



CARE Patsy Collins Trust Fund Initiative



Malawi PCTFI (Cohort 2) Final Report

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Long Term outcomes and impact:

Increased number of girls completing primary education

The project has observed that there is an increase in number of learners who are completing their primary education especially in the schools where PCFTI was being implemented. Three years ago because of various barriers only 50% of the learners would complete their primary education. However, this is no longer the case now. Though the average district completion rate for Kasungu is still low, the same has greatly improved in the schools where the project was being implemented. For instance, anecdotal evidence has shown that, completion rate among girls in primary education in the targeted schools has greatly improved. This has been achieved because of the effects of the combination of interventions such as strengthening of school and community based structures, facilitating development of School Improvement Plans (SIP) and the involvement of the Participatory Education Theatre (PET) groups which PCFTI has implemented for the past three years.

Increased awareness among parents on child rights especially the rights to education

Introducing child rights interventions in the community where illiteracy levels are low can sometimes meet hostility because such interventions tend to challenge the existing beliefs and values of the community. Before the project communities in Kasungu valued children as the source of labour and income. To them this was the ultimate reason why they made sure that their children are in good health so that their dreams would be fulfilled. Throughout the project implementation efforts were made to raise community's awareness on the children's rights especially right to education. This was done through various methods including the Participatory Education Theatre (PET). The project has noted that there is increased awareness among parents on rights of the child, especially girl child. The reports from the community indicate that 80% of the parents are aware of the rights of children. However, from the group discussions and other monitoring reports not all the 80% of parents are helping their children realise and exercise these rights.

Boys actively supporting girls on Menstrual Hygiene Management

When it comes to menstruation, boys would rather not hear it, not see it, not think about it, nor touch it and so on. This made girls to feel very awkward when they have unknowingly stained their clothes. Before the project the community regarded MHM as a female matter where the Mother Groups, female teachers and girls themselves should handle. But lately, things have been different in many primary schools because boys are also playing a greater role in supporting girls on MHM as they are the ones that closely interact with girls in classes. Boys' support on girls' MHM comes from the background where boys have contributed to the absenteeism of menstruating girls. But through involvement of boys in Teen Club sessions and Enhanced Life Skills classes where MHM lessons are taught to both boys and girls, boys have been enlightened and empowered to openly talk about girls' menstruation as a normal situation such that they can effectively interact with girls even upon noticing that they are menstruating. Additionally, adolescent boys and girls also were able to learn on their own from Aunt Stella and Puberty books

on body growth and development issues from which they learn what they are to pass through as they grow up. Boys therefore, are realizing that girls' menstruation is not a laughing matter but a normal life experience and they are now encouraging girls not to be absent from school whenever they are menstruating. They also advise each other on the bad conduct of laughing or booing girls who happen to stain their clothes that leads to girls' absenteeism.

Improved school environment for girls' education

One of the factors that led to girls' absenteeism was lack of appropriate facilities to enhance their learning. Throughout the project life, school governance structures have been making strides to improve the learning environments. Almost 90% of the 30 schools where the project was implementing its last phase of its interventions, have made efforts to have girls' friendly infrastructures. This is evidenced with the construction of sanitary facilities for the girls. Almost each school visited, either the mother group or the school management committee would quickly point to either a temporal or permanent structure as a sanitary facility for the girls.

Increased capacity of parents to hold service providers accountable for their girl child education

Teaching is a noble profession and teachers are regarded highly in the communities. They are the custodian of knowledge and they are rich and respected people as regarded by the rural community especially where PCTFI is implementing its interventions. Teachers, with this type of uphold, end up abusing their power and authority for personal gains. In the past parents in most cases expressed fear to talk about teachers' misconduct as they were afraid that the teachers may either be transferred to other schools or end up stopping delivering lessons in class.

Now there is substantial transformation taking place in the communities. The project noted that parents are zealous in holding teachers and other service providers accountable on the delivery of girl child education. With the interactions the project had been having with the communities through different structures and community facilitators, the parents have been empowered and are now demanding the quality services from the service providers. This was clearly noticed from the community score card interface meetings which took place in the last year of project implementation. Almost in all the 11 schools where CSC was facilitated, parents were at forefront giving scenarios that have led to poor quality education in their schools. *"We send our children to school because we have trust, and confidence that they are in the right hands to get the desired quality education. But to our surprise, it's the teachers that destroy our children's future."* Lamented one of the parents at Zumani School in Linyangwa zone.

Observation from the other schools also showed the same trend among parents. This was further noted when parents would suggest solutions to the problem and at the end adopting the solutions into an action plan. This was also evidenced at Dwangwa and Kamaliwa schools where through the CSC, the communities have constructed teachers' houses.

Increased community involvement in promotion of girls education

Structures such as Mother Groups and Parent-Child Forums are increasingly taking an active role in making sure that adolescents stay in school by addressing some of the challenges that these adolescents face. Some of the challenges includes; lack of school writing materials, school fees

and school uniform. The project noted, throughout the project life, that in most schools, Mother Groups are taking an active role by providing these school necessities for example, sanitary pads, soap, washing basins and cotton. A good example is Chimatiro Mother Group. Better yet some MG groups have even gone an extra mile by providing school fees to needy learners. For example at Chiputu primary school among 10 learners that were selected to go to secondary school 2 girls stayed at home due to lack of school fees. Mother group of Chiputu mobilized resources and are now paying school fees for these 2 girls. This has helped to reduce school absenteeism and more importantly, it has proved to be a right path towards sustainability of girls' bursaries. This is true not only for Chimatiro and Chiputu, but also for schools from Suza zone are doing almost the same thing.

Increased career aspirations among adolescent girls and boys.

The project has seen learners dreaming big during the years it has been implementing the project. Three years ago when adolescent girls were asked who they would want to be in the future, 90% of them would say "I would like to either be a teacher or nurse." This was because the people they were seeing were teachers in the schools they were attending and the nurses when they are sick and have visited their nearest health centres.

Things have however changed. Adolescents are now ambitious and they are sure that if they can be fully supported, their potentials can be realized. The change in this thinking, has come about not only due to the interactions that they have been having with different role models from different sectors as well as community identified role models but also the life skills and leadership trainings that the girls underwent.

Increased confidence among adolescent girls and boys to openly discuss SRH issues

It has been observed that in 65% of the schools and communities, boys and girls are now confident and comfortable to discuss SRH issues and are comfortably interacting with each other. This is making the relationship between boys and girls to become more constructive and without any destructive agenda. This was noted through follow up visits the project made to the all the schools. For instance, Teen club members and facilitators as well as Sister to sister group leaders were able to articulate the once regarded as sensitive SRH issues in their sessions confidently, something that they could not do before. The project is seeing this as a contribution of the Enhanced life skills curriculum sessions delivered by LSC Teachers and also adolescent's participation in Teen clubs. This increased confidence and openness is already having a positive impact on the other learners both within and outside the school.

The impact of the project, in positioning CARE as a key player at the national level

Though the project did not do much at national level, it has to be noted that it has contributed quite a lot to the national agenda. Within the ministry of education, the project has been directly addressing key issues in the education sector. For instance, under relevance and quality, the project through the mother groups and School Management Committees have been providing teaching and learning materials to the schools as well as constructing and renovating

infrastructures within their respective schools. Almost 90% of the schools where the project has been working with the Mother groups and SMC have tangible products to show.

The project has also effectively addressed issues to do with access and equity. This is evidenced by the enrolment rate for both girls and boys which has greatly improved within the past 3 years. A table below gives a quick view of how things are on the ground.

School	2011		2013	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Chasomba	163	169	266	282
Kalimaziche	94	146	203	290
Lingadzi	186	198	205	233

This was also noted from the interaction the project staff had with the district education office to find out what they have liked about the project. *“Initially when PCTFI was introduced as a project what we had in mind as education managers was fear, fear and more fear. But as the project rolled out, we noticed that it is just in-line with our strategic objectives.”* This is what Mr Muhawi Chivunga, the Deputy Education Manager, had to say during one of the reflection workshops.

Project Reach

Throughout the project life span, the project made efforts to implement all the designed interventions in all the phases. Through these interventions, the project directly and indirectly reached out to different categories of people. The table below gives a quantitative view of the reach.

	Girls	Boys	Women	Men
Direct- PCTFI (participated directly in activities)	6,710	6,292	5,336	3,674
Indirect- PCTFI	25,593	27,919	15,415	7,505
Leverage- beyond what is already included above. Please disaggregate per project.				

How has the project changed overtime

Malawi PCTFI, from 2007 to 2016 has been implemented in three distinct phases.

Phase 1: (2007 – 2011)

The project aimed at reducing marginalization of adolescents particularly that of girls and the emphasis was to ensure that their rights to education and development are achieved. Though there were so many issues that were identified during the situation analysis in 2008, such as cultural practices, poverty, engendered division of labour, unconducive school environment, teachers' lack of gender sensitivity and lack of knowledge and proper implementation of policies that support girls, the project zeroed on improving teaching pedagogies in order to improve teachers' lack of gender sensitivity as a way of reducing marginalization and enhance education outcomes particularly those of girls.

Phase 2: 2011- 2014

After working with the Malawi Institute of Education in mentoring the teachers on teaching pedagogies, in 2011, the project decided to utilise the funds in an experimental research design by assessing the impact of education interventions on education outcomes. The project, apart from the research, also had 3 components;

- Community mobilisation
- Scholarship package
- SIP

There is a lot of literature on factors that affect girls' education some of which are parents forcing girls to get married to help them alleviate poverty at household, using the children as a source of labour especially when doing casual labour just to mention a few. The results from these evaluations however found that sometimes girls make their own decision to get married, which is most of the times against the parents' desire. Though not intended, the research, helped also to uncover lack of sexual and reproductive health information as one of the causes of early marriages and teen pregnancies. Some of these findings are the ones that influenced the redesign of the project in 2014 to incorporate SRH in the interventions.

Phase 3: 2014-2016

This phase was aimed at empowering adolescents to claim and exercise their rights to good quality education and sexual and reproductive health information and services. As such it incorporated Sexual and Reproductive Health interventions and the focus was also on skills transfer and enhanced communication.

Negative impact

- It was against ethical considerations to deny some zones from benefiting what others were benefiting from the project when actually they were equally affected by the same. This was noted from the control zone where no any project intervention was implemented except annual data collection. This, as a result affected the process within the zone. For example in Kasasanya, a control zone, there was a decrease in the number

of respondents by 10% every year. People felt they were being used as such some were refusing to be interviewed.

- It was difficult to track impact from one design to the other. The project needed a systematic M & E system if it was to capture changes from one design to the other. The absence of this made the project to fail to stand as one project but rather as different projects within a project.

Project influence on program-level development and program-level change at the CO level

It has to be mentioned that the project has to a greater extent informed the program changes within the country office. For example, the Join My Village (JMV) project adopted the life skills and leadership manual, refined by the project in training the adolescent girls in the JMV impact area.

The Umodzi project is currently working with the Teen clubs in championing the Gender Conscious Practice (GCP) curriculum.

Leverage:

The project during its life span, did not receive a match grant. However it has to be commended of the efforts from the communities where the project was implementing its interventions.

Advocacy impact and Partners' reaction

The project participants would meet challenges that required the involvement of other to have a collective voice. Taking advantage of working with the Kasungu District Education Network (DEN) as a platform for advocacy, the mother groups have been working with the Kasungu DEN on advocating for the promotion of girls' education. Through this linkage the project managed to reach the senior managers at the district education offices on issues of teacher deployment especially female teachers in the zones, an action which led to posting of some female teachers into the schools that PCTFI was working in.

Combined efforts of the mother groups, PET groups and the CSC team saw some chiefs establishing by-laws which are now governing the communities.

Perceptions of stakeholders during project implementation

Community Perceptions

Any project when it is new attracts different reactions from the communities in which it works. PCTFI was not different from these. As the project was being introduced, people from the communities thought that pupils should not take part in teen clubs because the content used was seen to be obscene and inappropriate and was against their culture and religion. They also thought that life skill subject was bad for the pupils because they thought it would influence boys and girls to engage in bad and risky behaviours. During the start of the project some member of

Parent-Child Forum (PCF) decided to drop because they did not want to discuss SRH issues with their children as these were regarded to be a taboo and against their religious beliefs.

Government Perceptions

Teachers thought that that life skills trainings were just a duplication of things because it was already there before PCTFI and it was also taken as adding unnecessary work load to teachers as such little effort from teachers was noted throughout the schools that the project worked in. However this perception changed along the way as teachers begun to appreciate the SRH enhanced life skills curriculum delivered by the project. The training which teachers received helped a lot in changing their attitude towards the leadership/life skills curriculum that was being offered by the project.

Future for sustainability and scale-up

It has to be mentioned that though the project kept on changing from one design to the other, the project is assured that the activities initiated by the project will be taken to scale. This is evidenced from the remarks that members from different structures from both the schools and the communities make whenever there was an interaction between them and the project staff. Of keen interest is that:

- Teen clubs are bound to stay for so long because of the teachers who were trained on teen club management will keep on doing the job. They will pass on the knowledge to other teachers who will do the same as they leave the office.
- Teen clubs are also bound to stay as the TCF have acquired a great deal of facilitation skills which will help them properly facilitate discussions within clubs even when the project has phased out
- Life skills teachers will continue facilitating the life skills and leadership training as the learners graduate from the lower primary to upper primary level.
- Mother groups will also be effective for a long period of time because of the trainings they did concerning their jobs. They will transfer the information to the other mother group members who will take over the position from them. For example, some mother groups in Suza and Linyangwa zone have already started providing scholarships to girls in schools which might be done for a long period of time.
- Community Score Card (CSC) process will survive for a long period of time. This is due to the involvement of community structures and school management structures. These structures have attained skills in going through the process and they will be able to do the job quite well.

- The zealous and committed CSC facilitators also give an indication that the approach will continue to be used even in the other sectors like health.
- Networking and collaborations among key stakeholders through District Education Network will carry on for a long time

Outlook of the long-term change

Though not all the structures may be fully functional. The project anticipate 80% of the initiatives to still stand as the facilitators are from within the communities hence can continue facilitating.

Sustainable elements of the project

For any project to be successful, there is need for different resources and finances is one of them. The continuity of a project becomes questionable if not all resources are available. This is not the case with the PCTFI project. Most of the elements of the project were school driven with a huge involvement of teachers. This makes the elements to be more sustainable because the teachers will always be in these schools. Some of the elements were supported by the community structures which have demonstrated great commitment and momentum to continue with the interventions even after the project. At national level there is an opportunity for the country office to lobby for the scale up of the delivery of enhanced SRH life skills in teen clubs into other schools

The interventions that the project has been implementing were interrelated in such a way that they are self-sustaining. This was also echoed by the Deputy District Education Manager during the close out meeting at the district level

Non-sustainable elements of the project

From the field visit and the interaction the project staff had with the project participants, 100% of the interviewed people said that there is no element of the project that will not be sustained. However, experience has shown that the sister to sister approach may not be as effective as the other elements.

Elements of the project that have already started being scaled-up

- Mother groups have already started supporting the marginalized children. They are currently providing school uniforms, writing materials for the kids and are actually paying school fees for needy girls in secondary schools.
- Development Resource and Action Mentorship (DREAM), a local NGO in Kasungu, having learnt from the successes of the mother groups in PCTFI impact area, is facilitating the establishment and training of the mother groups in its impact area.
- CSC has already started scaling the interface meetings in other schools where PCTFI was not committed to reach
- Nkhotakota Youth Organisations have already established the linkages with the CSC team in Kasungu to learn the methodology and start using it in their district.