the programme. ADRA Malawi contributed to 9% of the outcomes. However, it could also be concluded that all outcomes are related to ADRA Malawi since the ASC programme has been implemented by ADRA Malawi and the results achieved at the local level has only come about due to the effort of the ADRA Malawi district teams and head office staff in training and supporting the CBOs and CBGs.

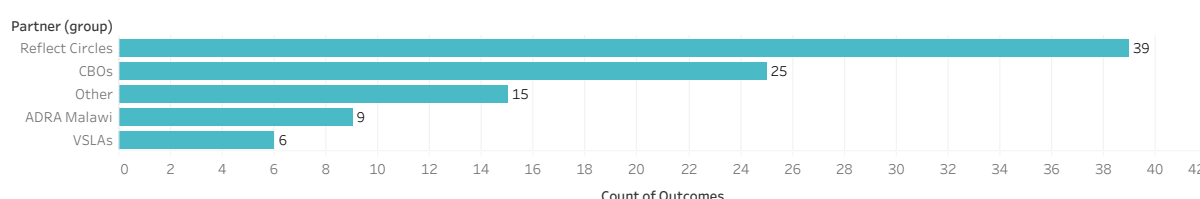


Figure 8 Number of outcomes per partner category

Conclusion evaluation question 1

After scrutinising the general trends and patterns in the outcome data, we can conclude that the ASC programme has achieved what it intended and in the way it had intended it. Most of the harvested outcomes relate to the improvement in public services. These results show, how communities have been successful in demanding their rights (Change Area A of the ToC), which was the core aim of the ASC programme. These changes were achieved with CBOs and CBGs as main partners, and through advocacy and awareness raising campaigns. Areas that achieved fewer outcomes (ToC areas B, D & E) are those areas that were not the main focus of the programme and consequently also received less funding. The analysis also shows that a stable and competent team of ADRA Malawi staff were instrumental in bringing about the changes. This was the case both at the national level and as support to the CBOs and CBGs at the local level, where the district with the strongest team produced the largest number of outcomes.

The following sections will dive deeper into the different types of changes that were achieved.

5.2. ADVOCACY

Evaluation question 2a: To what extent has the media played a connecting role between local level advocacy and national level advocacy in the programme?

To answer this question, it was important to scrutinise the national level outcomes as well as the media component of the ASC programme, since the latter was designed to be a connector between the local and the national level.

A total of 9 outcomes of the 94 are categorised as national level outcomes which is almost 10% of all outcomes. The fact that national level results only make up 10% of the total outcomes is a natural consequence of the ASC programme being designed to primarily work with local CBOs and CBGs and also due to complex and time-consuming processes that lead to national level results e.g. change of legislation. For all the national level outcomes, ADRA Malawi has been the partner producing these results, sometimes together with other actors such as Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWEMA) and Malawi National Girls Education Network (NGEN). Also, for all these outcomes, the ASC media component has played a significant role.

The ASC media component primarily consists of the Tikuferanji TV and radio drama programmes and the Zatonse radio debate programme. Tikuferanji was a drama programme broadcast weekly both on radio and TV nationally. Zatonse was an interactive radio programme where listeners would phone-in and issues were debated by panels including relevant duty bearers. The programmes were to a large extent based on issues identified and addressed by CBOs and CBGs. In this way CBOs and CBGs provided inputs and substance to the Zatonse and Tikuferanji media programmes produced by ASC so that issues of concern at community level were shared with other communities and brought to attention at the national level. Good examples of this are that the Parliament of Malawi passed a law that no child was allowed to be married until the age of 18 [112] and that the Ministry of Agriculture enacted a by-law with punishment for anyone who would buy agricultural produce below the minimum price [113]. These are both issues that were strongly felt in the communities and which the CBOs and CBGs brought to Zatonse and Tikuferanji. In the case of child marriage, the media and community mobilisation components were strengthening each other in that community members and duty bearers were discussing child marriage via the Tikuferanji TV program and the Zatonse radio programme which contributed to the legislative change at national level, and where the media attention also contributed to social norm changes at the local level, such as child marriages being dissolved.

Moreover, there are strong local to national linkages regarding the anti-corruption outcomes. One example is the Access to Information (ATI) law passed by the parliament, which allowed citizens to access documents that describe the transactions of public office holders and public funds on national and local levels and where Zatonse and Tikuferanji had contributed to this law being passed due to the many cases of corruption brought up by CBOs and CBGs and broadcasted through these media outlets [114]. In addition, the shortage of drugs in public health facilities came from the local level and was taken up by Zatonse in a series of 4 programmes where many people called in and claimed that the shortage was the result of theft by public officers. As a result, the Malawi Government confirmed the shortage and promised to allocate more funds [105]. Another example is the ruling out of illicit collection of school development funds from parents of school children, an issue brought up at the local level and eventually addressed by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology [39]. Another issue taken from the grassroot level to the national level through

Tikuferanji radio and TV was the law that was passed about prospective election candidates not being allowed to pass hand-outs during election campaigns [110].

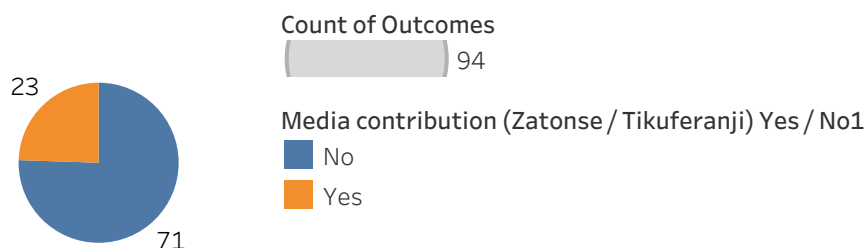


Figure 9 Number of outcomes with media contribution

Overall, radio or TV exposure was part of the contribution in a total of 23 outcomes. This means that the media components are not only associated with the 9 national level outcomes, but also with the community level outcomes. These are including many of the outcomes related to child marriage and school drop-out problems (cf. section 3), which were issues being discussed in Zatonse and other local radio programmes. In addition, other local issues such as the elephants escaping the Liwonde National Park [81] and child labour [5] were exposed through local radio, which contributed to put pressure on the duty bearers to solve the issues.

Conclusion evaluation question 2a

It can be concluded that there is a strong link between the issues identified and addressed by local CBOs and CBGs and the national level outcomes produced by the ASC programme. This linkage was facilitated by the media component of the ASC programme, more specifically the Tikuferanji and Zatonse radio and TV programmes. They broadcasted community issues and through that, managed to contribute to changes at the national level, for example in relation to corruption. Nevertheless, the effects of the national level advocacy and media component could have been even stronger in case the ASC programme would have formed alliances with like-minded organisations. This would make the ADRA Malawi national advocacy less vulnerable to risk factors such as government pressure and staff turnover.

Evaluation question 2b: What have communities gained from their advocacy interventions? Have duty-bearers started to react differently as a result of the changed behaviour of community groups?

The main focus of the ASC programme in Malawi was to enable community-based groups and organisations to do advocacy and hold duty bearers to account. The outcomes demonstrate that this has been achieved, since 55,5% of the outcomes (59 out of 94) are related to either authorities, traditional leaders, private sector actors or NGOs / UN actors responding to demands put forward by CBOs and CBGs based on community needs and requests.

The advocacy process which leads to advocacy results typically goes like this: communities identify a need (or a suspicion of corruption), CBGs and CBOs pick up the issue often in collaboration with traditional leaders and / or the Area Development Committee (ADC). After that a process - sometimes lengthy - of conducting meetings with government officers, District Council members, the local Member of Parliament (MP), company officials etc. follows until the issue is solved. In the cases of anti-corruption activities, the advocacy process also includes inspection of building sites, looking into money-flows and other evidence gathering.

5.2.1. Changes in duty bearers

When analysing the outcomes below, a section is presented for each of the following duty bearers: authorities, traditional leaders, private sector actors and NGO / UN actors. In each section we will explain how these actors have changed due to the advocacy initiatives by the communities.

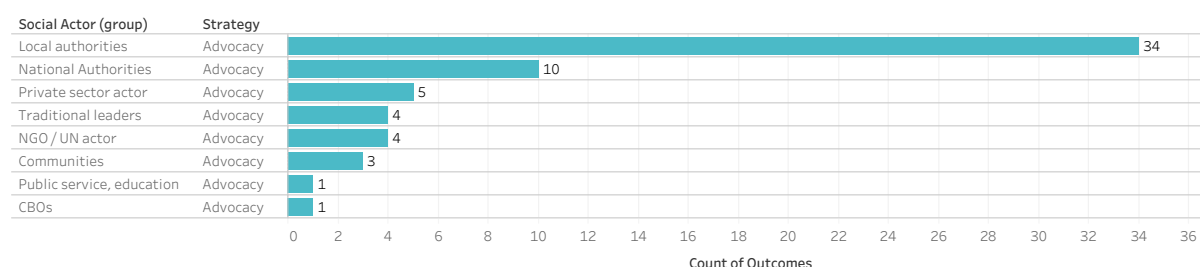


Figure 10 Number of outcomes achieved through the advocacy strategy separated per social actor

Authorities

Looking at the different types of duty bearers, the data in figure 10 shows that 'Local Authorities' have been the social actor in 34 outcomes and thus 32% of all outcomes, which constitute the biggest group of outcomes when sorted as per social actor. These outcomes are typically about providing additional and / or improved public services and can be divided into the following categories:

- Access to water in terms of drilling additional boreholes [21,51]
- Access to health by posting of additional health staff, improvement of buildings, electrification of health clinics [4,10,27,33,41,48,59,69,75,89]
- Better education in terms of additional school buildings and / or more teachers [9,28,31,32,34,54,72,87]
- Improved agricultural input, infrastructure and extension service [30,44,46]

Hence, the public services which seems to be of greatest concern to the communities are within education, health, water and agriculture. These are the areas that CBOs and CBGs have identified from the interaction with communities and where most advocacy has been carried out leading to a change in behaviour of duty bearers.

There is also a sub-strand of advocacy results related to **anti-corruption**. One example is the exposure and removal of a corrupt ADMARC (Agricultural Development and Marketing Corporation) official conniving with the vendors to buy grain from the farmers at low prices and then sell to ADMARC at the government-set minimum prices, cashing in on the difference between the price paid to the farmer and the official price [57]. Another example is the revelation of corruption and misappropriation of funds in the process of constructing a cholera shelter at Ntaja hospital, which led to the shelter finally being constructed with transparency in contracts and implementation [59]. An example at the very local level is the accountability activities related to fraud carried out by the Child Protection Officer in Ntaja who took per diem cash from girls at a workshop carried out by the District Council, and which led to the funds being returned to the girls and the corrupt Child Protection Officer being removed [61]. There are also anti-corruption outcomes on the national level as elaborated on above (Section 2a). The fact that duty bearers have been forced by the CBOs and CBGs to address such corruption cases constitute a clear change as a result of the work of the ASC project.

The local authorities held to account include the District Councils of Machinga, Mzuzu and Lilongwe, the locally elected Members of Parliament, the local ADMARC (Government-owned corporation /

parastatal) outlets in Mzuzu and Machinga as well as district line agencies such as the District Health Office, the District Education Office and the District Agricultural Office in the three districts.

If the national level authorities are added (analysed above), the total number of outcomes related to authorities amount to 44 which constitute 41% of all outcomes. All these outcomes describe results that have come about due CBGs and CBOs advocating for and achieving a change in the behaviour, relationships or actions of duty bearers.

Traditional Leaders

Another type of duty bearers is the traditional leaders which mainly consist of chiefs / headmen and traditional councillors. The last category is part of the traditional system in Malawi and can be both men and women who advise on

customs and cultural norms and have been involved in the ASC project as change agents in relation to child marriage and education norms. For instance, the traditional leaders have started enforcing by-laws imposing fines for parents who do not enrol their children of school-age in school, which

Example Advocacy outcome

Outcome Description:

Between 2018 and 2020, the District Education Manager appointed 3 additional teachers to Kapondero primary school addressing the shortage of teachers, in Kapondero area, TA Mtwaro, Mzimba.

Significance:

Kapondero full primary school had only 5 teachers to teach over 1,000 pupils, despite the requirement of 10 teachers. This led to lower quality of education.

Contribution description:

Kapondero REFLECT circle and the community members were trained by the ASC programme in Communication for Social Change and advocacy which equipped them with knowledge and skills to identify shortage of teachers as an issue for concern. The REFLECT circle conducted meetings with the Village Development Committee (VDC) and their chiefs. This was followed by a meeting with the Primary Education Advisor (PEA) to lobby for more teachers. After dialogue with the PEA and the district education manager, they facilitated the transfers of three more teachers to the school.

have resulted in more children attending school [5, 90]. Also, as an example, traditional leaders have been terminating child marriages and started referring gender-based violence cases to the legal system instead of a 'light' handling in the traditional system [18].

Moreover, some cases of corruption have been addressed in relation to traditional leaders selecting family and friends as beneficiaries for food assistance instead of the most vulnerable in the communities [8, 56]. The advocacy work done by CBOs and CBGs resulted in the abolishment of these types of nepotism in these communities.

Thus, traditional leaders have changed their ways of reacting and thereby changed social norms in the communities targeted by the ASC programme. Four outcomes are associated with this category of duty bearers which is 6% of the total number of outcomes.

Private Sector Actors

Private sector actors include Liwonde National Park [81, 83], Malawi Cotton Company [50], Shoprite Supermarket [115], Nandolo Farmers Association of Malawi (NFAM) [64, 65] and private contractors [68, 77]. Some of these duty bearers have been engaged by the CBOs and CBGs in similar ways as described above. For instance, Liwonde National Park has been advocated to take the concerns of the communities into consideration, which led to the delivery of community development activities / services by Liwonde National Park. Also, in the cases where contractors did not pay workers the salary they had been promised, Kawinga CBO held the companies to account and eventually the salaries were paid out to the workers [68, 77].

When looking at Malawi Cotton Company, NFAM and Shoprite [50, 64, 65, 115], the outcomes were about better market access and better prices for the small-scale farmers. These buyers of agricultural products were lobbied by FMS groups / cooperatives / farmer's associations. Here the only negative outcome of the 94 outcomes is found, which is about NFAM not paying the price for pigeon peas that they had promised the farmers when they planted the crop [65]. The farmers are now pursuing the case and engaging the NFAM head office for an explanation (the outcome is from 2021).

Thus, for this category of duty bearers we can also see changes as a result of the advocacy activities of CBOs and CBGs. Eight outcomes are associated with this category of duty bearers which is 9% of the total number of outcomes.

NGO / UN actors

A fourth type of duty bearer is the NGOs and UN actors who deliver basic services and humanitarian assistance. There are four outcomes where such actors have been engaged and advocated by CBOs and CBGs [20, 40, 47, 52] which constitute 4% of the outcomes. These outcomes are about providing health services, water and tree seedlings to the communities. The advocacy processes are similar to those described under authorities and have thus led to changes in the actions of these duty bearers.

5.2.2. Advocacy strategy

When analysing the changes in duty bearers, it is also relevant to look at the contribution of the programme to these outcomes. As was shown in figure 5 (see 5.1.5), the various strategies used in the ASC programme to produce results include advocacy, awareness campaigns, empowerment and for the livelihoods part mainly the methods of VSLA and FMS. The biggest category however was the **advocacy** category, with 62 outcomes out of 94 (58%). This strategy included training of the selected CBOs and CBGs in advocacy methods such as identification and analysis of problems;

identification and analysis of stakeholders who can be engaged to solve the problem; presenting an issue to duty bearers in a non-confrontational manner; training in constructive dialogue; mobilisation for collective action. These skills have then been used by CBO / CBG members when engaging with duty bearers. The ASC programme staff have also been supporting the CBGs and CBOs continuously in their advocacy activities through follow-up training, coaching and mentorship. Finally, training in REFLECT (incl. literacy), human rights and gender have also contributed to these outcomes.

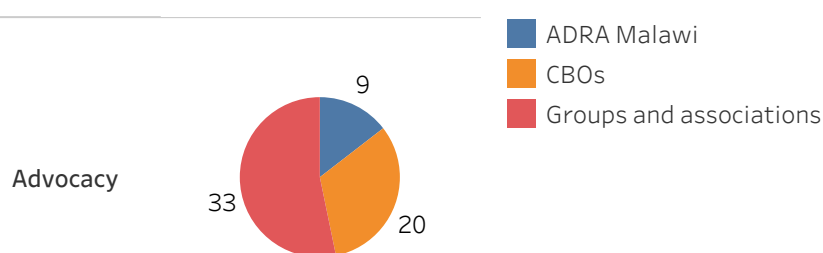
The use of **media** is also included in advocacy strategy. In several cases, media was used to take up an issue and expose it to put pressure on the duty bearers. Section 5.2 demonstrated how this was done to achieve changes on the national level. One example at the local level is the relocation of the Kuntaya dump site away from Mchitanjiru village where it posed a hazard to the people in the village [2]. In this case, Nsana CBO took the case to the Zatonse radio programme. The radio programme engaged the Member of Parliament for Lilongwe Central constituency and the subsequent programme brought in the chairman of the parliamentary Environment and Natural Resources Committee. These actions took place while the CBO continued to hold interface meeting with various duty bearers, which eventually led to the dump site being relocated. Radio or TV exposure has been an aspect in a total of 23 outcomes as elaborated on in section 2a. The interlinkage between the above-mentioned advocacy / social accountability activities and the media activities has been very close, for instance CBGs and CBOs were interviewed about the identified problems and exposed in the Zatonse and Tikuferanji radio and TV programmes, which also featured the relevant duty bearers, who would then need to respond to the evidence from the grass-root level.

5.2.3. Partners that contributed to the outcomes

When scrutinising the various partners, it is possible to divide them into three different types: 1. ADRA Malawi, 2. CBOs 3. Groups and associations.

Figure 11 Number of outcomes per partner group for the advocacy strategy

For the 9 outcomes associated with ADRA Malawi, these are all on the national level, as elaborated on in section 5.2. The difference between the two other categories is that CBOs are registered and a bit more formalised and are usually



comprised of community representatives from several villages / locations. The CBO category comprise of: Kawinga CBO, Tsabango Youth Network, Nsana CBO, Liwonde Youth Network, Choma CBO. On the other hand, the groups and associations are very local groups such as REFLECT Circles, VSLAs, farmer groups, youth groups and mother groups.

Looking at the data, the 5 CBOs have produced a total of 20 outcomes which on average is 4 outcomes per organisation. We do not have a number of outcomes per group / association since some groups have been pooled in the analysis e.g. VSLAs and FMS groups. In any case, it may be more interesting to look at the trends in the types of outcomes produced by the CBOs versus CBGs. Going through the outcomes, there is a slight trend towards the CBOs producing more outcomes related to district level authorities when compared to the groups / associations as a whole. Yet, the

composition of results delivered by CBOs and REFLECT Circles seem very similar. One explanation could be that the well-functioning CBGs or CBOs with good leadership have produced many outcomes and thus that the quality of the leadership and internal structures of the CBG / CBO has more to say when it comes to the number and types of outcomes produced than the nature (group versus network) of the grassroots organisation. Thus, the delegation of power to grassroots organisations and the investment in the CBG / CBO leadership by the ASC programme via the numerous trainings carried out, seem to have paid off.

Thus, the CBOs and REFLECT Circles are the types of CSOs that have carried out most of the advocacy vis-a-vis local authorities whereas VSLAs, farmer groups, youth groups and mother groups have been less involved in this type of social accountability work. An aspect of this is that there has been some level of collective action and coordination between the organisations and groups working in the same geographical area in the sense that the strategy of the CBOs and REFLECT Circles has been to identify and analyse problems across the community and various groups. For instance, while the VSLAs and farmer groups have mainly produced outcomes around market access and small-scale entrepreneurship, it has been the role of the CBOs and REFLECT Circles to take up advocacy issues in relation to agriculture e.g. the case where Lhomero REFLECT Circle advocated for a new Agriculture Extension Development Officer [30]. Thus, advocacy is a crucial part of producing results regarding livelihoods along with the training and mobilisation in the more technical aspects of improving skills and income (cf. section 4).

Conclusion evaluation question 2b

A main focus of the ASC programme in Malawi was to enable community-based groups and organisations to do advocacy and hold duty bearers to account: this seems to have been achieved since 55,5% of the outcomes (59 out of 94) are related to either authorities, traditional leaders, private sector actors or NGOs / UN actors responding to demands put forward by CBOs and CBGs based on community needs and requests. This conclusion is further substantiated by advocacy being the strategy behind 62 outcomes out of 94 (58%). Also, it can be concluded that local grassroots organisations such as CBO networks and REFLECT Circles have been the key partners when looking at advocacy results and that the investment of the ASC programme in strengthening the capacity, power and agency of these community-based partners has been a crucial factor in producing the 49 outcomes on improved public services, anti-corruption and changes in legislation and policies. Moreover, the analysis has shown that advocacy is a crucial part of producing results regarding livelihoods along with the training and mobilisation in the more technical aspects of improving skills and income (cf. section 4). The public services which seems to be of greatest concern to the communities are within education, health, water and agriculture. These are the areas that CBOs and CBGs have identified from the interaction with communities and where most advocacy has been carried out leading to a change in behaviour and actions of duty bearers.

5.3. GENDER

Evaluation question 3: To what extent do the outcomes relate to gender equality / social norms as well as changes in community practices in this regard and how did the programme strategies contribute to those outcomes?

Traditional, patriarchal systems in Malawi have often limited the space for women to engage in democratic and decision-making processes and have hindered their ability to earn an income and gain economic independence. ADRA worked with community groups to question these social norms and challenge the role that they played in limiting the capacity and opportunities of women and

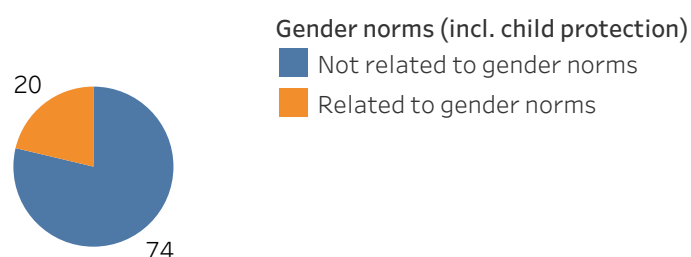


Figure 12 Number of outcomes indicating a change in gender norms

girls. When categorising the outcomes in terms of their relation to gender norms, we can observe that out of the 94 outcomes harvested, 20 of them (21% of all outcomes) reflected a positive change to gender equality and social norms, which were negatively affecting the opportunities and livelihoods of women.

These changes included:

- Women standing up for their rights and participating in development work (7 outcomes, for example [23])
- Girls being enrolled back into school, and more notably after teen pregnancies [49]
- Communities and traditional authorities dissolving child marriages (7 outcomes, for example [17])
- Increase in women taking up leadership positions in the community-based groups (4 outcomes, for example [106])
- Women gaining improved financial independence (7 outcomes for example [6])

Through the ASC programme, ADRA trained different CBGs and CBOs in gender and rights-based approaches including the REFLECT methodology, communication and advocacy which assisted them in identifying issues of concern in their community and

Example gender-related outcome

Outcome description:

In 2020, the community members of Nsana area, TA Tsabango, Lilongwe in 2020 collectively ended 7 child marriages and sent the children back to school.

Significance:

Child marriages have contributed to low education among youth in the area because the children drop out of school at early stages.

Contribution:

The program trained the mother group in the community in communication for social change and advocacy. The mother group held a meeting with the CBO to have their buy-in and join in advocating for a stop in early marriages and teen pregnancies. The CBO held interface meetings with the chiefs of the area, REFLECT circles, the ward councillor and teachers to sensitise them of the intended campaign. The CBO together with the mother group conducted sensitization meetings at group village Headman (GVH) level, trying to reinforce responsible behaviour over their children and education. They also reminded community members of the by-laws and consequences if a child is found breaking the law. [17]

devise solutions. As shown in figure 14 below, most of the changes took place among communities themselves, changing community practice as a result of the programme activities and trainings. However, communities were also influencing traditional and local leaders to change their practices and to positively contribute to improved social norms. It is expected that this will contribute to the sustainability of the results because it is these traditional structures that influence wider opinions and future community practices. Additionally, women played increasingly significant roles due to the ASC programme implementation, whereby in 2019, women held 52% (171 out of 330) of leadership positions in CBGs and CBOs in Lilongwe, Machinga and Mzuzu compared to 35% (40 out of 114) in 2016 (baseline) [106]. Through the programme, community members were trained on gender equality and the REFLECT for literacy approach, enabling women to read and write, as well as empowering more women to take on leadership roles in the groups (cf. section 5.1.5 on Programme Strategies).

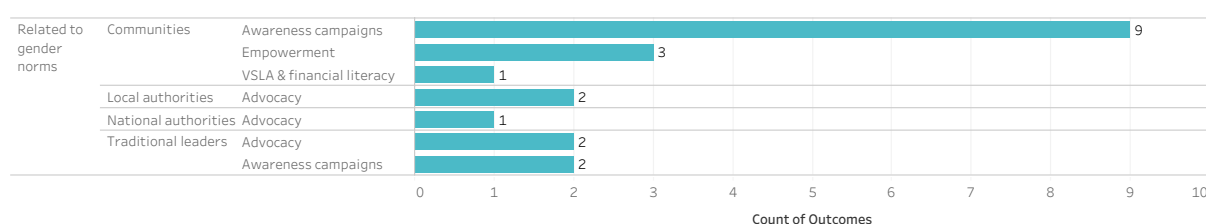


Figure 13 Number of outcomes related to gender norms organised per social actor related strategies

Of the issues identified by CBOs and CBGs, school drop-outs, child marriages and teen pregnancies were prioritised by a significant number of communities and 9 outcomes specifically reflected a change in practice of communities and traditional leaders due to awareness campaigns carried out by CBOs and CBGs - sometimes in collaboration with traditional leaders. These practices affect girls more negatively than boys, and therefore the change in practice is significant for gender equality. CBGs and CBOs conducted interface meetings with, for example, the chiefs of the area, ward councillor and teachers sensitising them and reminding community members of the by-laws and consequences of forcing children into early marriages etc. Teen pregnancies and early forced marriages often resulted in girls dropping out of school. During 2016, in Njobvu, Machinga, 7 girls were impregnated and dropped out of school within a year's school session. In addition to that, many girls and boys were reported to have been absconding from school. Ngongondo REFLECT Circle and Liwonde Youth Network conducted mass sensitisation campaigns on girl child education. During these forums, the traditional leaders agreed to utilise the community policing committees to make sure that every child goes to school and fines were agreed for those parents that prevented their children from attending. This resulted in many girls going back to school and the traditional counsellors conducting follow up to see their performance in class [49]. Additionally, in the Nsana area, back to school initiatives began in 2016, and subsequently enrolment across the 5 schools in TA Tsabango, Lilongwe, increased on a yearly basis. This is illustrated through Nkhulawe full primary school, where there were only 50 pupils from Standard 1 to 8 in 2016, in 2017 the enrolment rose to 700 and when the school session in 2021 began, the figure rose to 2050 pupils [15].

The outcomes harvested also reflect that **VSLAs** have been powerful structures for women to gain greater socio-economic power. Of the 94 outcomes harvested, 6 outcomes reflect VSLAs and financial literacy as the main strategy for enacting change. For example, it was recorded that 84% of VSLA members were female [6]. VSLAs have created a compelling space for women to save, access loans, pay school fees for their children, invest in the farming activities, invest in small-scale businesses and meet unforeseen expenses. These spaces have contributed to improvements in gender equality through economic empowerment processes.

Media also played a significant role in positively contributing to gender equality. Of the 23 outcomes linked to media programmes, 6 (or 26%) specifically addressed issues negatively affecting women and girls. One example is the outcome about the Parliament of Malawi passing a law, on the 14th of February 2017, that no child was allowed to marry until the age of 18 [112]. Previously, the legal age of marriage was 15 and many girls were dropping out of school due to marriage and pregnancy. Malawi has one of the world's highest rates of child marriage, with half its girls married before the age of 18 and teen pregnancies contributing to 20-30% cent of maternal deaths in the country. The Tikuferanji TV programme contributed to the issue of teen mothers and the early marriage law. The ASC programme trained community-based groups to advocate and campaign for children to go back to school. Traditional councillors were also involved in this. In 2016, the communities and traditional councillors started lobbying on this to their traditional leaders and political leaders (ward councillors and MPs). In 2017, Zatonse radio programme broadcast a programme on child marriage. Community members and duty bearers were discussing this via the Tikuferanji TV programme and the Zatonse radio programme, contributing to the pressure on Parliament to enact the law.

Conclusion evaluation question 3:

It can be concluded that a good portion of outcomes (21%) reflects a positive change in social norms and community practices leading towards greater equality between genders. These changes include an increase in girls' education, termination child marriages and GBV and women's empowerment / women taking leadership as well as VSLA related outcomes which indicate economic empowerment of women.

It is clear that the various strategies used in the ASC programme have positively contributed to these gender equality outcomes. This includes trainings in gender and human rights, the identification of issues of concern, as well as the REFLECT methodology (relevant for 41% of total outcomes), which contributed to improved consciousness and empowerment among women. An important part of the REFLECT methodology is literacy classes, which has been referred to as a contributing factor in 10 outcomes. Other aspects of the REFLECT methodology are empowerment, conscientisation and action. Thus, such participatory learning approaches, which takes its point of departure in discussing the issues affecting the participants and their communities, seems to be an important factor behind the changes in gender norms. CBOs and CBGs also carried out awareness campaigns which contributed to the broader norm changes in the communities. VSLAs were instrumental in improving the financial literacy and socio-economic status of women. Media also proved powerful in raising issues of concern negatively affecting women and girls on a local level to a national level platform where laws and practices could be changed.

5.4. LIVELIHOODS

Evaluation question 4: How have the programme strategies of Farmer Market Schools and VSLAs influenced the livelihood of the target group?

Throughout the project, ADRA supported the establishment of Village Saving and Loan Associations (VSLAs), a simple savings and loan structure enabling members to make savings and take loans for immediate needs or long-term investments. Financial capital accumulated through the VSLAs are often used for purchasing farming inputs or other income generating activities. ADRA also trained farmers in the innovative Farmer Market School (FMS) approach, where farmers become informed value chain actors, conducting market research and establishing direct relationships with new buyers to achieve better prices in order to improve livelihoods.

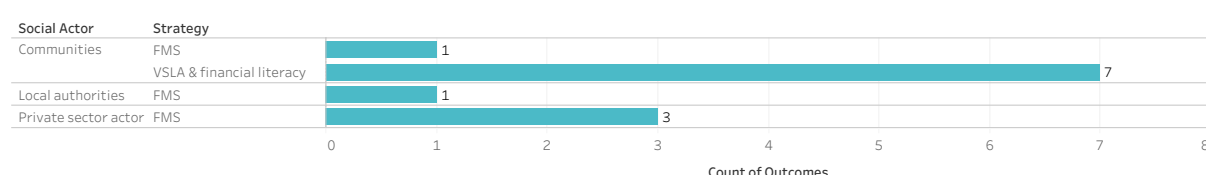


Figure 14 Number of outcomes related to VSLA and FMS divided per social actor

As reflected in figure 14, the outcomes harvested indicated that VSLAs have been powerful structures for improving the socio-economic status of community members, whereby, of the 94 outcomes, 7 outcomes reflect VSLAs and financial literacy as the main strategy for enacting change. For example, from 2016-2021, approximately 25 community members of Mdondwe and Chiyiringira areas in Lilongwe saved money which allowed them to buy food, motorbikes, build permanent houses, buy livestock and start small scale businesses which improved their livelihood due to VSLAs. The enterprises include vegetable selling, fish selling, hawker/grocery shop, second hand selling and other farm produce selling [7]. Although the number of outcomes associated with VSLAs are relatively low, most of the outcomes cover a wide geographical area, as well as a long period of time, rather than a single VSLA group's successes within one year. For example, one outcome found that between 2017 to 2020, 55 members from three different VSLAs across Mzuzu had an improved socio-economic status [42]. Most likely, the fact that the outcomes were harvested in a group meeting with community members prompted them to testify to the changes made at community level, rather than the individual changes that they themselves experienced in terms of improved income and livelihoods. As such, the number of outcomes could be somewhat misleading in terms of the impact that VSLAs had on the livelihoods of community members.

Of the outcomes harvested, FMS was referred to as the main strategy for affecting change in 5 instances. For example, in 2019, 3,247 farmers in Lilongwe, Machinga and Mzuzu regions sold their

Example livelihood outcome**Outcome description:**

In 2019, the VSLA members of Nanyumbu, Kawinga community in Machinga established 11 different enterprises, e.g. groundnuts, a bakery and a restaurant.

Significance:

Previously the community members depended on farming. Now they have diversified their income sources.

Contribution:

The ASC program in collaboration with the extension workers in the Ministry of Agriculture trained the farmer groups in crop diversity, village savings & loans (VSLA) concept and enterprise management. This led to farmers exploring a diversity of income generation in order to support their families and improve their livelihood. [66]

products at local markets including to new buyers such as hotels, restaurants and commodity companies at more lucrative prices [109]. The market linkages to new buyers increased the income for the farmers. These outcomes are also relatively few in terms of the wider number of outcomes. This can be explained by the fact that FMS is a relatively new concept developed by ADRA Denmark and only first tested as a pilot within Malawi in 2016. As such, the low number of outcomes can be associated with the start-up phases of that new programming approach.

However, it is clear that it was not just the strategies of VSLAs and FMS, which positively affected the livelihoods of the target group. Through the extensive advocacy and campaign work conducted by the CBOs and CBGs, positive changes were also made to the provision of agricultural services and public infrastructure. The Ministry of Agriculture trained farmer groups in crop diversity, improving income diversification and

improving livelihoods [66]. Further, in 2018, the District Agricultural Office posted a new Agriculture Extension Development Officer (AEDO) in Luhomero, Mzimba District [30]. The Luhomero REFLECT Circle started lobbying for the AEDO to keep staying in the community. They approached the Agricultural Extension Development Coordinator (AEDEC) and explained the problem and asked for a new extension worker who could stay in the area. To promote this, the community renovated the house where the AEDO was supposed to stay.

As another example, in 2020, Mzimba District Council through the Agriculture Sector Wide Approach Project (ASWAP) constructed the only road in Kapondero community, TA Mtwaro, Mzimba North [44]. Kapondero area is very far in the mountains of Mzimba North away from town. There is only one road which connects this area to town where they access many amenities. The area is a highly agricultural community and access to the markets /customers is through this road. The road is always in very bad condition with impassable bridges, and this is worse during the rainy season which means the area gets cut from various services. ADRA trained the Kapondero REFLECT Circle and the communities in advocacy, Farmer Market School (FMS), gender and human rights among many other technical trainings. The REFLECT circle organised various advocacy initiatives and meetings with local and government authorities. The process was not smooth, but with ongoing lobby activities, the District Council allocated Constituency Development Funds for construction of the road. The maintenance of bridges started in September 2021.

Media was also able to play an instrumental role in affecting positive change in the livelihoods of smallholder farmers. In 2018, the Ministry of Agriculture enacted a by-law with punishment for anyone who buys agricultural produce below minimum price [113]. A minimum price for agricultural products is set by the government. However, middlemen were buying at lower prices than what was set by the government and selling it to ADMARC (Agricultural Development and Marketing Corporation), cashing in on the difference between the price paid to the farmer and the official price. The by-law made it possible to prosecute those who were underpaying the farmers. In 2017-

2018, this issue was brought to the Zatonse radio programme where it was discussed in what ways the farmers can access better prices and earn a better living. The public attention put pressure on Ministry of Agriculture to enact this law.

Conclusion evaluation question 4:

Overall, 7 outcomes reflect VSLAs & financial literacy interventions while FMS was referred to as the main strategy effecting change in 5 instances. Thus, a total of 12 outcomes out of 94 are in the livelihoods area which is around 12%. Compared to the Advocacy, Awareness Campaigns and Empowerment strategies, which are the strategies behind 88% of outcomes, this may seem low. However, the funding for the livelihood component was also much less. The exact financial expenditure figures for the 5 years (2016-2020) under scrutiny remains to be analysed at the time of writing but will be subject to a 'value for money' analysis before the end of 2021. Also, some of the livelihood outcomes cover a number of sub-outcomes and are summed up across all three districts e.g. when it comes to farmers entering into new deals with buyers and VSLA members starting small-scale businesses. Finally, as elaborated on above, some of the livelihood related outcomes are not categorised under the livelihoods related strategies but rather as an outcome of advocacy interventions. The overlap of programme elements and linkages between livelihoods and advocacy strategies shows that over time the ASC programme has developed into a holistic programme that covered various aspects of vulnerable people's lives. It is also an important learning point to bring in the role of advocacy interventions when designing programmes aiming at improving vulnerable people's livelihoods.

5.5. SUSTAINABILITY

Evaluation question 5: Have the approaches used within the ASC programme contributed to ongoing action by community groups even after the end of the programme?

In this section, we discuss the potential for the outcomes of the ASC programme to be sustainable. Although the question was originally designed to only look at the outcomes that took place after the end of the project, the evaluators and users decided to also analyse if indications for sustainability could be found in the other outcome statements. Since this was not part of the original design, not every single outcome was verified in terms of its lasting effects during data collection. Therefore, it should be noted that many more outcomes than the ones mentioned here may have lasting effects, such as the ones on livelihood and gender norms.

We found 31 outcomes which had an indication for sustainability of the changes. Despite the project ending abruptly in June 2020, 8 outcomes concerned changes that **happened after the ending of the project**, indicating an immediate sense of sustainability, as the CBGs were acting on their own, without the mentoring and facilitation from ADRA Malawi. The only negative outcome of this harvest is included in this number. This outcome describes that in June-August 2021, Nandolo association bought peas at a cheaper price than agreed (10% as opposed to 20% additional) from the farmers of Mpapa Cooperative in Nanyumbu, Machinga [56]. Although the actual (negative) change here is not sustainable, the cooperative members are still working to achieve a positive change. The contract between the cooperative and the Nandolo association was a breakthrough to the farmers because it enabled them to sell at lucrative prices and be able to profit from their hard work. The breach of the contract made them feel betrayed by the very buyer who had helped them in the past and they made losses from their produce. The cooperative members are however planning to meet and write the head office through the agriculture office at Nanyumbu EPA asking for an explanation on the development. Hence an advocacy process is underway and this example shows that the work of the programme continues even after the support of ADRA Malawi has ended.

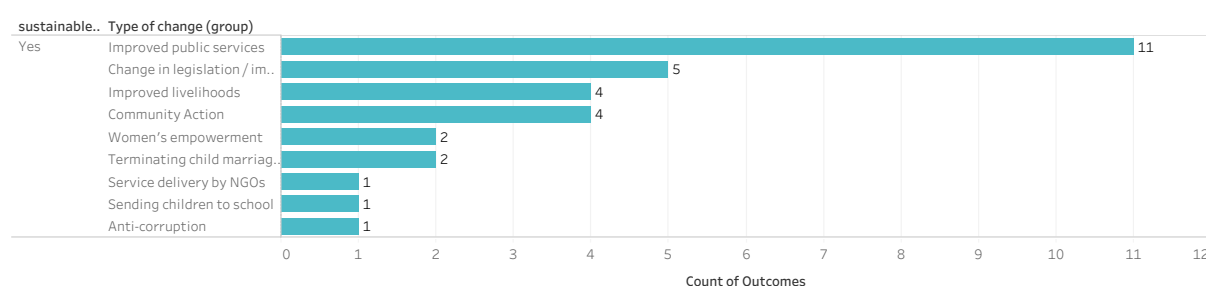


Figure 15 Number of sustainable outcomes organised per type of change

Additionally, another 23 outcomes reflect a social change that is still **ongoing after the ending of the project or that lead to a significant and permanent social change**.

The type of change reflected in these outcomes is diverse, as pictured in figure 16, indicating that the ASC programme managed to create sustainable outcomes across the programme.

For the biggest category, public health services, the outcomes concern mostly the provision of health infrastructure by duty bearers, such as for example the construction of a guardian shelter at the Mangamba health center through community development funds in 2017 by the Machinga District Council [89]. This also reflects positively on the sustainability of the strategies used throughout the project, as the changes are not dependent on the presence of ADRA.

Lastly, the abrupt ending of the programme did not seem to have an influence on the sustainability of the work of the ASC programme given the many lasting changes were recorded. This could be observed as well from the committed engagement of the beneficiaries during the data collection.

Conclusion evaluation question 5:

Even though the evaluation scope did not allow to scrutinise all the outcomes in terms of their sustainability, the evaluators found evidence that a big part of the outcomes achieved by the ASC programme indicate a lasting change. The ASC programme has built the capacity in the communities to advocate for their rights and this capacity is used to hold duty bearers successfully to account. The 8 outcomes that manifested after the end of the project are a good indication that this capacity is still being used without the support of ADRA Malawi and that the programme not only gave them the knowledge but also the confidence to hold their duty bearers to account. Another 23 outcomes reflect a social change that is still ongoing after the ending of the project or that led to a significant and permanent social change across the different types of changes indicating that sustainable outcomes were achieved across the programme.

6. Recommended points for consideration

All in all, it is clear that the ASC programme managed to capacitate and mobilise communities to advocate for their rights. Their efforts were successful as demonstrated by the many outcomes that indicated that duty bearers reacted positively to their requests.

A few points for consideration can however be made to take into account for further programming:

Collaborate with other organisations

Less funding was available for the livelihood component and hence less outcomes were achieved in this area. ADRA Denmark could in such cases build stronger connections with other organisations to take on this area of work. Along the same lines, the communities could choose the topics they would advocate for. ADRA might not be specialised in all these topics but could link the communities with organisations who have the expertise.

As the outcomes showed, the media played a strong role in connecting the local with the national level advocacy. Nevertheless, the effects of the national level advocacy and media component could have been even stronger in case the ASC programme would have formed alliances with like-minded organisations. This would make the ADRA Malawi national advocacy less vulnerable to risk factors such as government pressure and staff turnover.

Define sustainability

ADRA Denmark could benefit from defining what sustainability means in the design of the programme. This would make it easier to focus on it during implementation as well as to measure sustainability during implementation.

Guide on alternative ways to achieve the results

In a few cases, the process to get to the results took a long time. Although the efforts were successful in the end, the field facilitators could guide the groups more in finding alternative ways, without pushing them into a certain direction.

Advocacy interventions are important for improving livelihoods

The outcomes harvested on improved livelihoods are not only associated with the strategies of FMS and VSLAs. It turned out that also advocacy interventions were producing improved livelihoods for people living in poverty. Thus, it is important to bring in the role of advocacy when designing programmes aiming at improving vulnerable people's livelihoods.

Interview VSLAs individually

Outcomes on changes by VSLAs were formulated in group during the data collection for this evaluation. To harvest more outcomes from this actor, it might be better to interview them individually or to give them time after the group work to also reflect individually.

Reflecting on the use of Outcome Harvesting for this evaluation, the ADRA Denmark staff considered it a good exercise that gave them valuable information for future programming. In the past, the emphasis had rather been on the outputs. Outcome Harvesting provided them with insights on what happened in the programme after they outputs. Staff felt that through the coaching and learning-by-doing they are able to use it in the future and have the confidence to do so. A new evaluation in which Outcome Harvesting will be used is already being planned. Staff felt they were able to get a lot of learning from the evaluation notwithstanding the challenges that there was in implementing partner anymore and given the COVID-19 circumstances. Improvements in the process would therefore mostly be related to implementing the evaluation without these challenges, for example

by having a more elaborate substantiation process carried out by the external consultant or ADRA Denmark staff.



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