



**Australian Partnerships with African Communities  
(APAC)**

**Poverty Alleviation through Civil Society Strengthening (PACS)  
CARE Australia  
2004-2009**

**Final Evaluation Report**

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## List of Acronyms

ADC	Area Development Committee
ANGO	Australian Non-Governmental Organization
APAC	Australian Partnerships with African Communities
ART	Antiretroviral Treatment
AWARD	Association for Water and Rural Development
CBO	Community Based Organization (in SCORE, refers to groups organized to undertake economic activities)
CDL	<i>Comités de Desenvolvimento Local</i> (Local Development Committees – Mozambique)
CI	CARE International
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DA	District Assembly
DC	District Commissioner
DEC	District Executive Committee
DPA	District Pastoralist Association
DPLG	Department of Planning and Local Government and Housing
ELMT	Enhancing Livelihoods in Mandera Triangle (Kenyan NGO)
FGD	Focal Group Discussion
FOPROI	Inhambane Provincial Forum
GTZ	German Technical Cooperation
HLS	Household Livelihood Security
HBC	Home Based Care
HLS	Household Livelihood Security
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
IGA	Income Generation Activity
ILRP	Inhambane Livelihood Recovery Project
INAS	<i>Instituto Nacional de Acção Social</i> (National Institute for Social Action - Mozambique)
INGO	International Non Governmental Organization
KULIMA	Mozambican rural development NGO
LFA	Logical Framework Analysis
LIME	Livestock Marketing Enterprise (precursor to sub-program 4 in Kenya)
LipFund	Livestock Purchase Fund (sub-program 4 in Kenya)
LRSP	Long Range Strategic Plan
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
OIIL	<i>Orçamento de Investimento e Iniciativas Locais</i> (Budget for Investment and Local Initiatives - Mozambique)
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
PA	<i>Posto Administrativo</i> (Administrative Post - Mozambique)
PACS	Poverty Alleviation through Civil Society Strengthening
PLWA	People Living With HIV/AIDS

PPC	Pastoralist Management Unit
PPG	Pastoral Production Group
SCORE	Strengthening Civil Society for Rural Empowerment (sub-program 2 in Mozambique)
SIMAHO	Kenyan NGO working in health
SMIHLE	Supporting and Mitigating the Impact of HIV/AIDS for Livelihood Enhancement Program (sub-program 1 in Malawi, formerly CRLSP)
TA	Traditional Authorities
ToT	Training of Trainers
VAC	Vulnerability Assessment Committee
VAP	Village Action Plan
VDC	Village Development Committee
VS&L (or VSL)	Village Savings and Loans group
VUC	Village Umbrella Committee
WHELL	Water, Health and Livelihoods Program (sub-program 3 in South Africa)

## Executive Summary

### Overall Assessment of the Program

The following is a report of the final evaluation of the Poverty Alleviation through Civil Society Strengthening Program (PACS) (2003-2008) funded under the Australian Partnerships with African Communities (APAC) Australian Aid program. The purpose of the program was

*To enhance livelihood security and well-being through improving rural communities' access to quality services that mainstream effective responses to HIV/AIDS and address gender inequities.*

The PACS program has been implemented in Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa and Kenya, and designed within the context of the decentralization processes underway in these four countries. The program focused on developing civil society service delivery models that work to directly reduce poverty, and then use these models as the foundation for evidence-based advocacy to promote their further replication. The models aimed to facilitate the effective engagement of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), including local Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Community Based Organisations (CBOs), into wider policy and practice debates, and to build practical service and advocacy linkages between civil society and government.

In the four countries where sub-programs were implemented, it sought to directly and indirectly benefit a total of over 600,000 people by improving their access to more equitable government and NGO services that support agriculture, water management, and HIV/AIDS and malaria prevention. Various levels of government staff and more than 750 CSOs were targeted for capacity building (advocacy, fundraising, gender analysis, and HIV/AIDS mainstreaming) in water management, health, agriculture, and savings and loans models. The three broad themes underpinning the four sub-program's approaches were 1) influencing policy and practice; 2) mainstreaming HIV/AIDS; and 3) building CSO capacities for service delivery. The program sought to ensure that the most vulnerable households were able to access and benefit from sub-program activities.

The objective of the final evaluation was to fully understand the impact of PACS in terms of the outcome-level achievements of each of the sub-programs' effectiveness, efficiency, relevance and sustainability. The evaluation sought to determine how effectively the most vulnerable populations were targeted, whether the interventions achieved their desired outcomes in terms of both quality and quantity, whether project resources, including commodities, were used efficiently, and the sustainability of program impact on the livelihoods of vulnerable beneficiary families. The final evaluation team employed a mixed set of rapid assessment methods to gather both qualitative and quantitative data for gauging program performance, program quality, and management effectiveness. The evaluation process was highly participatory, incorporating key stakeholders and a wide cross-section of beneficiaries, local government institutions, NGO and CBO partners, technical partners, donors, and CARE program staff. Evaluators used a gender analysis framework and sought to reflect and report upon the relative impact of the sub-programs upon women and men in terms of changes in their material well-being as well as social positions. The remainder of this executive summary provides an overview of the evaluation team's complete set of findings and recommendations.

## **KEY FINDINGS**

Evidence-based information about the effectiveness of program activities is very limited. However, based on observations made during the final evaluation, all of the sub-programs have achieved significant advances in working with CSOs. The program has supported several different types of organizations, which are appropriate in different conditions and are organized to achieve different objectives, all related to the overall program purpose. Furthermore, the program has pursued different forms of collaboration with other partners to leverage direct activities of the individual sub-programs.

In all four sub-programs, the efficiency of achieving the desired impacts has been hampered by two factors, i) insufficient field staff and technical support staff to achieve the scale of impacts initially proposed, and ii) geographic dispersion of project implementation areas. Inadequate numbers of field staff has led to the need for reduction in targets in SMIHLE, SCORE and WHELL.

In the context of PACS, sustainability primarily pertains to the CSOs that the program is developing and supporting, and the extent to which they are in a position to continue independently without project support. As is to be expected, there is a wide range in variation in the capacities and levels of initiatives of individual groups. Key activities that all sub-programs should undertake during the extension will be to assess every CSO, develop strategies for phasing out support to them under the current program, and make plans for continued support under new proposals.

The evaluation team found that all four of the sub-programs are addressing critical problems and concentrating on important issues within their respective program areas. The focus of program activities to address these issues is appropriate and justified. Furthermore, the individual sub-programs have exhibited flexibility to reorient activities to maintain relevance in light of increased awareness of the problems, or changing political or institutional circumstances.

## **Contribution toward Millennium Development Goals**

The activities of the each of the sub-programs contributed toward several of the Millennium Development Goals. The goal to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger is addressed by village savings and loans groups, seed banks and CBOs directed toward income-generating activities. The goal to achieve universal primary education is addressed through the adult literacy program in SMIHLE. Gender equality and empowerment of women is promoted by encouraging participation of women in CSOs in all of the sub-programs. Combating HIV/AIDS is also addressed in all programs, through awareness training and provision of support services to PLWAs. Making a contribution toward a global partnership for development is addressed by supporting local governance and decentralization in SMIHLE, SCORE, and WHELL.

## **KEY RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following recommendations are intended to inform the extension of the current program as well as the development of follow-up proposals. The first set of recommendations is cross-cutting, relating to overall program design and monitoring and evaluation.

### **➤ Design should be based on sound cause-effect logic**

First, future design should be based on sound cause-effect logic, using a comprehensive problem-

opportunity analysis to formulate the logic, and then identifying opportunities along identified cause-effect streams. Linkages between, for example, food or livelihood security and targeted groups should be made more explicit in the logical hierarchy. Outcomes, based on behavioral changes (practices) and the systems (CBOs, local government, networks, NGOs, private sector) should be explicit and clearly defined.

➤ **Monitoring and Evaluation plans must be developed from the outset**

Second, monitoring and evaluation plans need to be developed from the outset, appropriately funded, and conducted with accepted methods and appropriate rigor. Particular attention should be placed on designing, conducting, and analyzing baseline studies for all new programs. Use of a variety of baseline designs should be considered based on sound analysis and use of in-house or contracted experts.

➤ **Exit strategies should be developed in the first year of future programs**

Finally, future programs should develop exit strategies during their first year of implementation and update them annually. These exit plans focus primarily on aspects of sustainability, and identify early on what the program expects to be in place when program assistance is withdrawn. The plans then provide important input into annual work plans and implementation.

### **SUB-PROGRAM EXTENSIONS**

The report additionally details recommendations specific to the more immediate sub-program extensions. A number of these are applicable to all four sub-programs.

➤ **Catalogue lessons learned**

The first recommendation is to catalogue lessons learned during implementation in order to make well-informed plans for follow-up activities. One component of this process would be to undertake a series of surveys of project participants. The surveys should be designed to obtain necessary information about project impacts on the participant groups, and information about the strengths and weaknesses of the support provided by the project. All surveys should include sections on HIV/AIDS and gender mainstreaming, employ quantitative and qualitative methods, and seek the advice of qualified monitoring and evaluation specialists.

➤ **Increase qualitative reviews with collaborating stakeholders**

For the project extension, projects should also plan to undertake more qualitative reviews with partners and other collaborating organizations. These reviews should address the process of collaboration with APAC, suggestions for how to alter the collaboration on the basis of perceived strengths and weaknesses in the project implementation, and expected future changes in the operational environment.

➤ **Ensure documentation of guidance and training materials**

In addition, all sub-programs should ensure that proper training materials are left behind for community groups, and that all volunteers have sufficient documentation to carry out their functions and to train future volunteers.

The evaluation's additional recommendations relate to specific aspects of the four sub-programs.

### ***SMIHLE (Malawi)***

- To enable future reference, the project should develop standardized training and support modules for forming VUCs, VSLs, community facilitators, seed banks, etc., Examples from the SMIHLE project could serve as future models.
- SMIHLE should conduct an assessment of its models in order to better address sustainability. This should be based on jointly established criteria for each model, and result in a clear classification of ‘weak’, ‘moderate’, and ‘strong’ groups. SMIHLE should then develop a strategy to work with each of these classes.
- Both VDCs and VUCs should have simpler monitoring methods (less time-consuming methods than the scorecard tool), to be used for monitoring road work and adult literacy, and training on how to evaluate budgets or potential contracts.
- CARE Malawi monitoring and evaluation systems are strong, but could be further improved. While community-led monitoring is a great exercise, and CARE Malawi has taken it very seriously, it does and should not substitute for rigorous project-level monitoring that quantifies effect-level changes through rigorous quantitative methods and analysis.
- SMIHLE should experiment with creating networks based on its models, starting with the VSLs, as they have the most to gain initially from being part of a network.
- The project should not expend large resources on many years of support to individual VUCs. A better strategy would be to work intensively with VUCs in the first year, have less intensive contact in the second year, and shift to monitoring and occasional backstopping support after the second year.
- With respect to new proposals following the SMIHLE experience, community groups reported demand for irrigation kits and treadle pumps. Future projects could examine the financial feasibility of projects using these irrigation materials (e.g. projects for specific crops; examining the physical production potential based on agroclimatic conditions as well as the marketing potential). If financially attractive options are identified, the project could work with VSL groups to purchase necessary irrigation materials and undertake the projects as commercial activities.

### ***SCORE (Mozambique)***

- The project extension for SCORE could benefit from the lessons learned from the use of the institutional scorecard in SMIHLE, and consider implementing this with CBOs, CDLs and consultative groups in Mozambique.
- SCORE should also undertake a survey of community groups supported by the project, namely CBOs and CDLs, in order to make independent assessments of the capacities of the collaborating organizations. Using the survey information, the project should identify procedures to assess the capacities of individual CBOs and make programmatic decisions according to those assessments.
- New proposals should seek to improve the integration of project components (CBOs, CSOs, HIV/AIDS and gender mainstreaming). Lessons can be learned from the SMIHLE experience. CARE-Mozambique should continue to support the decentralization process in new proposals. In particular, continued support to CDLs is recommended.
- CARE-Mozambique needs to develop a more strategic way to provide support to CBOs in light of the variations in capacities and interests across these groups. One aspect of such a strategy would be to identify activities that are likely to provide sustainable economic returns to groups, taking into account the geographic isolation and the vicissitudes of the weather.
- New proposals should strive for better coordination with other CARE projects in the same project area.
- OIIL is an important government program that could be used to greatly leverage the support to CDLs and CBOs.

### ***WHELL (South Africa)***

- In the project extension, CARE should focus on the strengths of WHELL, which is the relevance of its model, and continue to promote the model. This should focus, in part, on training and technical assistance to government and interested NGOs/CBOs/CSOs so that they may experiment with applying the model within their own programs and share their respective learning.
- WHELL should disseminate the case studies to reinforce CARE's expertise in this area with other stakeholders and to link into all relevant national networks and forums, including Water Sector Forums, District AIDS Councils, IDP annual reviews, DWAF's Civil Society Support Program, and HIV/AIDS forums.
- CARE and Mvula Trust should conduct an open and honest review of their experience and accomplishments under WHELL, in order to extract partnership lessons for the future.
- WHELL should develop a strategy to keep municipal officials engaged with the idea of applying mainstreaming approaches. This includes attending the annual reviews of IDPs to provide technical support to local government's efforts to mainstream.
- Follow-up by CARE and Mvula Trust with municipalities will help maintain interest and motivate staff to extract lessons learned and to move from concepts to applications.
- CARE and Mvula Trust should continue to develop case studies on the pilot projects to preserve and disseminate learning from the project.
- WHELL needs to develop an exit strategy that will wrap up involvement with the pilot projects responsibly and fill gaps in support. This includes helping Justicia to register as a CSO and create a vision, a strategy, plans and a monitoring system for the group. In Mawa, it needs to ensure that the first four water harvesting tanks installed for vulnerable households can be fully used.
- In all pilot communities, WHELL should facilitate planning sessions to identify how the communities can best continue their activities. Last, CARE should move forward with its plans to have its small business expert review the women's brick making enterprise in Tshiungani to see how it can be made into a viable income generating activity.
- For new proposals, CARE should identify areas of mutual interest with DWAF, which has policy responsibility and budget influence over municipal water service delivery and a broad range of activities that address the social aspects of service delivery. CARE and Mvula Trust should advocate for the issues identified in their targeting studies regarding the most vulnerable for service delivery, to be taken up at a national level. And last, CARE and Mvula Trust should retain their working relationship to focus on policy and advocacy issues. Both are well known by municipalities and communities as a result of WHELL and have good networks.

### ***LipFund (Kenya)***

- During the extension, LipFund should explore with Equity Bank the possibility of using LipFund funds to establish lines of credit with end markets such as KMC and Alpha Foods.
- A second recommendation for the extension is to increase the opportunities for PPG participation in study tours. They allow PPG members to establish personal relationships with purchasers and for trust to be built.
- If CARE continues to engage in livestock production in the Northeast, more needs to be done in future initiatives in terms of ranching and fattening livestock. There is a lot of potential in ranching/fattening, and this may be what smoothes out the curves in annual price fluctuations in this drought-prone area. Pastoralists will have a difficult time fulfilling contracts in drought years, or they will sell their livestock at local markets for very low prices. The options of establishing ranches in the project area or linking pastoralists to coastal ranches should be more fully explored.

## 1. Introduction

The following is a report of the final evaluation of the Poverty Alleviation through Civil Society Strengthening Program (PACS) (2004-2009) funded under the Australian Partnerships with African Communities (APAC) Australian Aid program. The APAC program is a five-year partnership between AusAID and seven ANGOs operating in seven countries. The goal of the APAC Program is “to contribute to poverty reduction and achievement of sustainable development in targeted countries in southern and eastern Africa”. The program involves three sectors: food security, communicable diseases (including HIV/AIDS) and water & sanitation. The purpose of the PACS program has been established as follows:

*To enhance livelihood security and well-being through improving rural communities’ access to quality services that mainstream effective responses to HIV/AIDS and address gender inequities*

The evaluation team considers the alteration of the purpose statement at the time of the PACS mid-term review to be appropriate since it better reflects the intervention strategies that the program is pursuing, and also emphasizes the final goal of improvement in household livelihood security, rather than focusing only on the delivery of services to households.

The PACS program has been implemented in Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa and Kenya, and designed within the context of the decentralization processes underway in these four countries. A challenge across Africa is how to make decentralization work. The program was designed to ensure that people’s priorities are reflected in planning and resource allocation systems at the local level and that these turned into real, improved basic services. This implies that citizens can influence decision-making at and above local levels, and requires attention to Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) as well as local government institutions. Another important challenge was to ensure that all program sectors deliver services in an integrated manner that mainstreams gender equity and HIV/AIDS.

The program recognizes that CSOs are central to the sustainable delivery of services that promotes voice, representation and accountability. It therefore has focused on developing civil society service delivery models to work to directly reduce poverty and has used these models as the basis for evidence-based advocacy to promote their further replication. The models aimed to facilitate the effective engagement of CSOs, including local NGOs and Community Based Organizations (CBOs), into wider policy and practice debates, and to build practical, service and advocacy linkages between civil society and government.

The objective of the final evaluation was to fully understand the impact of PACS in terms of the outcome-level achievements of each of the four sub-programs’ effectiveness, efficiency, relevance and sustainability. The evaluation sought to determine how effectively the most vulnerable populations were targeted, whether the interventions achieved their desired outcomes in terms of both quality and quantity, whether project resources, including commodities, were used efficiently, and, of paramount importance, the sustainability of program impact on the livelihoods of vulnerable beneficiary families.

## 1.1. Objectives of the PACS Program

The overall objective of PACS was supported by mutually reinforcing sub-program objectives as listed below:

- Developing and promoting operational models and practices that strengthen the delivery of food security services that mainstream gender and HIV/AIDS;
- Developing accountable systems of civil society and government service provision, which improve food security, access to water and knowledge of preventative health practices in a way that mainstreams gender;
- Promoting operational and locally accountable sustainable water and sanitation services that mainstream HIV/AIDS and gender equity; and
- Developing a socially responsible and commercially viable livestock model to support pastoral livelihood systems sustainably.

## 1.2. Program Approach

The overall PACS program builds upon previous CARE work in supporting increased food security through improved livelihoods security strategies and civil society capacity within the region. It applies a household livelihood security (HLS) approach developed and tested successfully by CARE that addresses the complex issues and problems faced by rural communities. CARE aims to generate, demonstrate and spread models for alleviating poverty through a series of interconnected approaches that build institutional capacities and partnerships, produce sustained agricultural productivity, enhance rural incomes, and improve market access.

In the four countries where PACS sub-programs were implemented, it has sought to directly benefit a total of over 600,000 people (including both primary and secondary beneficiaries) by improving their access to gender equitable government and NGO services to support agriculture, water, and HIV/AIDS and malaria prevention. Various levels of government staff and more than 750 CSOs were targeted to improve their skills in advocacy, fundraising, gender analysis, and HIV/AIDS mainstreaming as they promoted water management, health, agriculture and savings and loans models.

Three broad themes underpinning the four sub-program's approaches were 1) influencing policy and practice; 2) mainstreaming HIV/AIDS; and 3) building CSO capacities for service delivery. The sub-programs were designed to support the main objective through the following means:

- developing conceptual frameworks that articulate a process of engagement between duty bearers; local civil society and community based structures to take place;
- facilitating organizational relationships and linkages that are necessary for this engagement to take place in a way that will lead to effectively negotiated and resourced implementation strategies;
- promoting decentralization through rural linkages for service provision between rural/local organizations and service providers;

- promoting participatory approaches in all stages - including design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation;
- linking to CARE's relevant regional and international experience;
- utilizing the private sector where feasible; and
- developing the capacity of rural organizations to promote sustainability.

The program sought to ensure that the most vulnerable households (including female-headed households, households hosting orphans, households caring for chronically ill persons, and child-headed and elderly-headed households) were able to access and benefit from sub-program activities. PACS sub-programs applied a common approach of mainstreaming of HIV/AIDS within all sectors, and ensuring the consideration of how best to deliver services to meet the challenges of gender equity and HIV/AIDS.

### **1.3. Description of Sub-programs**

Each sub-program adapted the overall program approach to its country context and experiences. The four sub-program approaches are summarized below.

**Sub-program 1 (Malawi): Supporting & Mitigating the Impact of HIV/AIDS for Livelihood Enhancement Program (SMIHLE).** This sub-program built on the lessons, experiences and successes to date under the AusAID funded Central Region Livelihood Security Program. It aimed to develop replicable models and practices that strengthen the service response of CBOs, CSOs, government and the private sector to mitigate the impact of HIV/AIDS on food security. SMIHLE worked directly with CBOs to provide livelihood agriculture, marketing, and savings and loan technical services.

**Sub-program 2 (Mozambique): Strengthening Civil Society for Rural Empowerment (SCORE).** This sub-program built on experience and lessons learned through the Inhambane Livelihood Recovery Program (1999-2004) and the growth in civil society in the area during the project period. It aimed to strengthen existing CBOs to better provide marketing, business training, savings and loan support, and water supply services. In order to achieve required sustainability PACS simultaneously sought to build the number and capacity of NGO and local government service providers to build linkages with village level CBOs.

**Sub-program 3 (South Africa): Water, Health and Livelihoods Program (WHELL).** WHELL built on the existing partnership between CARE and the Mvula Trust to promote sustainable, replicable and locally accountable water and sanitation services that mainstream HIV/AIDS and gender equity. Models were developed to focus on translating national water policy into practical implementation systems through working with NGOs, CBOs and local government to create the linkages and systems required for effective service delivery. The sub-program sought to achieve its aims through a combination of capacity building approaches and direct technical support to local level organizations in undertaking and learning lessons from a range of sub-program funded 'good practice pilots' in key technical and methodological approaches for increased water and sanitation access.

**Sub-program 4 (Kenya): Livestock Purchase Fund (LipFund).** LipFund's main objective was to

develop a socially responsible and commercially sustainable livestock marketing model that mainstreams HIV/AIDS and gender. It was a continuation of the original LIME (Livestock Marketing Enterprise) Project. However, unlike the original strategy of CARE providing many of the key marketing services, LipFund was based on a livestock purchase fund managed by local banks and accessible by production groups and private sector traders.

The activities of each of the sub-programs have contributed toward several of the Millennium Development Goals. The goal to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger is addressed by village savings and loans (VSL) groups, seed banks and CBOs directed toward income-generating activities in SMIHLE and SCORE, and the pastoral production groups (PPG) in Lipfund. The goal to achieve universal primary education is addressed through the adult literacy program in SMIHLE. Gender equality and empowerment of women is promoted by encouraging participation of women in CSOs in all of the sub-programs. Combating HIV/AIDS is also addressed in all programs, through awareness training (SCORE, LipFund) and provision of support services to people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) (SMIHLE, WHELL, LipFund). Contribution toward developing a global partnership for development is supported by supporting local governance and decentralization in SMIHLE, SCORE, and WHELL.

#### **1.4. Evaluation Methodology**

The methodology used for the final evaluation was two-tiered: the first tier focused on program-level achievement, progress towards common objectives and issues; the second addressed sub-program level objectives, their area of focus, and crosscutting issues. The evaluation overall sought to assess whether the sub-programs contributed to achieve the program-level goal while taking into consideration their country focus and the widely disparate geographical distribution and management structures.

The final evaluation team employed a mixed set of rapid assessment methods to gather qualitative data for gauging program performance, program quality, and management effectiveness. The team featured expertise in quantitative data collection and analysis, participatory rapid appraisal, focus group discussions, community ethnography, team dynamic and network analysis, and institutional analysis. Evaluators used a gender analysis framework and sought to reflect and report upon the relative impact of the sub-programs upon women and men in terms of changes in their material well-being as well as social positions. In the course of designing the evaluation it was decided not to use quantitative methods such as household surveys. This was mainly due to the fact that the baseline surveys were poorly designed, and replication for temporal comparisons would not be highly beneficial. Instead, the evaluation team used primarily qualitative methods.

The evaluation process was highly participatory, incorporating key stakeholders and a wide cross-section of beneficiaries, local government institutions, NGO and CBO partners, technical partners, donors, and CARE program staff in the assessment process, including planning for implementation, analysis, and utilization of evaluations. In addition, whenever appropriate, the evaluators provided the opportunity to project and program participants to define their own measures of success and failure, including indicators. The team encouraged the participation of stakeholders at all levels to reflect results and impact on specific groups such as women and ethnic minorities, and the adoption of lessons learned and recommendations,

especially at the grass-root level.

## **2. Sub-program Level Findings**

### **2.1. SMIHLE (Malawi)**

The objective of this sub-program was *to develop and promote operational models and practices that strengthen the delivery of food security services that mainstream HIV/AIDS and gender.*

SMIHLE is based on primarily four operational, service-delivery models including community institutions (namely Village Umbrella Committees, VUCs), Village Savings and Loan Groups, Seed Bank Groups, and Marketing Groups. In addition, there was specific targeting of vulnerable sub-populations (mainly women and those living with HIV/AIDS) within these group models.

Objective-level indicators for SMIHLE included the number of models and practices adopted and adapted by CSOs and CBOs, and the percent of vulnerable households (including those affected by HIV/AIDS) with improved food security. Data gathered on these indicators clearly indicate widespread acceptance and provide some evidence of unsolicited spread of all of the models, with the exception of marketing.

#### **2.1.1. Effectiveness (Impact and Outcomes)**

The first indicator relating to the overall PACS goal is “the number of civil society and government organizations with improved capacity to deliver quality decentralized rural services that mainstream HIV/AIDS and gender”. Yet counting the number of service-providing organizations reveals little about whether or not quality services are being delivered<sup>1</sup>, so assessment of the status of organizational capacity and service delivery is contingent on other evaluation insights. For example, it is evident in SMIHLE that the project has not been able to establish the types of linkages to government it would have preferred. Its efforts to forge linkages in Dowa District have been more successful than in Lilongwe District. SMIHLE has worked with and supported Village Development Committees (VDCs), and it has included VAPs in the overall district planning process and facilitated meetings between VUCs, VDCs, and District Assembly Officials. The project has also worked with government agricultural extension agents. In Dowa District, SMIHLE has included the District Director of Planning and Development in several scorecard processes and follow-up meetings. This has led to some increased investments in afforestation, roads, and ponds.

Although there are no objective-level indicators for participation in groups by women and vulnerable individuals (such as PLWHA) per se, it should not be overlooked as a significant behavioral change. Communities were not overly discouraged by the lack of response to their requests from their District Assembly, according feedback from several groups. They have hope that someday they will be answered. Their participation should be viewed in relation to recent political history: for the previous ten years, under the previous government, community groups participated little in government decision making. So

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<sup>1</sup> However, SMIHLE has met or will meet its target in capacity building for VUCs, VDCs and ADCs, as well as its targets for developing CBOs such as seed banks and VS&Ls.

while the decentralization process is slow, the dialogue now in evidence between community and district levels demonstrates a significant improvement in government's attempt to respond to people's inputs and needs.

Another effect-level change SMIHLE hoped to promote was self-initiated activities by CBOs. During the evaluation it was noted that many of the VUCs have initiated their own activities, but beyond this there is still a strong dependency on groups for CARE services. Part of this is historical – rural households in Malawi have never been weaned off of government subsidies and handouts. However, the foundation of SMIHLE is to enable communities to participate in the decentralization process more effectively. Due to the pace of decentralization, it is difficult for communities to see any positive feedback – boreholes are not being drilled, access to markets is not improving, and few tangible improvements in livelihoods are evident. The project has faced strong challenges to overturn the underlying culture of dependency, but it has been able to develop some very strong groups.

Nevertheless there is enough evidence to conclude that some of the models and practices are spreading beyond the reach of the project as well, by either being studied and copied by other organizations, or being requested by communities who have heard of these different models and want CARE's assistance. SMIHLE's work with civil society organizations has been impressive, and indeed is the cornerstone of the project. It also separates SMIHLE from the other sub-programs in its ability to effectively integrate gender and HIV/AIDS into its programming.

SMIHLE has supported a number of specific groups to provide community-level services. Following are descriptions of effectiveness findings with regard to these specific aspects of the SMIHLE sub-program.

#### ***Village Umbrella Committees (VUCs)***

VUCs, the main community institution model, have been very effective. In SMIHLE, 208 VUCs have been created against a target of 200 VUCs. They are usually composed of 10-12 members from other CSOs and CBOs, develop their own constitution, and serve as a coordinating body for village-level activities, reporting to VDCs and village headmen. Thus, by providing leadership and direction, VUCs can be a very effective civil society organization at the community level. Drawing VUC members from existing community groups is a good strategy, because it means that all members come to the committee with interests and agendas from the groups they represent. This promotes a broader vision on the part of the VUCs.

The VUCs are responsible for Village Action Planning that feeds into the local development process. Current and former VUC members also compose membership of the VDCs, which adds continuity to the planning process. VUCs are responsible for identifying and supporting community agents that facilitate the formation of seed clubs and seed banks (discussed below). They see their duties primarily in community mobilization, planning, health, seed banks, and hygiene. The quality of the work witnessed during the evaluation was high, as was the awareness and enthusiasm of group members. Every group interviewed wanted more training, particularly training on leadership strategies.

In terms of real impact for improving livelihoods in the future, vast potential lies with the VUCs.

Malawi's decentralization policy requires that all villages develop a Village Action Plan (VAP) that represents community needs and priorities; the aggregate of these VAPs would be assessed in the development program of the VDC. However, there is no plausible manner in which VDCs could themselves identify community needs in an informed and unbiased way. Communities need a voice through a local structure that represents all households, listens to community members and makes informed judgments, and is ultimately held accountable as a conduit for feeding community information into the government system.

CARE's VUC model appears to be meeting all of the criteria for a community-based organization that is representative, transparent, and responsible. Unfortunately, the decentralization process has not gone well, and there are no real tests whereby the efficacy of the VUC-based needs assessment ultimately results in government-led action at the village level. For now, VUCs are playing more of a community organizer role, for example by maintaining local roads, monitoring seed bank activity, or organizing local events. They appear to be doing this effectively and with a desire to address the needs of vulnerable households.

### ***Village Savings and Loan Groups (VSLs)***

Perhaps the strongest and most popular model SMIHLE promotes is that of the VSL groups. These groups have a predominantly female membership, and a significant number of women members come from vulnerable households. Some VSL groups have been established exclusively with PLWHA as members, one of the more empowering outcomes of the project. SMIHLE has established 215 VSL groups (out of a target of 200) but the demand is very high to develop more. Growth in interest of VSLs has been significant, especially during the last year when those outside the groups were able to see for themselves the benefits members were receiving from participating. Now the community volunteers have a difficult time keeping up with the demand for creating new VSLs.

SMIHLE has performed very responsibly in creating VSLs – on one hand giving them enough capacity-building and basic facilitation to establish the groups, while on the other hand not dictating how they should structure themselves or establish their rules. Thus, one sees a lot of variety in membership composition and expectations, lending rules and interest rates, repayment strategies, and problem solving. Default rates among members have been low, but default rates when money is loaned outside of the membership have been a problem. Feedback from VSL members suggests that the savings and loans have made dramatic changes in the lives of VSL members, in particular women. The VSLs have provided an avenue for empowerment by encouraging women to participate in groups for economic gains, by giving them more relevance in household income streams, and by providing some (not nearly enough, however) with opportunities to develop income-generating activities on their own. Women now say they can pay for school fees easier, buy fertilizer and other inputs for their own production, and have access to funds when there is a household emergency. Many said their husbands were reluctant to see them join in the beginning but were very supportive once they saw the benefits. As a result, today there is increasing demand by men to be members of VSLs.

### ***Seed Banks***

Seed banks are a very simple idea but have a significant and positive impact on vulnerable groups. They all start out with the objective of targeting vulnerable groups with small quantities of seed that they can

plant and then pay back after the cropping season. SMIHLE has created 208 seed banks against a target of 200 seed banks.

The VUCs appear to be successfully applying vulnerability criteria to identify those eligible to participate in seed banks, including PLWAs, who are among those identified by VUCs as the most vulnerable, as well as poor female-headed households, elderly-headed households, and poor households hosting orphans.

Most of the time, members are required to pay back into the seed bank twice the amount of seed or cuttings they received. Thus, if no problems occur (such as the almost complete loss of beans last year in Lilongwe District) the bank can grow almost exponentially. The VUC assists in targeting who gets the seed. As the seed bank grows, more and more households can be included. One seed bank visited in Nakutepa had been operational for four years, and now everyone is being provided seed.

The seed banks have primarily distributed soybean, groundnuts, beans, sweet potato, and Irish potato to group members. Most have had success in planned payback, with the noticeable exception of beans last season that were largely destroyed by a disease. Individual members sometimes have difficulty paying back twice what they were provided, and usually the seed bank committee allows them to only pay back what they took out. Overall, however, all seed banks are seeing positive growth. They are particularly suited to the poor and vulnerable households since payback is in kind and not in cash.

What is not apparent is how successful the seed banks have in seed selection to improve the gene pool for next season's planting. Community facilitators have been provided training on seed selection techniques, but these messages do not seem to have always guided the practices of the seed banks. When asked if farmers select the best quality seed to pay back to the seed bank answers were mixed. Many said they did, but when probed about how this was done answers were vague. Discussions with local extension agents suggested that few people were trained to do this, and it did not appear to be within the guidelines of the seed banks themselves.

### ***Marketing Clubs and Groups***

The most problematic part of SMIHLE has been promoting marketing of surplus through the formation of marketing clubs, groups and associations. SMIHLE has helped developed 201 marketing clubs at the village level, 30 marketing groups at the group village headman level, and six marketing associations at the Traditional Authority level. The purpose of the groups is to monitor prices, identify traders and buyers, and promote group marketing of agricultural surplus (mainly groundnuts and soy, but other crops as well) in order to obtain more favorable terms of trade. To date, SMIHLE has had few success stories. It was also unfortunate that in 2007 several of the marketing groups under SMIHLE were swindled by a dishonest buyer who took possession of a significant amount of groundnuts and never paid the groups their money. The case remains in the court system in Lilongwe.

One of the marketing challenges in the project area is the poor state of rural infrastructure: it does not encourage a lot of buyers to come to the area, so there is little competition. Another challenge is that surpluses are often small, and so collectively, it takes many households to pool their surpluses. Future marketing strategies may have to consider options such as contract farming. Overall, the marketing

component needs serious redesign; there is not enough time remaining in the current project for redesign, so this component should be carefully reviewed to develop new models which CARE-Malawi and CARE-Australia can incorporate into follow-up proposals.

### ***Impact on Food Security***

SMIHLE aims to have a positive impact on food security. There is limited quantitative evidence regarding any improvements in food security, despite the fact that food security indicators are relatively easy to collect. SMIHLE has begun to participate in monitoring of agreed food security indicators with the Ministry of Agriculture. However these indicators are very broad and cannot be directly associated with program activities. Despite a lack of quantitative data, there are tangible aspects of SMIHLE with direct links to food security. VSLs, for example, have resulted in increased income for a modest number of members who take loans to start income generation activities (IGAs). More importantly, VSLs distribute shares in December, when households need cash to purchase agricultural inputs. Access to adequate amounts of inputs is the largest constraint to smallholder agriculture in Malawi. By distributing shares in December, women report that they have more money available to purchase inputs, and this has improved their production. Additional disposable income from IGAs coupled with improvements in production from increased use of inputs will have a direct and positive impact on food security.

Seed banks have played a direct role in improving opportunities for positive food security outcomes in several ways as well. They provide the most vulnerable households with improved varieties (some of which are drought-tolerant), and they can result in increased dietary diversity. Finally, the CBOs have been strengthened to integrate food security into their activities.

### **2.1.2. Efficiency**

In terms of efficiency, SMIHLE made two important adjustments during implementation. Initially SMIHLE was overly ambitious in anticipation of the number of groups it could form and the area it could cover. During the mid-term this was duly noted, and the project made appropriate adjustments and has since met or exceeded realistic targets for building its models. SMIHLE also works over a realistic number of districts and Traditional Authorities (TAs), so that driving times are not excessive and both field and office-based staff can have frequent contact with communities.

The second important adjustment the project made related to how field staff were organized. Initially SMIHLE had each field staff member doing everything, from facilitating VUCs, to establishing seed banks, to working with PLWAs. Given the diversity of interventions, it soon realized this was inefficient, and that staff had particular experiences and skills unique to them as individuals that would be advantageous to the project in particular areas. SMIHLE now pairs staff to work together within a TA, and each has her/his own areas of specialty. This has made a real difference in implementation and was very noticeable to community members. SMIHLE also recognized that frequent contact with groups is critical, so it moved its field staff to more strategic locations when necessary, which enabled them to visit communities more often, thereby increasing their visibility and effectiveness.

The VUCs were an important element to promote from the standpoint of efficiency. The baseline study showed that up to 16 village-level committees existed in some villages, which had been organized for a

variety of benefits and functions. There is no effective way so many CBOs could self-coordinate and position themselves to more effectively link to local government. The VUCs include members from each group that functions in the community, so ostensibly become representatives of the community as a whole. If decentralization ever moves forward, VUCs are well-positioned to provide meaningful community input to VDCs, which in turn use this in area development. Even in the absence of a strong decentralization process, VUCs have identified useful activities and have performed important roles in their communities. Having said this, it is important that VUCs move to be more self-sustainable.

SMIHLE has been able to effectively leverage project resources and institutional structures both at the project and community levels. It has undertaken three initiatives (adult literacy, water and sanitation, and irrigation) using non-project resources to address requests from VUCs. At the community level, volunteer facilitators have coordinated provision of services from various sources (government extension, INGOs such as Africare, local NGOs, etc.). These contacts with service providers have been particularly useful during the project as a substitute for working through the formal structures of decentralization, which have not yet become operational. This strategy of finding alternative channels for community groups to find access to services should be continued, possibly by developing a strategy for providing VUCs with the necessary capacities to effectively approach these alternative service providers.

SMIHLE, despite good intentions, has not been effective in evenly distributing resources over the project area. Inadequate funding has resulted in uneven (and often inequitable) distribution of some important resources, such as drip irrigation kits for PLWHA, cash boxes for VSLs, and certain types of seeds for seed banks. While it is commendable that SMIHLE has leveraged resources to address such needs as adult literacy training, the services have not been distributed evenly throughout the sites. This can and in some cases has created 'haves' and 'have nots'. Because communities are aware of services received by others, this has created a little distrust among some (although SMIHLE is still greatly revered!).

There has also been some inequity of participation, especially in VSLs but also in adult literacy training. SMIHLE developed the demand, but then had few plans on how to scale up, due mostly to a lack of financial (but also some human) resources.

### **2.1.3.Relevance**

#### ***Women's Empowerment***

In SMIHLE, about 44 percent of direct beneficiaries are female, with the majority participating in V+SLs. Based on interviews with group members, VSLs have been an effective vehicle for economically empowering women. Many group members noted that although they must still discuss how to use the receipts of VSL share payments and income they might earn with their husbands, they feel they now have more voice in spending decisions since they are now bringing more income into the household.

Within the timeframe of the project, addressing issues of economic empowerment of women has been one of the most effective strategies. Economic empowerment provides impetus for more advanced social and economic empowerment; the requirement of a minimum number of women on VUCs is a start toward political empowerment. The women members of VUCs visited for this evaluation were quite articulate

about group aims, activities, challenges and achievements.

In hindsight, adult literacy should have been a main intervention of SMIHLE because it is central to women's empowerment, to livelihood enhancement, and to promoting active participation and good governance. CARE should have made a stronger case for co-financing adult literacy; not having it throughout the project area has created inequities, or a system of haves and have-nots.

### ***Vulnerable Groups***

Before SMIHLE, relatively few vulnerable groups were involved in village-level committees and decision-making. SMIHLE has greatly enhanced social inclusion and equitable access to resources through its work in good governance, its inclusion of community-based organizations under the VUCs, its special attention to improving production and diet diversity through seed banks, its support to savings and loans through VSLs, and its specific support to PLWAs. The largest impacts to vulnerable groups are through the seed banks and VSLs. Seed banks specifically target vulnerable groups identified by community members themselves. The fact that some PLWA groups have their own VSLs is quite powerful (and should be highlighted more as a detailed case study during the extension phase). Savings and loans available through participation in VSLs enable vulnerable households to access their own savings or emergency social funds for payment of hospital bills when members are sick, or for payment of medicines. The support PLWAs provide for each other by participating in a PLWA group and/or a VSL cannot be underestimated in importance.

### ***Decentralization***

SMIHLE was designed to support the decentralization strategy of Malawi. The Government of Malawi adopted its Decentralization Policy in 1996, with intent to decentralize political and administrative authority down to the district level. The impact of decentralization was to consolidate services at lower levels to achieve more in poverty reduction. As a result of the policy, the District Assembly (DA) is the focal point for district-level policy and program development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. The DA is composed of elected ward councilors; it is serviced by a secretariat and headed by a district commissioner or chief executive for rural and urban areas, respectively<sup>2</sup>. The District Executive Committee (DEC) is composed of technical staff from government departments (e.g., Extension) and civil society organizations. The DEC is the technical arm of the DA and is directly responsible for formulation and implementation of District Development Plans. The Area Development Committee (ADC), below the DA, operates as a Traditional Authority, consisting of many villages and headed by a Chief. The lowest official tier is the Village Development Committee (VDC), composed of community members.

While the decentralization process looks good on paper, it has not been very effective. In response, projects such as SMIHLE have developed models to serve as a bridge between communities and local government. In SMIHLE the VUCs work directly with the VDC (many members are the same) and the VUCs, through their smaller sub-sector committees, have good representation from women and vulnerable groups in the community. The overall weak link to local government, however, remains problematic, but not due to a lack of effort on the part of SMIHLE staff. Government plans in decentralization have moved slower than expected, and while SMIHLE has been able to establish

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<sup>2</sup> People in Planning in Malawi: Lessons from the APAC Programme in Eastern and Southern Africa. Fiona Samuels, Bright Sibale and Kerry Selvester. ODI Project Briefing No. 18, January 2009.

linkages to local government entities, especially in Dowa District, it has not had the types of opportunities envisioned at the beginning of the project.

SMIHLE documents note that the project is developing the capacity of government extension agents, but the evaluation team found this to be weak. There is little or no evidence of joint planning between SMIHLE and local extension staff, and extension agents are not able to effectively complement or add on the activities SMIHLE is doing, especially with respect to seed banks. This lack of coordination with extension the extension service has not been for lack of initiative from the side of SMIHLE. However, the efforts to implement coordinated activities have been restricted by financial constraints on the part of the government services.

#### **2.1.4.Sustainability**

Overall, many of the activities SMIHLE is engaged in have a high probability of sustainability. However, SMIHLE needs to develop an exit strategy that would address many of the sustainability issues. The project has begun this process, gathering lessons learned from trainings with community facilitators, local leaders, and government partners. This process should be continued over the course of the extension year.

There is reason to believe that a number of VUCs will be sustainable institutions. Not all, however, because there are local factors, such as lack of trust or support from a few of the village headmen, that could eventually derail some VUCs. Clearly, the success of VUCs depends very much on individual personalities and village-level politics. It should not be expected that all villages will have dynamic VUCs that will operate independently. However, there are no general structural limitations on the continued operations of the VUCs. Many village chiefs actually welcome the VUCs, because they took over a portion of the chiefs' duties and responsibilities. Chiefs reported this as a positive contribution, and not a usurpation of their power. However, it is also true that some chiefs had a somewhat limited view of the VUCs – they mostly mentioned the role of the VUCs in monitoring seed clubs, and the ability of the VUC to act as representatives of the chiefs when the chiefs were absent from the village. The fact that VUC members come from other community organizations means that the members have specific interests and agendas to bring to the VUC, and so their continued participation in the umbrella organization has a more specific reason. To the extent that the VUC members see their role as essentially coordinating and monitoring activities of other groups in the communities, they should not view participation in the VUCs as overly time-consuming.

As mentioned above, SMIHLE has become the de-facto service provider, at least in the eyes of community members, through its support to VUCs, seed bank establishment, VSLs, and PLWA support groups. There is strong sentiment (even fear) about SMIHLE eventually ending. Many see this as abandonment, and so SMIHLE staff need to continually bring up the topic of the sustainability of the models with committee members. It would also be useful to develop SMIHLE's exit strategy in concert with VUCs –perhaps as an explicit exercise with them on sustainability.

Community agents are being asked to do a lot of different activities. It would be useful to have a system that rewards them more for their contributions. Such items as bicycles, plastic boots, writing materials, and notebooks are needed, but there should be a way for the community/groups to contribute. Seed banks and VSLs, for example, could pay a small annual fee for the volunteers. Bicycles would be especially valuable to help community agents get around to more groups.

### **2.1.5. Lessons Learned**

- Local Agent<sup>3</sup> approaches have been very successful. Volunteers play a key role in facilitating group activities and serving as an extension, in a sense, to project staff. Their sustainability, in terms of training and replacement, is a key to the future of these communities.
- The models SMIHLE created result in groups that vary greatly in terms of capacities, dynamics, and leadership. After a time, a project needs to take stock of which groups are strong and which are weak, and with the stronger groups it needs to challenge/expand their thinking – to push their limits. This will create more dynamic learning (for both CARE and the groups) and new activities that groups can engage in. For example, many seed banks would like to have maize as part of the seed bank. There is no reason seed banks cannot be expanded to include maize, or even poultry or fish. Strong groups can experiment with adding new activities, creating sustainable funding mechanisms, and expanding their social programs.
- One unintended impact of VSLs is the increased risk they are exposed to after they accumulate significant cash assets. One VSL was robbed in December 2008 by a local and his friends. The money was being kept in a cash box with a VSL committee member at her house. After the incident, the VSL decided it was better to keep their cash in a bank. However, they have yet to open a bank account because the fees charged by the banks are relatively high<sup>4</sup>, especially in the minds of those with no previous banking experience. Issues of securing funds (and other assets accumulated by groups such as seeds) need to be factored into future planning.

### **2.1.6. Way Forward**

#### *Project Extension*

- In order to better address sustainability, SMIHLE should conduct an assessment of its models. The assessment should be based on jointly established criteria (many of which could build off of the scorecard experience<sup>5</sup>) for each model. The assessment should result in a clear classification along

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<sup>3</sup> The term “Local Agent” includes both community volunteers, who train and support VSLs, and community facilitators, who train and support seed banks.

<sup>4</sup> In Malawi, banks do charge a number of fees for cash withdrawals and other services. Project staff confirmed that the fees are indeed high.

<sup>5</sup> CARE Malawi has developed a “scorecard” tool used for community-level, participatory monitoring (e.g. social auditing, planning, and evaluation). It is used for demanding accountability, transparency, inclusion and responsibility from service providers by service users. It brings providers and users together to analyze issues underlying service delivery and to explore ways of addressing those issues. Common tools that are used in the process include, scoring, ranking, social mapping, focus group discussions and trend analysis.

the lines of ‘weak’, ‘moderate’, and ‘strong’ groups. It should then develop a strategy to work with each of these classes. The single most significant element missing from SMIHLE’s current programming is the lack of using strong institutions to a) expand the range of activities these groups could do to further the food and livelihood security of its members, and b) act as mentors to other like-institutions that need mentoring.

- Both VDCs and VUCs would like to have more monitoring methods. They see the advantage in the scorecard methodology but want simpler, less time-consuming methods for monitoring road work and adult literacy. They also want to know how to evaluate budgets or potential contracts.
- Improve CARE Malawi monitoring and evaluation systems. While CARE Malawi’s monitoring systems have many strong features, such as well-designed M&E plans, excellent output-level monitoring, and good indicators, the strength of the M&E staff allows more outcome-level monitoring and reporting to be achieved. Community-led monitoring is a great exercise, and CARE Malawi has taken it very seriously. However, it does not substitute for rigorous project-level monitoring that quantifies effect-level changes. Proper monitoring produces high-quality data that allows CARE to learn from its activities, and advocate for funding opportunities using evidence-based approaches. Future baseline and other quantitative surveys need to be designed using stronger and more rigorous methods. Analysis of such studies should include statistical comparisons.
- SMIHLE should experiment with creating networks based on its models. It should start with the VSLs, as they have the most to gain initially from being part of a network. Networks will also enhance women’s empowerment, taking it to the next level. Networks can have a very positive impact on VSL performance and improve the efficiency with which SMIHLE can address existing constraints in VSL performance.
- While the structure of VUCs appears to be generally sustainable, the project should not expend large resources on many years of support to individual VUCs. A better strategy would be to work intensively with VUCs in the first year, providing extensive training and perhaps facilitating a community scorecard exercise toward the end of the first year, less intensive contact in the second year, and shifting to monitoring and occasional backstopping support after the second year. This strategy would allow for a larger number of communities to undergo the VUC formation process. It is more important to expose as large a number of communities as possible to the possibility of forming civil society organizations, rather than working very intensively with a small number of VUCs over many years. The project design should accept that a certain proportion of VUCs will not sustain, but it is more important to provide as many communities as possible the opportunity to form civil society organizations. Clearly there has to be some maximum level of “failure” that would require a review of the implementation strategy, but spending too much time and too many resources on a small number of VUCs to try to achieve 100 percent “success” is not an efficient use of resources for civil society organizations.

### ***New Proposals***

- Community groups reported demand for irrigation kits and treadle pumps. Future projects (not the current SMIHLE) could examine financial feasibility of projects using these irrigation materials (e.g. projects for specific crops; examining the physical production potential based on agroclimatic conditions as well as the marketing potential). If financially attractive options are identified, the project could work with VSL groups to purchase necessary irrigation materials and undertake the projects as commercial activities.
- CARE Malawi should develop clear and comprehensive exit strategies early in the life cycle of its projects. Exit strategies articulate how project components will transition after project resources are withdrawn. As such, they ensure better program outcomes and encourage commitment to program sustainability.

## 2.2. SCORE (Mozambique)

The overall objective of the SCORE sub-program was to develop and promote replicable and locally accountable decentralized service delivery models that improve livelihood security while mainstreaming HIV/AIDS and gender. The indicators were 1) district development plans reflect society needs including mainstreaming HIV/AIDS and gender; 2) number of models adapted by CSOs and government; and 3) number of households with improved access to services.

Objective verification of these indicators at the time of the evaluation was difficult for several reasons. First, five-year district development plans are only being developed during this coming year, and the CDLs were not yet in place to participate in the previous five-year planning process, so it was not possible to observe the impacts of CDLs on district development plans. (District government officials express strong expectations that the CDLs will significantly improve the process of decentralization by bringing communities more directly into the planning process.) Second, the process of decentralization in Mozambique has been changing significantly over the past few years. CSOs and government have not been able to develop new models in this changing and uncertain policy environment. Finally, the sub-program has not yet conducted a survey to collect information about household access to services. Presently, the general implementation strategy of SCORE is to work with two kinds of groups in local communities: Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). CBOs are groups of community members that are engaged in specific income-generating activities. Some CBOs have a strictly commercial orientation: their activities provide additional income or savings to CBO members. Other CBOs have a social purpose: they engage in economic activities to generate income, which can then be used to support needy households or individuals within their communities. For example, some CBOs produce food to distribute to needy households, or raise cash to purchase school supplies for orphans. The SCORE project promotes the CBOs to take on these social support functions, but not all do. Note that a large number of the CBOs currently being supported by SCORE were actually formed prior to SCORE, under a program that did not emphasize the social character of CBOs. In addition to the CBOs, the sub-program supports the formation and operation of CSOs: local development committees known locally as *Comités de Desenvolvimento Local* (CDLs). These committees represent the interests of the entire community. They identify and prioritize the problems

within a community and work with local governments or other service providers to find ways to resolve the problems.

SCORE also works with government representatives and consultative councils (also a kind of CSO) at the district and *posto administrativo* (PA) or administrative post level. The sub-program works in communities to help form and then support the activities of these organizations. Local government organizations have also been supported with training, and the sub-program works to strengthen links between the local government bodies and community-level CSOs.

### **2.2.1. Effectiveness (Impact and Outcomes)**

The sub-program has worked to achieve the overall objective by undertaking activities designed to deliver the following outputs (normally referred to as “effects” or “outcomes” in evaluation terminology):

*Output 1: Gender sensitive HIV/AIDS prevention and mitigation strategies, including strategies to enhance asset security for women and men, are incorporated as an integral part of project intervention.*

In order to achieve this output, the project provided training in HIV/AIDS awareness and mitigation strategies to the groups and organizations it has worked with in communities and districts – CBOs, CDLs, consultative groups, and district technical teams. Currently the project applies a training-of-trainers (TOT) model. Generally, two individuals in each participating organization receive training in HIV/AIDS and gender awareness provided by project staff. These individuals provide the training to the other members in their organizations. While this strategy may be quite cost-effective as a means of transmitting basic information to a large number of individuals, it is less effective as a way to mainstream HIV/AIDS and gender awareness into the activities of these organizations. From the observations of the evaluation team, the HIV/AIDS and gender training has been a compartmentalized activity, and the issues covered in the trainings have not been organically incorporated into the activities of CBOs, CDLs, consultative committees, or district level technical committees. The main impact of the training has been on awareness-raising, rather than on developing and supporting coherent mitigation strategies by the CSOs and CBOs. This finding was supported by comments from district staff as well as interviews with members of the collaborating organizations. The underlying problem is that the project does not directly promote and support the mainstreaming process within the collaborating organizations, but instead leaves the initiative to the organizations themselves. Not surprisingly, community-based organizations generally do not adopt new priorities and practices that conflict with traditional social norms.

According to project staff, one of the greatest obstacles to mainstreaming HIV/AIDS issues is persistent “self-stigma” associated with HIV-positive status: HIV-positive individuals avoid disclosing their HIV status. Thus, while communities may be willing to provide support to individuals with advanced symptoms of AIDS and orphans, individuals who are HIV-positive may avoid testing out of fear of ostracism by their communities and a lack of awareness of more positive options available for living with HIV. It is important to note that communities within the SCORE project area are very isolated, often distant from the nearest facility that can provide counseling, testing, or antiretroviral treatments (ART), so the options for testing and mitigation of the effects of illness are quite limited.

In terms of mainstreaming of gender issues, one important activity of the project is to ensure that one-half of the CDL members are women. This may appear at first glance to be a superficial and perhaps ineffective strategy, since there is no guarantee that women will actually participate even if they are CDL members. However, in the short timeframe of the project, ensuring that women are included in the formal organizational structures is probably the most that the project can meaningfully undertake. Furthermore, based on field observations by the evaluation team (and also noted in the mid-term evaluation), while men still dominate the leadership positions in the CDLs, women do appear to be active participants, at least in group discussions.

Formation of CBOs with female membership also appears to be an effective way to economically empower women. The VSL groups seem to be particularly effective vehicles for women to enhance their economic status.

Indicators identified for Output 1 are the following: 1) CBOs (and one NGO) have gender-related indicators integrated into their monitoring systems; 2) HIV/AIDS focal teams carry out at least two training activities per year within their organizations; and 3) strategies in the area of HIV/AIDS prevention and mitigation of gender inequities are incorporated into SCORE. Based on field observations, CBOs and CDLs were found not to have any formal monitoring system and were not tracking any indicators related to HIV/AIDS or gender. All CBOs and CDLs that were interviewed did have focal teams (normally two individuals) that received HIV/AIDS training, and they reported that they had provided training to members of their groups. Members of CDLs reported awareness of HIV/AIDS messages, but there was little indication that the CDLs had internalized these messages into their plans and actions. Some CBOs are providing support to PLWHA and Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC).

*Output 2: CBOs improve livelihood security in a sustainable manner through clearly defined livelihood goals for both genders.*

In order to offer means for vulnerable households and individuals, including women, to improve their livelihood security conditions, SCORE works to establish and support groups within communities to undertake income-generating activities<sup>6</sup>. The groups are also promoted as means to provide cash or other resources to more vulnerable households in the communities. The project does not have quantitative records of the activities and outputs of the groups, although this information collection process had been initiated at the time of the evaluation. Interviews with CBOs during the evaluation revealed a range of situations of CBOs, but generally the level of economic gain obtained by the interviewed CBOs was quite meager. In most cases, the poor results were attributable to poor agricultural growing conditions (drought). Rural CBOs face difficult challenges in northern Inhambane. Agriculture, the main economic activity, is generally not very productive and quite risky due to generally low and erratic rainfall patterns in the area. In addition, the districts covered by the project are quite isolated and, with the exception of Vilanculos district, far from major market centers. The agroclimatic conditions, geography, and poor road access are all important factors that restrict the commercial opportunities for groups in the project area. These factors place severe constraints on the range of economically viable options available to CBOs.

In addition to these economic challenges, NGOs also face difficulties in establishing independent, self-sustaining groups to undertake economic activities. CBOs have a long and complex history in northern Inhambane, an area that is prone to natural disasters and where relief efforts have often been organized

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<sup>6</sup> The income may be in the form of food production rather than cash.

around providing support to community groups. Thus, there have been incentives for individuals to form groups as a means to receive direct support from the government or other organizations. However, these groups were not based on any coherent strategy for the groups to continue on their own. Furthermore, in recent years, the government *Orçamento de Investimento e Iniciativas Locais* (Budget for Investment and Local Initiatives) or OIIL program, which has promoted the allocation of funds to community groups, has created artificial, project-based incentives for individuals to form into groups. In this environment, CARE and other NGOs have experienced difficulties in establishing independent community groups organized to undertake and maintain activities based solely on the initiative of group members, and thus in enhancing possibilities for sustainability.

It is also important to note that CARE has been supporting community-based groups since before the inception of SCORE. In fact, many of the CBOs supported by SCORE were formed under previous CARE projects and have been receiving support for a long time. There is likely a need for long-term support to CBOs before they can become independent, self-sustaining groups, especially given the history of formation of community groups within the area. In particular, groups need to be reoriented away from dependence on outside support, to consider how they can operate with the resources they are able to obtain through their own efforts. However, the project, and CARE in general, needs to develop a clearer strategy for working with CBOs that explicitly avoids reliance on project-based incentives that foster groups' dependence on continuous support from outside projects.

In addition to providing technical support to CBOs, the project provides sub-grants to CBOs to support initiation of economic activities. Currently funds are distributed equally among the four project districts. CBOs prepare proposals, and the proposals are reviewed by the local CDLs and the project. Project criteria favor proposals that provide for the needs of the most vulnerable groups. Sub-grants are typically provided for purchases of seeds or other agricultural inputs. The sub-grant strategy is problematic for several reasons. First, it is counter to currently accepted practices for supporting development activities. Current thinking is that NGOs should not make direct transfers of material support for economic activities: if activities are economically viable, then the individuals or groups undertaking them should pay for the inputs. This is to discourage the perception that it is the responsibility of outside organizations to provide necessary inputs, and encourage the perception that individuals or groups themselves need to incur any expenses required to engage in economic activities. Also, the sub-grant approach is inconsistent with other development approaches being supported within the project, namely the VSL groups promoted by Kukula, which are based on the notion that groups should mobilize their own savings rather than receive donations from others. The approach is also inconsistent with another CARE livelihoods project, SEED, which also works with groups to promote various livelihood activities and operates in the same districts as SCORE. However, SEED provides only technical assistance: groups must finance all material inputs. The contradiction in approaches between SEED and SCORE leads to confusion in the communities, where some groups are provided with materials, while other groups must purchase them.

Indicators identified in Output 2 are: 1) percentage of respondents who make at least two behavior or practice changes as a result of training received; and 2) percentage of surveyed members of CBOs who report that their lives have improved in concrete ways. The SCORE program does not currently have the necessary information collection system in place to measure these indicators. This information would have to be obtained from surveys of CBO members. SCORE should undertake a survey of CBO members to obtain this information, as well as other information about perceived benefits and problems associated

with participation in CBOs.

*Output 3: CSO/NGO, private sector and government service providers offer services that respond to locally established priorities*

The activities of SCORE related to this output have changed substantially over the course of the project. These changes have been appropriate, given the major changes that have taken place in the decentralization process since the inception of SCORE. Initially, the project provided support to the district-level technical teams. The technical teams in the four project districts all reported that the training they received from the project was extremely helpful in assisting them to be able to better meet their changed responsibilities within the decentralization process. However, the evaluation team was not able to independently verify the impact of these trainings, and the extent to which the training provided to the technical teams actually provided improved delivery of public services to rural communities also could not be assessed.

Observation of CDLs by the evaluation team revealed a marked difference in the characteristics of these groups. While some (particularly the more recently-formed) seemed to be quite dynamic and energized to tackle problems within their communities, others (especially the older groups) seemed less active. There were also indications that the selection of individuals to serve on the CDL was not always based on the individuals' own interests. For example, one woman stated that she had been appointed to the health sub-committee, but had no background in health, and felt she was not able to contribute effectively in this area. The differences in comportment of the CDLs in terms of their years of operation suggest a basic problem in motivation of these groups: the initial enthusiasm wears off over time. One possible reason is that until now the CDLs have been able to demonstrate few tangible benefits that they have brought to their communities. CDLs in particular communities are not yet able to demonstrate that their communities have received specific services or support as a result of the actions of the CDLs. In part this is because of the long-term and opaque nature of the five year planning process.

One concern regarding the project approach to the CDLs relates to the decision to provide CDLs with necessary materials to build an office structure for the CDLs within the community. Unless the community at large shares in and recognizes the social benefits of this structure, there is a concern that community members will perceive that resources are being provided to benefit the CDL, not the community. This may be perceived by community members as similar to the district governments' decision to use the financial resources made available to them first to refurbish the district offices, an investment that was not the highest priority for the district population.

Specific indicators to measure achievement of Output 3 are: 1) degree of coverage of CSO/NGO, private sector and government providers in agriculture, malaria protection<sup>7</sup> and microfinance in the project area; 2) percentage of rural residents who report services have improved, and 3) district plans reflect the CBOs<sup>8</sup> receiving support. Currently, the project does not maintain information to measure these indicators. Information for the first indicator would have to be compiled from government and other NGOs. Surveys of beneficiaries would be required to track the second and third indicators.

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<sup>7</sup> This objective should also include HIV/AIDS and gender mainstreaming.

<sup>8</sup> This refers to CDLs in this case.

### **2.2.2. Efficiency**

The initial design of the SCORE project was overly ambitious with respect to the planned level of coverage and support provided to collaborating organizations relative to available project resources and staff. The targeted number of collaborating organizations was thus reduced from the original project document. Even with this cutback, the project staff are still spread too thinly to provide the necessary services to all collaborating organizations. In addition, at this time there is only one other project-level support staff member. This position is nominally responsible for supporting decentralization activities, but in reality must provide backstop support for other areas as well.

Another project implementation decision made to increase efficiency had important negative consequences with regard to sustainability. This was the decision to develop CDLs in communities where the project was already working with CBOs, in order to economize on project resources and simplify field logistics. However, the fact that CDLs are being supported in scattered communities throughout the districts has imposed severe costs with regard to the sustainability of CDLs. The problems associated with dispersed CDLs with regard to sustainability are discussed in more detail in the section below on sustainability.

One important way to leverage project resources and improve efficiency is to find and exploit complementarities with the activities of other organizations. While SCORE has successfully exploited some useful complementarities, it has not taken advantage of other possibilities. Successful activities to leverage project resources include 1) subcontracting with Kukula to support VSL groups in the project area; and 2) coordination of activities (on an informal level) with GTZ and FOPROI in supporting the decentralization process. SCORE has been less successful in leveraging with other CARE projects operating out of the Vilanculos office: the SEED project which supports livelihoods in rural areas, as well as three other HIV/AIDS projects. SCORE has not been able to effectively coordinate with these projects. The main obstacle has been the bureaucratic problems associated with trying to combine activities funded by different donors. These are certainly real constraints; however, the lesson to be learned is that CARE needs to carefully design new projects to integrate strategies and activities with those of existing projects that operate in the same communities.

### **2.2.3.Relevance**

The design of the SCORE project is very relevant to the major problems confronting rural households in northern Inhambane. Meager livelihoods and very limited access to services are general problems, while PLWHA and women are particularly vulnerable. Political decentralization is well under way in Mozambique, but the process is in a state of rapid change and a high degree of uncertainty. Furthermore, while the decentralization process is highly supported at the district level, there is a strong need for support to ensure that the chain of decentralization of decision processes reaches the community level.

The SCORE project has taken on that role through the support of community-level CSOs.

The project has also been very good at adapting activities in order to maintain relevance in the context of changing conditions and circumstances. This has been most evident in the adoption of the CDLs as the model for supporting decentralization. The CDL model was first developed and implemented elsewhere in Mozambique, and the SCORE project correctly identified this strategy as an effective way to support PACS objectives within the changing environment of the decentralization process. In particular, other organizations, notably GTZ in Inhambane, are providing substantial technical support to district level government officers, so the switch to working with CDLs in the communities is an effective way to avoid duplication and exploit complementarities with other efforts.

There are additional examples to demonstrate changes in project implementation strategies that have been appropriate to changes in the institutional environment within which the project operates. For example, the project has given up active support of malaria prevention activities, since these are being carried out by other organizations now. In addition, the project had intended to work with INAS to help identify cases for INAS' social support in rural areas. Initial collaboration with INAS was encouraging, but changes in staff in both organizations led to a suspension of this collaboration.

There appear to be valid reasons for all these changes in project implementation strategies, and CARE Australia and AusAID seem to have accepted the changes. However, there is a lack of clear documentation in project records to explain in detail the changes in strategies and provide clear reasons for why the changes were made. Explicit documentation of these changes is important, both to make sure that the project and the donor are in agreement on the changes, and also to assist planning future activities and strategies.

#### **2.2.4.Sustainability**

With regard to the first output, the assessment team did not see evidence that the mainstreaming of HIV/AIDS and gender was effective. Also, the mainstreaming strategy followed by the project does not hold much promise that the effects will be sustainable. Without providing strong institutional support to mainstream HIV/AIDS and gender issues into the organizations' plans and actions, the TOT process implemented will not have any lasting effect.

Evidence is mixed with respect to the sustainability of CBOs, in reference to Output 2. Many CBOs have suffered from several years of poor agricultural conditions, and have not been able to generate sustained surpluses. This has slowed down their development. However, some of the CBOs interviewed have quite clear objectives and plans for what they want to accomplish, even though they have not yet been able to generate significant returns on their activities.

As mentioned previously, the strategy of providing sub-grants to CBOs undermines the sustainability of the economic activities of these groups. Provision of sub-grants tends to distort the expectations of group members, and diminishes their incentives to save funds to pay directly for necessary expenses: they come to rely on projects to provide them with necessary inputs. If they are to be used at all, sub-grants should only be used for very limited and specific purposes, such as to provide necessary inputs for a field test

exercise (so the group members do not have to invest their own resource in an uncertain activity), and it should be made clear to all groups the restricted nature of these sub-grants.

With respect to Output 3, district officials reported that communities with CDLs have been much more effective in participating in the decentralization process; communities with CDLs are able to articulate their needs much more effectively than communities without CDLs. This raises a concern about equity across communities, particularly within a single PA. If one community within a PA has a CDL, and other communities within the same PA do not have CDLs, those without will be at a disadvantage relative to their neighbors in the planning process. Therefore, from an equity perspective, it would be preferable to support CDLs in all communities within a PA, rather than have CDLs dispersed throughout the district with a few in each PA. Establishing CDLs within all communities of a PA can also provide ways to enhance the sustainability of CDLs, such as establishing formal networks among the CDLs within a PA, cross-visits, and other regular contacts among the groups.

Several observations about sustainability of the CDLs arose from the field visits with these organizations and in discussions with district government staff. First, the CDLs are quite different types of organizations from CBOs. The level of technical support that they need in order to become sustaining and functional organizations is less than for CBOs. For CDLs the main objective should be to ensure that a large number of communities are provided with necessary support for their establishment, but long-term support to these groups should be much lighter than for CBOs. On the other hand, unlike CBOs, the CDLs need to have continued access to outside resources, either from the government or elsewhere, in order to be sustainable. If CDLs are not able to effectively mobilize resources to address needs within their communities, they are likely to become moribund.

Another concern about the sustainability of CDLs relates to the fact that they are geographically dispersed. Developing CDLs within all communities of a PA would offer possibilities for establishing networks of CDLs among neighboring communities and organizing cross-visits. Through these mechanisms, a mutual support system could be established that could help the CDLs to function even without external support from the project.

### **2.2.5.Lessons Learned**

- Future project designs could benefit from carefully considering how proposed initiatives will complement and integrate with one another to support the overall objective. SCORE undertakes three different kinds of activities: it 1) provides HIV/AIDS and gender training to all collaborating organizations; 2) supports CBOs to improve livelihoods of vulnerable populations; and 3) supports CDLs, other CSOs, and local governments to improve participation of communities, and especially poor people within those communities, in decisions about delivery of public services. While these activities all contribute toward the various aspects of the final objective, they are not well integrated into a single, coherent overall objective. In particular, there is no clear logical reason why the project needs to be simultaneously involved in all these activities – one could imagine a project that works only with CBOs, only with CDLs, or only supports HIV/AIDS and gender mainstreaming. Because there are no clear complementarities or synergies among these components, there is competition for

project efforts and resources among these three components, which really address different objectives.

- One implication of the small field staff is that the field officers are responsible for providing support in all sectors – CBOs, CDLs, and local government organizations – and providing HIV/AIDS and gender training. This is quite a broad range of technical capacities required by the field staff. The SMIHLE project in Malawi encountered a similar problem of too many areas of technical responsibility for the field staff. The Malawi project adjusted so as to have field staff specialize in different functional areas. This approach would have been preferable in the SCORE project as well.
- The support of CDLs has the potential to greatly enhance the participation of communities in the decentralization process. However, to be effective and sustainable as organizations, the CDLs must have demonstrable and direct impact on conditions within their community. If they are not able to demonstrate that they have been able to provide some services through their efforts, then they will not have incentives to continue their activities. One possible way to provide a critical role for the CDLs is to provide them with a meaningful role in the allocation of outside resources, such as in the management of the OIIL resources. This could be a great opportunity for CARE to leverage the CDL structures that have been created in the communities, and provide the CDLs with effective control over important resources. In addition to helping to use OIIL resources more effectively, this strategy could also help to establish CDLs as sustainable institutions within the communities.

## **2.2.6. Way Forward**

Following are recommendations and considerations for program improvements in both the extension and future projects.

### ***Project Extension***

- The project extension could benefit from the lessons learned from the use of the institutional scorecard in SMIHLE, the Malawi sub-program, and consider implementing this with CBOs, CDLs, and consultative groups in Mozambique.
- SCORE should undertake a survey of community groups supported by the project, namely CBOs and CDLs. The survey should be designed to obtain the following information from each group:
  - description of the group purpose and goal(s);
  - group structure and membership profile;
  - activities of the group (including revenues generated);
  - details of the group's action plan and M&E system;
  - description of support received from SCORE;
  - assessment of strengths and weaknesses of the support received from SCORE;
  - self assessment of group (SWOT); and
  - description of future plans.

The project team has already begun to collect some of this information, but more detailed information about activities and plans of the organizations should also be obtained.

- Using the information collected in the survey described above, the project should identify procedures to assess the capacities of individual CBOs and make programmatic decisions according to those assessments: which CBOs should be discontinued from receiving further support, which are likely to benefit from further support, and which are ready to receive other kinds of support or to be “graduated” to operate on their own. Developing this strategy for assessing CBOs and establishing appropriate interventions for different categories of CBOs should be a priority activity during the extension of the SCORE project, and be incorporated into future projects as well.

### ***New Proposals***

- Future projects should address project design issues that hampered the achievement of SCORE objectives, namely, they should seek to improve the integration of project components (CBOs, CSOs, HIV/AIDS and gender mainstreaming). Lessons can be learned from the experience of the Malawi sub-program.
- Consider placing emphasis on supporting the decentralization process. The work with CBOs could focus on providing them with necessary capacities to develop good OIIL proposals.
- Similarly, work with CDLs as community-level organizations to support CBOs and individuals in the development of OIIL proposals.

The project needs to develop a more strategic way to provide support to CBOs in light of the variations in capacities and interests across these groups. One aspect of such a strategy would be to identify activities that are likely to provide sustainable economic returns to groups, taking into account the geographic isolation and the vicissitudes of the weather.

- Strive for better coordination with other CARE projects in the same project area.
- It is important to emphasize that OIIL is an important government program that could be used to greatly leverage the support to CBOs. While there could be many risks involved with organizing future project activities around OIIL resources, there are also potentially very important benefits which could greatly support the sustainability of CBOs.

### **2.3. WHELL (South Africa)**

WHELL’s revised sub-program goal<sup>9</sup> was *to develop replicable and locally accountable sustainable livelihoods that strengthen the access to quality water and sanitation services that mainstream HIV/AIDS and gender equity*. The three primary indicators for this goal were: 1) number of models and practices over baseline that mainstream HIV/gender into water and sanitation services adopted and adapted by civil

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<sup>9</sup> WHELL’s original sub-program goal was revised in Year Five. The goal, outputs and indicators used here are from the Year Five Plan.

society and government; 2) number of households over baseline accessing improved water and sanitation services, and 3) priorities of women and poor people better reflected in village and municipal planning, processes and systems.

The WHELL sub-program has had significant success at the institutional level in raising awareness and stimulating improved practices around the links between water and sanitation, HIV/AIDS and gender. WHELL developed a strong conceptual framework which it has used to bring about a change in how national and local (municipal) government view service delivery. WHELL has convinced municipalities of the need to incorporate socioeconomic considerations and analysis into what was primarily a technical focus on water service delivery. It has encouraged greater interaction by local government with communities and reduced trepidation among local government about engaging community feedback. Conversely, while the WHELL pilots with vulnerable groups have produced some limited benefits for their participants, they have not been robust applications of the concept, nor have they produced the learning originally envisioned. The assessment of WHELL's effectiveness for the final evaluation is based on qualitative focus groups and key informant discussions and project documents. There is little quantitative data on effect-level changes (behavioral and systemic), especially for years four and five.

### **2.3.1. Effectiveness (Impact and Outcomes)**

Following are the evaluation findings regarding effectiveness as they correspond to the four outputs articulated in the WHELL sub-program design.

*Output 1: Improved understanding of linkages between gender, HIV/AIDS and sustainable water and sanitation services.*

Indicators for this output are: 1) generation of conceptual and associated toolkits; 2) conceptual framework (and associated toolkits/guidelines) disseminated to 250 organizations nationally and regionally, and 3) evidence that the conceptual framework has informed policy or practices relating to water and sanitation services in at least 10 CSO and municipal organizations.

The WHELL conceptual framework outlines the linkages between water and sanitation services as a basic human right, water and sanitation services and gender, gender and HIV/AIDS, and water and sanitation and HIV/AIDS, in a clear and understandable manner. By applying the framework, the project seeks to build the capacity of civil society and local government to deliver integrated, sustainable water and sanitation services that mainstream HIV/AIDS and gender into service delivery methodologies. WHELL has produced and disseminated some excellent conceptual materials and toolkits and is developing case studies of lessons from the pilots for dissemination. These have helped to establish CARE South Africa-Lesotho's (CSAL) reputation as a knowledgeable and valued actor in the water services sector.

CARE's interaction and support of local government staff not only raised awareness of municipalities around gender HIV-affected communities, it additionally built the capacity of municipal staff to develop the five-year Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) for their districts. Local government is still finding its way after 10 years of decentralization, hampered by low capacity and inadequate training. Staff are

responsible for implementing poverty programs but have no common understanding of how to identify or serve the most vulnerable. WHELL's training around how to integrate project themes helped staff to understand the IDP process and raise the quality of the IDP in targeted municipalities. It has provided a strategic framework which municipalities can use to mainstream HIV/AIDS and gender and which CARE has used to push greater integration with all municipal activities. WHELL has also encouraged local government in its actions to appoint more female staff, an initial step towards greater internal gender equity. Municipal staff tend to equate this increased representation with the achievement of gender equity, however, indicating that continued interaction and awareness-raising on gender is needed.

WHELL principles around mainstreaming HIV/AIDS and gender needs into service delivery have been incorporated into the 2009 IDPs of Bushbuckridge and Mutale municipalities. Bushbuckridge and Greater Tzaneen municipalities also plan to pilot the Community Scorecard in 2009. These are important steps towards institutionalizing WHELL approaches, but will require intensive and consistent follow-up to monitor implementation and facilitate lessons. Without such follow-up it is likely that mainstreaming will be manifest only in the language of the IDP and not the application. The risk of viewing the use of mainstreaming language as equivalent to action is the main danger to the sustainability of WHELL principles with local government.

The conceptual framework has influenced policy or practices relating to water and sanitation services in the three municipalities where WHELL works and in several CSOs. In addition, WHELL's work is recognized by the national Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF) at the policy level. DWAF and CARE have a good relationship, though their initial engagement in WHELL lapsed due to the project's staff changes. CARE recently re-established contact with DWAF and the agency remains interested in identifying a way to work together as both are working towards the same ends. DWAF has funds to promote mainstreaming in municipalities, which are dispersed through the Department of Planning and Local Government and Housing (DPLG); DWAF has authority to monitor and assess the use of these funds by the municipalities.

*Output 2: Four operational models developed that mainstream HIV/AIDS and gender and translate policy into implementation systems.*

Indicators for this output are: 1) number of formal inputs to public and civil society policy processes, and 2) based on lessons learned, CSOs offer municipalities at least six water and sanitation good practice models.

As noted, WHELL has had a number of formal (and informal) inputs to public and civil society policy processes. This is a difficult indicator to measure and project monitoring records were not up to date.

The number of operational models was scaled down from ten to six to four over the life of the project, reflecting delays in start-up operations and CARE's dissatisfaction with the quality of implementation by its principal partner, the Mvula Trust. The final four models cited in the Year Five Plan are: 1) the Community Scorecard, 2) mainstreaming HIV/AIDS and gender into local government's Integrated Development Plan, 3) Promoting Positive Living (in Justicia), and 4) community gardening (in Mawa).

The Water Users Committee in Tshiungani, Mutale municipality and a brick making activity created to generate income for women are other models.

The operational models have not developed concrete applications of the WHELL framework to a very high degree and thus have had limited impact. The major reasons for the lack of progress relate to: differing views of how to implement approaches to the project; weak implementation capacity on the part of CARE's major partner-implementer, Mvula Trust; weak management support and oversight in both Mvula Trust and CARE; frequent staff changes in both organizations that disrupted continuity of service to pilot communities and stalled progress; and a lack of agreement or understanding on what constitutes an output. WHELL was managed from the headquarters of Mvula Trust and not integrated into the regional office operations, and with the departure of the original HQ manager, responsibility for the project was largely delegated to field staff. Nor was WHELL well integrated with other CARE projects. The pilots were chosen from communities located in dry zones and in which Mvula Trust already had a presence. The communities' trust in Mvula and their good working relationship made entry easier for CARE. However, Justicia and Mawa may not have been the most suitable sites to apply the WHELL framework. Many of these issues are not uncommon stumbling blocks in partnerships, but attempts to resolve these issues were undercut by more staff changes, especially in CARE.

In addition to organizational weaknesses, some of the technical solutions introduced by Mvula Trust were incomplete. In Mawa, in-ground rainwater harvesting tanks were introduced to help vulnerable households cultivate vegetable gardens during the dry season for additional income but lack hand pumps, so that the water cannot be drawn out even when the tank is half full. In the same community, it took two years to make the school's rooftop rainwater harvesting tank model operational. In Tshiungani, a brick making enterprise meant to generate income for women is not producing income and requires a thorough analysis of its business model.

Another WHELL partner-implementer, AWARD, worked successfully in Bushbuckridge municipality. However, AWARD is a very small organization and ended its participation in 2007 due to staff constraints. A third partner, Tsogang, began work with WHELL but withdrew after the first year.

On the positive side, traditional authorities have reportedly become more aware of the links between water, gender, and HIV/AIDS as a result of WHELL. This is evidenced by their willingness, particularly in Tshiungani, to allow women to participate in community settings and to present their concerns. In the conservative rural areas where women are considered secondary to men, this is a positive step. A majority of pilot project participants are women. Participation in WHELL workshops about HIV/AIDS has also made project participants less reluctant to talk about HIV.

*Output 3: CSOs and government, and linkages between them, strengthened to support sustainable water and sanitation services.*

Indicators identified for this output are: 1) number of CSOs over baseline with improved capacity in service delivery and advocacy; 2) number of CSOs and municipalities over baseline formally engaging with each other, and 3) number of municipalities over baseline implementing new policies and practices

on water and sanitation services that mainstream gender and HIV/AIDS.

The monitoring of these indicators suffered due to the staff changes and unstaffed positions in CARE, and the assessment of achievement is based on qualitative field interviews and existing records. There have been some achievements under this indicator. WHELL has strengthened communication and contact between pilots and municipalities; whether or not this grows into greater constituent feedback and policy influence without CARE as a facilitator remains to be seen. The pilot groups have improved linkages with local government as a result of the project. The Tshiungani Water Committee activities are better integrated with the Mutale municipality, and the committee was able to secure an open-ended commitment from the municipality to provide diesel for its borehole and thus improve water service delivery. WHELL workshops have improved the Water Committee's communications, and thus its relations, with the community. The committee in Tshiungani pays for the water use of three child-headed households, and provided water for free to one chronically ill woman who is now deceased. However, these activities are more of a charitable nature and there is no indication that the community has thought further about how else to work with government or the community to assist vulnerable households. The Positive Living group in Justicia has a strong relationship with the local Councillor, and a stronger sense of what it can achieve as a result of WHELL training that included gardening, diet, and techniques to recycle water. Initial work to help this group formalize by registering with government as a CSO stalled due to project staff changes. The Community Gardening group in Mawa does not appear to have expanded relationships outside its contacts with Mvula Trust and CARE.

The local government staff involved with WHELL in the pilot municipalities of Bushbuckridge, Greater Tzaneen, and Mutale are in greater contact with each other, though understanding of the framework has not spread throughout all offices in the municipality. The piloting of the Community Scorecard by two municipalities in 2009 should strengthen linkages with communities.

### **2.3.2. Efficiency**

Staff changes in both CARE and Mvula Trust resulted in gaps in information and in staff coverage, reducing the overall efficiency of the project. Pilot groups did not receive consistent support as a result and sometimes felt as though they had to start over again with the new project representative. Staff turnover and differing views about how the pilots should be supported among incoming staff created some distrust among pilot groups as they were not sure prior commitments would be honored. All of this made it difficult for pilots to move forward; for example, WHELL had been assisting the Justicia group to become registered as a CBO but the process stalled when the CARE project manager left in early 2009.

It appears that the deliverables expected of Mvula Trust by CARE were either not clearly articulated or understood. Mvula Trust staff devoted time to WHELL activities but these were not consistent with expected outputs, many of which were far behind schedule or not achieved. Mvula Trust, whose main strength is in policy and advocacy, had the desire to implement the project but lacked field experience, and internal challenges mid-way through the project undercut its capacity to carry out the activities. By Year Three most of the implementation fell to CARE, though it largely reverted back to Mvula Trust, at the organization's request, after the departure of CARE's third WHELL project manager in January 2009.

CARE does not now have a full-time project manager. The shifts in implementation responsibility contributed to implementation and follow-up inefficiencies in the project. Though staffing levels were not raised as an issue, the gaps in coverage suggest that the project design did not provide for an adequate staffing level to accomplish its activities.

Management inefficiencies also hindered the project. WHELL was managed from Mvula Trust headquarters and bypassed the regional office, and CARE did not have project staff in the field. Due to tensions with its headquarters, the Mvula Trust regional staff did not feel responsible for oversight and WHELL was not integrated with other regional projects. The absence of a role for the regional office also meant that District Councils did not receive regular feedback on WHELL during its monthly meetings, which might have encouraged the faster integration of the framework into municipal plans. CARE project staff was based in Johannesburg and not in the field, though the pilot locations and municipalities are in Limpopo and Mpumalanga provinces in the extreme north and eastern parts of the country. In addition to the absence of a constant field presence, travel to the locations from Johannesburg and between the locations, which are themselves geographically dispersed, was time consuming and expensive. Some of the municipalities stated that they expected more assistance from CARE than they received; though from CARE's perspective it needed to reduce the municipalities' dependence on CARE to assist with the IDP in order to build their own capacity to write the plans.

Mvula staff frequently cited insufficient budgets as an obstacle to systematic monitoring and the achievement of project outputs. However, the project budget was consistently underspent. The installation of four in-ground water harvesting tanks in Mawa, at a cost of R 25,000 each to the municipality, without the provision of a complementary hand pump, raises questions about Mvula's efficiency in the use of its budget. Similarly, the female-run brick making IGA in Tshiungani does not appear to have been well researched, particularly in regard to market demand.

### **2.3.3.Relevance**

The WHELL framework is highly relevant in the current context of South Africa. In institutional terms, it supports the realization of the constitutional right of all South Africans to a minimum standard of potable water and sanitation. It also seeks to strengthen the accountability of recently decentralized local government structures to their constituents. In the context of South Africa's continuing growth as a democratic society, it seeks to empower civil society groups to engage government in dialogue and advocate for improved service delivery. With regard to social and economic development it seeks to ensure that government service provision is responsive to the needs of women, vulnerable households, and the poor.

WHELL has built capacity in a government service sector that must learn how to deliver services in a manner that goes beyond meeting technical goals to respond to the needs of its most vulnerable households. The WHELL concept is especially timely in that it complements current efforts by institutions such as the Institute for Democracy in South Africa and the University of Johannesburg's new Centre for Democracy to foster greater grassroots participation in democratic processes. It is also a strategic fit with CARE South Africa-Lesotho's recent program shift towards a

livelihoods/rights/governance focus. This is an area with significant, though challenging, program opportunities for CARE South Africa. It should be noted that formerly CARE provided regional-level technical experts to support country offices in the application and implementation of livelihood, rights, gender and governance concepts. This dedicated technical expertise provided valuable input to program managers and ongoing assessment of programs' efforts to operationalize integrated conceptual approaches to improve the livelihoods of poor households and communities. As noted, the WHELL concept is well developed but would have benefited from greater technical support in its application. CARE South Africa, and CARE as an organization, needs to identify how to continue providing such expertise.

The focus on assisting women, and women in HIV/AIDS-affected households, is highly appropriate in South Africa given the low status of rural women and the prevalence of HIV. HIV/AIDS is not openly discussed in conservative rural areas, making the identification and targeting of affected households a challenge for municipalities. Additionally, many within local government still see HIV/AIDS as a health-related issue. Gender mainstreaming is one of the key priorities of the Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry. WHELL's activities have supported this priority by raising awareness within local government about the risks of HIV and gender-based violence that the simple and necessary task of water collection poses to women and girls.

#### **2.3.4.Sustainability**

An initial reliance on WHELL's implementing partners to liaise with the local government water services provider on behalf of participants has yielded to a stronger connection between participants and the municipal water services authority. However, the overall capacity of the participant groups is low and members continue to face strong gender bias and stigma within their own communities. All the pilot groups existed prior to WHELL and will likely continue to function. Individual members got discouraged with the lack of follow-up by WHELL and dropped out, so the inconsistent project support actually weakened some of the groups. The issue is not so much around sustainability but that the groups are unlikely to develop and grow as CSOs beyond their current capacity without external support. The Positive Living group in Justicia and the Community Garden group in Mawa do not have the capital to expand their activities. The Tshiungani Water Users Committee has been operating since 1993. It was initially reluctant to work with local government, afraid that it would lose control of its water management decisions. WHELL has strengthened the sustainability of the committee by supporting stronger relationships with both the Tshiungani community and the municipality.

It is too early to judge the sustainability of work with local government. Municipalities are challenging to work with, as it is difficult to keep them engaged and to get follow-up from them on initiatives.

Continued follow-up is required to consolidate the initial gains made by WHELL. The technical staff in water service provision have the best grasp of how to apply WHELL concepts in practice. However, they are not the decision-makers in their department and do not have regular contact with departments outside of water services, including those working in HIV/AIDS. In addition, the project has targeted the Water Services Department and the Local Economic Development Department in the delivery of services and

IDPs. Other departments have not been as involved and do not understand the importance and methods of mainstreaming. WHELL should continue to focus on bringing its concepts to directors and senior managers within the municipalities, as their understanding is a prerequisite to implementing the approaches. This will require that CARE develop a strategy to keep municipal officials engaged with the idea of applying mainstreaming approaches.

Staying engaged may require greater formalization of WHELL approaches in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with municipalities. This will help promote ownership and shift the focus from CARE and Mvula Trust as the project owners to local government. A MoU would require municipal officers to report on the project at monthly District Council meetings and would facilitate inclusion in district IDPs.

There are practical challenges to sustaining the emphasis on mainstreaming and serving the most vulnerable. The municipal services face some pressure to serve fee payers to generate revenue for local government, and there are questions around what proportion of the municipal budget should be allocated to serving the indigent in a district where 60 percent of people are unemployed. These are difficult issues for municipalities. Sustainability is best served by continued engagement by CARE and Mvula Trust with local government on how to address these challenges.

### **2.3.5. Lessons Learned**

- Future projects could benefit from well-defined partnering arrangements.
  - The project was originally conceived as a full partnership but devolved into a sub-contracting arrangement. Mvula Trust and AWARD contributed substantially to the design of WHELL. While sub-contracting is a legitimate partnering arrangement, it requires a well-defined agreement on implementation approaches, outputs, expected deliverables, activity schedules, and monitoring, along with an accompanying work plan.
  - There was not enough interaction or understanding of how the three main partners – CARE, Mvula Trust, and AWARD – would interrelate. Roles and responsibilities were not clearly laid out, and the approaches to the pilots were not clearly defined.
  - CARE and Mvula Trust had different perspectives on implementation, yet CARE delegated much of the project responsibility to Mvula Trust. Mvula Trust, a large and well-established organization, wanted to manage the project in its own way rather than be guided by CARE, but did not have sufficient implementation experience.
- Staff ownership of the project is influenced by management commitment.
  - WHELL began with good support and oversight in Mvula Trust and CARE. However, high staff turnover appears to have reduced management interest and commitment to the project over time. This suggests that the initial staff, which was very committed to WHELL, did it a disservice by not integrating the project into their respective institutions, therefore ownership of the project diminished when they left.

- In-depth capacity assessments of all stakeholders could increase the effectiveness of future projects.
  - The project did not draw on the strengths of Mvula Trust, which are in policy and advocacy, not in implementation.
  - Municipality staff are a challenge to work with and are not always available or reliable. It is critical to get project objectives written into the five-year IDP to be able to hold municipalities accountable. However, not all municipalities have the same understanding of service delivery or capacity to carry out expanded service delivery.
  - Project participants in Tshiungani stated that it was difficult for them to pass the information from workshops on to the rest of the community as they lack the skills to conduct community workshops.
- Increased effort should be placed on follow-up.
  - The three participating municipalities carried out studies on targeting the most vulnerable for service delivery and identified a lot of valuable issues. These issues need to be taken up at a national level.
  - WHELL engendered a lot of learning that requires follow-up. CARE should consider undertaking an in-depth study with municipalities and CSOs on the degree to which the project has changed attitudes and practices around gender, HIV/AIDS, and water among partners.
  - The CSOs should be encouraged and assisted to examine deeper changes in behaviors and practices among their members, such as reductions in domestic workloads for women; reduction in gender-based violence during water collection; reduced burden of care on women caring for AIDS patients; and increased economic self-sufficiency of women.

### **2.3.6. Way Forward**

WHELL has had significant strengths and significant weaknesses. Its accomplishments should not be undervalued in the final assessment of its impact, as they provide a valuable foundation for future strategic partnerships for CSAL. CARE's reputation seems to have been enhanced by the positive aspects of WHELL and not unduly damaged by the limited achievements in the pilots.

#### ***Project Extension***

- CARE has identified a niche with WHELL that addresses several key elements in South Africa's current political and economic discourse. CARE should focus on the strengths of WHELL, which is the relevance of its model, and continue to promote the model.
- Promoting the model should focus, in part, on providing training and technical assistance to

government and interested NGOs/CBOs/CSOs so that they may experiment with applying the model within their own programs and share their respective learning.

- CSAL's contribution to the water services sector is highly valued, but it is not clear that all the other stakeholders working on HIV/AIDS and gender issues are aware of the work. Most of the conceptual materials were produced and disseminated early in the project. WHELL should use the extension period to disseminate the case studies to reinforce CARE's expertise in this area with other stakeholders and to link into all relevant national networks and forums, including Water Sector Forums, District AIDS Councils, IDP annual reviews, DWAF's Civil Society Support Program, and HIV/AIDS forums.
- CARE and Mvula Trust should conduct an open and honest review of their experience and accomplishments under WHELL in order to extract partnership lessons for the future. Many of the partnership challenges faced by WHELL are not new, and an in-depth understanding of what worked and what did not work, and why, would be valuable institutional lessons.
- WHELL should develop a strategy to keep municipal officials engaged with the idea of applying mainstreaming approaches. This should include attending the annual reviews of IDPs, which take place between July and September, to provide technical support to local government's efforts to mainstream. This could be done in conjunction with DWAF.
- Many municipalities see community-based monitoring and evaluation and mainstreaming of gender and HIV/AIDS as add-ons to their work and do not understand how they will help improve service delivery. WHELL should stay engaged with municipalities that are testing the Community Scorecard and assist them to identify and disseminate lessons.
- Municipalities are enthusiastic about WHELL concepts but the applications are still largely untested. Follow-up by CARE and Mvula Trust will help maintain interest and motivate staff to extract lessons learned.
- CARE and Mvula Trust have reviewed the pilot projects and are in the process of developing case studies on them in order to preserve and disseminate learning from the project.
- WHELL needs to develop an exit strategy that will wrap up involvement with the pilot projects responsibly and fill gaps in support. This includes helping Justicia to register as a CSO and create a vision, a strategy, plans, and a monitoring system for the group. In Mawa, it needs to ensure that the first four water harvesting tanks installed for vulnerable households can be fully used. In all pilot communities, WHELL should facilitate planning sessions to identify how the communities can best continue their activities.
- CARE should move forward with its plans to have its small business expert review the women's brick making enterprise in Tshiungani to see how it can be made into a viable income generating activity.

## ***New Proposals***

- A strong enabling national policy environment exists for mainstreaming HIV/AIDS and gender considerations into the provision of water and sanitation services. CARE should identify areas of mutual interest with DWAF, which has policy responsibility and budget influence over municipal water service delivery and a broad range of activities that address the social aspects of service delivery.
- It will take the municipalities possibly another five years to fully integrate the WHELL concepts into its service delivery, assuming that they consistently apply the approach and examine the lessons learned. CARE and Mvula Trust should continue to work on influencing national policies by engaging DWAF and DPLG in identifying opportunities to work with municipalities.
- The municipalities identified important issues in their targeting studies of the most vulnerable for service delivery. CARE and Mvula Trust should advocate for these issues to be taken up at a national level, as addressing them may require policy action and supporting budgets.
- CARE and Mvula Trust should retain their working relationship to focus on policy and advocacy issues. Both are well-known by municipalities and communities as a result of WHELL and have good networks.

## **2.4. LipFund (Kenya)**

The LipFund sub-program goal stated:

*By 2009, livelihood security will have been enhanced by improving rural service delivery in a way that mainstreams responses to both HIV/AIDS and gender inequity.*

The two primary impact indicators were: 1) the number of pastoralist women and men with increased income and access to income earning opportunities over baseline, and 2) the number of pastoralist women and men accessing increased HIV/AIDS and rural services.

### **2.4.1. Effectiveness (Impact and Outcomes)**

Qualitative evidence gathered during the final evaluation and inferred from project documentation suggests that LipFund has resulted in positive impact for its target groups. Unfortunately, little quantitative data on effect-level changes (behavioral and systemic) have been systematically collected during the project, despite the relatively straightforward nature of the types of information the project could have collected and the relatively few sources from which monitoring data would be sourced (see section on monitoring and evaluation for additional details).

There is little hard evidence to support a conclusion that incomes *per se* have increased, although it is highly likely that many Pastoral Production Group (PPG) members have marginally increased their income through higher prices gained from the sale of at least a portion of their livestock. There is considerable inter- and intra-group variation due to a number of factors, such as where livestock is

marketed (e.g. through a formal contract or at regional markets) and the type of production season different groups have experienced. However, the majority of PPG members still sell their livestock at local markets, and although selling prices and transaction costs may be more favorable, the income gains are modest at best.

Nothing in the qualitative research conducted in the final evaluation would suggest that incomes have *not* increased. During focus group discussions with four PPGs, all reported that they were receiving better prices for their livestock by being in the group, and that their transaction costs were lower. In those PPGs that have contracts with terminal markets, terms of trade are better and are resulting in increased profit. LipFund has very high potential for promoting increases in income, assets, capital expansion, and investment through its extension year if the credit obstacles are solved.

Perhaps more important than income figures (which may be dubious anyway) is how members plan to use monetary gains. Many PPGs are more interested in pooling any monetary benefits that result from improved marketing opportunities and reinvesting them into the group, either in practical terms such as purchasing lorries, or in visions of building future assets such as ranches and other livestock-related infrastructure. LipFund could have placed more emphasis on exploring what PPGs planned to do with any profits, and oriented their facilitation more business orientation, savings, pooled investments, etc. In terms of behavioral change, however, LipFund has made a significant contribution to livelihood improvement. Another evidence of impact is demonstrated by the increase in the cost to join some PPGs. For example, in Moyale PPG members had to contribute 10,000 KSh to become a member; now the fee is up to 50,000 Ksh.

In terms of pastoralists increasing their access HIV/AIDS and other rural services the hard evidence is again scant, but qualitative results suggest that any increase has been modest at best. All PPGs have had some HIV/AIDS awareness sessions from SIMAHO, the CARE partner tasked with creating HIV/AIDS awareness and services. SIMAHO claims to have reached over 2,600 PPG members (covering 9 out of 12 PPGs), however, there has been little follow-up and SIMAHO has not kept disaggregated records on specific access to VCT or other services specifically by PPG members<sup>10</sup>.

Despite the paucity of hard evidence that LipFund has resulted in significant changes at the impact level, it has made considerable contributions to changes in practices and systems that support decision-making in pastoral communities, and has developed a marketing model that could become sustainable with additional time and resources.

Credit should be given where credit is due. LipFund works in a very difficult physical environment and with pastoralists who, by tradition, are fiercely independent and bound by social norms that have persisted for centuries. One of the more evident and significant behavioral changes, is that of trust. Members of PPGs acknowledge that before LIME (Livestock Marketing Enterprise Project) and LipFund, their livelihoods were carried out more or less independently. When they chose to become members of PPGs there was initial mistrust and little faith that working together would be in their best interest. Many joined in hopes of getting tangible benefits from CARE, not out of a desire to work collaboratively. The fact that

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<sup>10</sup> SIMAHO does have a quantitative questionnaire and plans to conduct a survey, but would need considerable technical support to do this properly as they have little in-house research capacity.

LipFund has resulted in facilitating pastoralists to work together should not be underestimated. There are no indicators in the logframe to capture this change, but it is a very significant, though unintended outcome. CARE could capitalize on this in the future, perhaps with other livelihood and health interventions. There are also very few examples of any organization working on issues of access to credit with pastoralists or on mainstreaming HIV/AIDS in livelihood promotion with pastoralists.

Less evidence supports any notion that any behavioral and system changes have been mainstreamed with respect to gender and HIV/AIDS. Gender imbalance is still a problem, and it manifests itself in discrimination against women in asset ownership and decision-making. Men own and manage most large stock (camels and cattle), while women own and manage small stock (goats and sheep). Most of the trade decisions are male dominated, however in a few PPGs, female participation in decision-making is evident. This has far more to do with the strength and capacity of individual women, and LipFund cannot be credited at this point with mainstreaming gender, despite the fact that about 30 percent of group leadership is female.

One of the systemic changes sought under LipFund's objectives was the creation of a viable bank-managed Livestock Purchase Fund which would provide pastoralists with direct links to the private sector. While this process is not complete, it does show promise – but will require a few significant changes during the remainder of the project and extension period to succeed. The most significant issues are how PPGs can access funds through Equity Bank and when the bank will become Sharia-compliant. Although a banking culture is not entirely new to pastoral groups, it is not strong either. It is taking time to foster more access to and use of credit, but this is also a significant behavioral change that LipFund has promoted.

## **2.4.2 Efficiency**

The objective of the project was to reach 700 households with about 5,600 members. LipFund estimates that it has reached about 1,094 households, which translates to over 156 percent of the targeted households. About 40 percent of PPG members are women.

LipFund (and its predecessor LIME) is not a particularly efficient project, although it has made achievements with very limited staff. The most compelling issue is the distance between production groups. There is an inefficient distribution of PPGs and sites, requiring too much travel time and not enough quality time spent with groups. This is not the fault of the field staff, but rather of the project design. Projects that facilitate the creation of new groups and then build their capacity need to spend significant time with them, and this requires a proper staff-to-group ratio. In LipFund, even with one field staff member, the ratio would be adequate were it not for the amount of time it takes to reach the different groups. This also inhibits bringing different group members together in trainings, meetings or networks, which is a real weakness of the project.

Management issues aside, there have been some valuable efficiencies. Improved knowledge of animal health has benefited pastoralists in early detection of animal health issues and in disease prevention. It has

allowed herders to detect and treat minor ailments, thus saving money and livestock. The training provided on drought management (which probably ranks first or second among pastoralists as the most valuable training received) has incorporated early warning of drought and actions to take when drought is imminent into herd management. For a small cost in training, this is having a significant impact on herder decision-making regarding when to sell livestock.

Cooperative-style marketing has also improved efficiency. Before, individuals took their animals to markets as far as several hundred kilometers away, and prices varied widely depending on the volume of animals in the market (a supply/demand function whereby the buyer has a lot of power). Now PPGs send only a few representatives and herders, each animal is tagged and its sales price is recorded, and the owner is paid upon return. This results in lower transaction costs. Actually, two models have emerged from the project: the first is group sales to local markets, whereby efficiencies are gained by grouping livestock, minimizing the transaction costs of trekking and providing higher quality animals<sup>11</sup>. The second model concerns sales to end markets, whereby the middlemen are largely excluded and contracts for delivery are established between the PPGs and the market.

### **2.4.3 Relevance**

The logic of LipFund is sound. The collective (cooperative) style of marketing livestock in NE Kenya has many efficiencies, and real potential for changing livelihoods in a fundamental way. No other groups have been addressing livestock marketing issues, especially with respect to credit, so CARE's work in this arena is quite revolutionary. Moreover, no other INGOs are targeting these groups and linking them to end markets. Although CARE is lean on experience in market-oriented projects, it has identified key leverage points in improving income streams in these groups. However, CARE needs to continually reassess its strategy, just as a private sector company assesses its position monthly through sales data, market demand analysis, and an eye on the competitor.

Very little emphasis has been placed on ensuring that vulnerable groups have voice and means of participation. Some vulnerable households are part of PPGs, but their participation is more limited to marketing their animals through the PPG system. Many (especially women) are at a real disadvantage due to low literacy levels. Some (not all) PPGs that become strong and sustainable are likely to take on private sector characteristics without the social inclusion and community outreach that CARE may desire. More emphasis could have been placed on PPG fund development that specifically goes to addressing needs of the more vulnerable pastoralists and women livestock owners.

LipFund has underachieved in linking HIV/AIDS to the behavioral changes associated with the changes in livestock marketing. The evaluation team recognizes the complexity of addressing HIV and AIDS issues in a traditionally closed society which does not welcome outsiders to discuss such delicate issues. While SIMAHO has carried out admirable work in HIV and AIDS, there has not been strong interaction between SIMAHO and field staff during LipFund. For example, PPG members are often traveling to large, distant cities and getting significant amounts of cash. As one focus group

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<sup>11</sup> The exception may be in years where drought is severe enough to trigger culling, which drives down market prices to the point where the marginal gains are miniscule.

member said "...we go to the market, get rich overnight...where do you think we go next?", meaning that the amount of money and distances traveled could promote promiscuous behaviors. These and other issues need to be recognized and discussed between SIMAHO and CARE field staff, and then documented as lessons learned in mainstreaming HIV/AIDS in a pastoral setting.

#### **2.4.4 Sustainability**

Many aspects of LipFund have high potential for sustainability. However, everyone fears that CARE is leaving, and there is still a high level of dependency on LipFund services, especially on credit and contract marketing issues. Most PPGs are still selling their livestock in local markets, and to the extent individual members feel they are getting more favorable terms by selling through the PPG they will likely remain members. The PPGs themselves do not require a lot of organization to sell at local markets, so current level capacities are probably adequate for these types of transactions.

Contracts with ranches, slaughterhouses, meat firms, and other end markets, however, require a completely different level of organizational capacity and efficiency. The ability of a PPG to secure contracts with end users depends on established linkages (which are greatly facilitated by site visits), and good personal and business skills of key PPG members. Repeat business and growth in contracts will depend heavily on past performance. PPGs as envisioned by the project will be sustainable to the extent that they generate profit. The key is to solve the credit bottleneck and for the PPGs to provide consistently high-quality cows and goats.

For sustainability, CARE needs to rethink its strategy with Equity Bank in its planning for the extension period of the project. The real problem for those PPGs that are accessing contracts is one of cash flow, though not all PPGs need a loan to carry out a contract. What they do need, however, is more rapid transactions so that they can keep pace with their contract demands. A PPG selling livestock on a monthly basis to KMC, for example, may have to wait several months before it is paid by KMC. This inhibits it from purchasing the next round of livestock from its members or other non-members. One solution may be to establish, through Equity Bank, lines of credit to sellers instead of loans to PPGs (although loans should still be an option for infrastructure and other capital needs). Without solving the cash flow problem, many of the PPGs doing contract business may not be sustainable.

Repeated contact with existing clients, plus periodic contact with new potential markets, is also a key to sustainability. Therefore, LipFund could improve prospects of sustainability by conducting one more site visit to markets before the end of the extension period. Other elements that will improve the likelihood that results are sustainable include training on improved bookkeeping, more strategic use of PPG funds and reinvestment practices, and encouragement of PPG member contributions and profit sharing. Success of PPGs is currently based mostly on the ingenuity and 'business sense' of individuals.

The HIV/AIDS work is not sustainable without continued sources of funding. SIMAHO is totally dependent on donor funding and does not generate substantial revenues from its services. Costs to provide services outside of Garissa are relatively high, and the only realistic way to make HIV/AIDS services sustainable is to have mobile clinics and satellite clinics.

## 2.4.5 Lessons Learned

- Both LIME and LipFund have logical frameworks with many *output* indicators that should be *outcome* indicators. Perhaps this is where weak project design results in a project being managed in the wrong way. Logical analysis, or at least basic systems thinking, would lead to more rational and hierarchical objectives and associated indicators.
- The size of the PPG may be a factor in how successful and sustainable it remains in the future. From a business perspective, it may actually be a disadvantage to maintain a large PPG, especially if most of the business is in contracts. The more successful PPGs are likely to be those that have strong leadership, and individuals with appropriate skills in negotiation, bookkeeping, planning, and logistics. Only a small number of PPG members are likely to end up doing 90 percent of the actual management of the process. The more successful PPGs are also likely to mimic a business rather than a community-based organization. Some, not all, will provide social services to their communities and encourage more active participation of women and vulnerable groups.
- There are some serious misconceptions about the terms of the transition from LIME to LipFund. Many PPG members believed that the funds currently residing in Equity Bank are PPGs' funds, and that CARE was going to provide grants to PPGs with these funds. It is difficult to go back in time and sort out how the changes from LIME to LipFund were communicated to PPG members, but it is easy to see how either too little communication or mixed messages can impact a project. In the future, better communication strategies are needed when significant changes are made.
- The process of transitioning from LIME to LipFund took a very long time, even when it was evident to everyone that the conceptual model of LIME was flawed and the implementation was failing. The delay was due, in large part, to AusAID taking more than 6 months to approve the revised LipFund design. CARE Australia and all other stakeholders, however, must reflect on how changes to their programs are made in the future. This is important for all projects, but especially important for projects that are market-based. Dynamic analysis is essential in business-type interventions, so CARE Australia (actually, CARE International and its donors) need to establish better protocols when working on private sector projects. They are fundamentally different than typical development projects, and CARE has to be able to react quickly to market demands, to better acknowledge and manage risk, and to have strategies that efficient and profitable in order to ultimately succeed.
- There is no real evidence that control over decision-making processes or resources and benefits are balanced between women and men. Decision-making is tightly linked to the dynamics of groups and leaders within the groups. However, LipFund has facilitated some important changes in gender, and these need to be broadcast and highlighted. While there is no strategy or time to do this in the extension, it is something that CARE Kenya can capitalize on if they continue working with pastoralists.

## 2.4.6 Way Forward

### *Project Extension*

- The basic approach of LipFund is to provide access to credit for both the private sector in the value chain of livestock production and marketing, and to Pastoral Production Groups as livestock producers. To date, the use of Equity Bank as a provider of credit has not worked very well. While it is too early to determine the real outcome of the use of Equity Bank, there are some fundamental flaws in the system. First, it is questionable why the private sector should have access to cheaper credit through a CARE-implemented scheme. While it is condition of access to credit through LipFund that borrowers must do business with PPGs, this does not mean that these businesses will have the best interests of the PPGs in mind. In fact, access to cheaper credit to do business with PPGs could free up capital of these private sector traders to do business outside of PPGs. In effect, LipFund could be subsidizing private sector traders to do business outside of PPGs, and this could impact on terms of trade. Livestock owners outside of PPGs could actually get better prices since trader risk is reduced by the cheaper credit, and eventually push out PPGs.
- The real problem for those PPGs that are currently accessing contracts is one of cash flow, and not all PPGs need a loan to carry out a contract. What they all do need, however, is more rapid financial transactions, so that they can keep pace with their contract demands. CARE Kenya should explore with Equity Bank the possibility of using LipFund funds to establish lines of credit with end markets such as KMC and Alpha Foods. Once an end-user receives a satisfactory shipment of livestock from a PPG, it could inform Equity Bank that the PPG could then be paid through the line of credit. This would cut down the time it takes the PPG to receive funds, and they would then have cash to purchase livestock for the next shipment.
- Many have not had the opportunity to participate in study tours. Although the tours are expensive, from a cost-benefit perspective they may be the best thing LIME and LipFund have done. They allow PPG members to establish personal relationships with purchasers and for trust to be built. Many of those who participated in the first study tour now receive phone calls directly from meat processors and other purchasers.

### *New Proposals*

- If CARE continues to engage in livestock production in the Northeast, more needs to be done in terms of ranching and fattening livestock. There is a lot of potential in ranching/fattening, and this may be what smoothes out the curves in annual price fluctuations. The area is drought-prone, and the likelihood of serious drought every three to four years is high. Pastoralists will have a difficult time fulfilling contracts in drought years, or they will sell their livestock at local markets for very low prices. The option of establishing ranches in the project area or linking pastoralists to coastal ranches should be more fully explored.

## 3. Program Level Findings

### 3.1 Program Approach

Overall, the general strategy of all four sub-programs is to develop and strengthen the capacities of CSOs. A typology of four different types of CSO can be identified:

- Groups that are organized to provide services and support only to group members. Many of the VSLs and CBOs in SCORE fall into this category. While these groups do not provide services to other members of their communities, they have been adopted as effective means to target vulnerable households.
- Groups that are organized to provide services and support to group members, but also provide services to some community members outside the groups. Some VSLs and CBOs fall into this group – some VSLs provide loans to non-members, and some CBOs provide products or materials to vulnerable individuals within their communities. PPGs and marketing groups provide improved market access by buying crops or animals from non-members for later resale. Seed Bank groups use seeds received to provide planting seeds to other community members. Some of the PLWHA groups in WHELL support non-member vulnerable households, and in one case, a preschool.
- Groups that are formed to represent the interests of their entire community, and to provide more representative community-level inputs into the decentralization process. The VUCs in Malawi and the CDLs in Mozambique fall into this category, as does the Tshiungani Water Committee in WHELL.
- NGOs that partner with, or are contracted to provide complementary services to support the efforts of the sub-programs. These include Mvula Trust in WHELL, MAICC in SMIHLE, Kukula and GTZ in SCORE, and Enhancing Livelihoods in Manderu Triangle (ELMT) and SIMAHO in LipFund.

Another overall similarity across the sub-programs is that they are all designed to mainstream HIV/AIDS and gender. However, there are important variations across the sub-programs with regard to the strategies they have implemented to pursue this objective. The Lipfund has subcontracted out the training on HIV/AIDS awareness. SCORE programs have focused on providing training in HIV/AIDS and gender awareness to contact persons in community organizations, with the understanding that they would then provide training to other organizations. SMIHLE has been the most effective in mainstreaming HIV/AIDS and gender into the other organizations and activities supported by the program. VUCs are closely linked with positive living, other PLWHA support groups, and seed bank groups within their communities. They also have contacts with other organizations that provide services to PLWHA. Many of the VSL groups are predominantly or exclusively women. WHELL has provided training to both local government staff and CSO participants in gender awareness and HIV/AIDS. CSOs were then expected to pass on their knowledge to other community members, but some officers said this was difficult because they lack the skills to facilitate community workshops. Despite the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS in

South Africa, the national government over the past five years has ignored or disseminated much misinformation about the subject. WHELL has helped break down this bias by encouraging local government staff to have open discussion about HIV/AIDS in its workshops. In conservative rural areas, WHELL has helped convince traditional leaders to allow greater participation by women in public forums.

Finally, all the sub-programs engage in collaboration with other organizations which provide complementary services that enhance the direct efforts of the sub-programs. Some of the collaboration is in the form of contractual arrangements, where the contracting organizations provide specific services that complement direct activities of the sub-programs (partnerships with Kukula, SIMAHO, ELMT). Other collaboration takes advantage of shared or complementary interests of the collaborating organizations, for example program interactions with MAICC in Malawi and GTZ in Mozambique. Finally, the partnership with Mvula Trust in South Africa represents a more strategic and formalized partnership in which both partners share in program design as well as implementation.

Within these overall common approaches, there is substantial variation in implementation strategies across the four sub-programs. SCORE and SMIHLE have quite similar program activities: developing and supporting village level CSOs; supporting groups organized around economic activities, including VSLs; and promoting mainstreaming of HIV/AIDS and gender with these groups. The approaches and activities of LipFund and WHELL are quite different. Lipfund's approach is based primarily on a business model, and is now focusing on establishing viable and profitable marketing strategies for the PPGs by linking them directly to end markets and financial institutions. WHELL is building the capacity of municipal planning processes to incorporate the needs of vulnerable households and simultaneously working with CSOs to build their grassroots capacity to advocate for better service delivery from local government.

### **3.2 Program Effectiveness (Impact and Outcomes)**

The PACS logical framework was formulated to measure impact using three quantitative or semi-quantitative indicators. There is a serious challenge in assessing impact at the program level for PACS. First, there is no unifying framework that cuts across all four sub-programs in such a way that changes can be aggregated. The PACS program review in 2006 presented a conceptual framework for mainstreaming HIV/AIDS and gender, but there has been no consistent application of this or any other framework across the four sub-programs.

Second, the choice of indicators for measuring program-level changes shows a lack of understanding of outcome measurement. Unqualified changes such as 'improved capacity', 'improved access', and 'enhanced livelihood security' are too ambiguous to measure even within a sub-program, much less across sub-programs.

Third, there has not been a commitment in any of the four sub-programs to develop and systematically measure outcome-level indicators, either at the sub-program level or the program level. Without

standardization and rigorous monitoring, one is left with largely qualitative interpretations from reports and field visits. Indeed, it is evident that there have been meaningful changes in many areas, but an opportunity to quantify these changes has been missed.

Despite this lack of evidence-based information, the evaluation team observed that the program has achieved significant advances in working with CSOs. The program has supported different types of organizations, described in Section 3.1 above, which are appropriate in different conditions and are organized to achieve different objectives, all related to the overall program purpose. Furthermore, the program has pursued different forms of collaboration with other partners, also described in Section 3.1, to leverage direct activities of the individual sub-programs.

### **3.3 Program Efficiency**

In all four sub-programs, the efficiency of achieving the desired impacts has been hampered by two factors, i) insufficient field staff and technical support staff to achieve the scale of impacts initially proposed, and ii) geographic dispersion of project implementation areas. Inadequate numbers of field staff has led to the need for reduction in targets in SMIHLE, SCORE and WHELL. The problem of insufficient staff numbers has been exacerbated by staff turnover, which has further reduced the efficiency of field activities.

The geographic dispersion has limited the opportunities for contact among community groups and increased overall implementation costs. If efforts were concentrated in adjacent communities, more opportunities for cross-visits and establishment of networks of neighboring organizations could strengthen and leverage the impacts of working with individual organizations.

On the other hand, program efficiency has been enhanced through effective strategies of partnership and collaboration with other organizations, described above. These collaborations have permitted each of the sub-programs to use their available staff resources more efficiently.

### **3.4 Program Relevance**

The evaluation team found that all four of the sub-programs are addressing critical problems and addressing important issues within their respective program areas. Limited livelihood opportunities, constraints in access to effective government services, HIV/AIDs, and the subordinate status of women are all serious problems in the intervention areas of each of the four countries. In addition, the ways in which the processes of political decentralization are unfolding in Malawi and Mozambique present important challenges for rural communities to effectively take advantage of these potential opportunities. The focus of program activities to address these issues is appropriate and justified.

The individual sub-programs have exhibited flexibility to reorient activities to maintain relevance in light increased awareness of the problems, or changing political or institutional circumstances. Adopting support for adult literacy in SMIHLE, the overall reorganization of LIME into LipFund, and the decision to form and support CDLs in SMIHLE are all examples of this flexibility. The decision to put greater

emphasis on working with municipalities in WHELL is an example of a successful program adaptation.

### **3.5 Program Sustainability**

In the context of PACS, sustainability is primarily with respect to the CSOs that the program is developing and supporting, and the extent to which they are in a position to continue independently without project support. As is to be expected, there is a wide range in variation in the capacities and levels of initiatives of individual groups. One of the key activities of all the sub-programs to undertake during the extension will be to assess all of the CSOs, develop strategies for how to phase out support to them under the current program and make plans for continued support under new proposals.

### **3.6 Mainstreaming HIV/AIDS and Gender**

Improved access to quality rural services that mainstream HIV/AIDS and gender varies greatly across the four sub-programs. SMIHLE, through its development of formal structures that focus particular attention on vulnerable groups, including women and those with HIV/AIDS, has improved access to quality rural services. These services, however, lie primarily within communities themselves, and have little connection to government (given the lack of real change in decentralization) and still rely on linkages to NGOs and national forums.

In Kenya, LipFund claims that it works in partnership with a local NGO (SIMAHO) to build the capacity of PPGs to integrate social services in their operations and understand the impact of HIV/AIDS on their livelihoods. In reality, however, the two work independently, and even though there are relevant linkages between market-led approaches to livestock production and HIV/AIDS, there is scant interaction between LipFund and SIMAHO on these issues. In terms of enhancing gender equity in their operations, LipFund actively promotes female participation in marketing. Given the strong cultural biases in women's participation in, for example, cattle marketing, LipFund has had to look for modest changes in women's participation. In some PPGs, women's participation and leadership are evident, and LipFund has helped to break down some of the barriers and biases.

In WHELL, the majority of pilot participants are women. The project has helped change the attitudes of traditional leaders towards women's participation in public forums and the leaders have actively supported WHELL's work with income-generating enterprises for women. In the pilot groups, WHELL has built the capacity of the pilot groups to understand their legal rights to water and sanitation services and to demand services that take their specific needs into account. This has helped poor communities to advocate for water and sanitation services that meet their needs for multiple uses of water, rather than accept a single-use, uniform technical service delivery approach that may not be appropriate. These multiple needs include water for household use, for small-scale income generating activities, and for vegetable gardens that support schools and HIV/AIDS affected households. The actual numbers of women and men with improved access to quality rural services that mainstream HIV/AIDS and gender are limited to the pilots, and thus are extremely modest. For the CSOs working with WHELL, whether or not people have improved access to 'quality rural services' in the context of mainstreaming should eventually be measured by indicators such as reductions in domestic workloads for women; reduction in

gender-based violence during water collection; reduced burden of care on women caring for AIDS patients, and increased economic self-sufficiency of women. The CSOs are not currently doing this.

SCORE has ensured that women have representation on the CDLs (one-half of the members are to be women), and women generally appear to be active participants in these civil society organizations. In addition, the project has provided training on HIV/AIDS and gender awareness and mainstreaming to members of CBOs and CDLs. The intention is that they will then provide training to other members of their communities, and will actively promote mainstreaming of these issues in their respective organizations. However, while the trainings have been provided, there is no indication that the community level organizations have begun to adjust their activities to mainstream HIV/AIDS and gender issues. It is quite evident that the project needs to take a more active role in mainstreaming; only providing training is not sufficient.

### **3.7 Institutional Capacity**

The program has done much to create informal institutions at the community level and forge links from these organizations to local government structures. However, in all sub-programs it is not possible to quantitatively assess the extent to which these community organizations have had measurable impact on the delivery of services. This is due to the fact that the community level organizations are still in the process of being developed, and the process of decentralization of government services is either paralyzed (Malawi) or in the process of change (Mozambique). In Kenya, the model of implementation has recently been substantially reorganized, so it is still too early to observe the ultimate impacts of the revised model (however, even if the basic model is successful it does not mainstream HIV/AIDS and gender). In South Africa, WHELL has increased the capacity of three municipalities to mainstream services. Two municipalities have incorporated mainstreaming HIV/AIDS in their 2009 IDPs. The IDPs take effect in July 2009, so the initial results will not be known until mid-2010, but municipal staff are held accountable to the District Council for results. This is a significant step forward, as mainstreaming in water services delivery is already a priority of the Ministry of Water Affairs and Forestry, but the municipalities, which are responsible for basic services, have little understanding of what it means or how to do it. However, the realization of IDP plans to mainstream need to be encouraged and closely monitored for impact. Awareness of and support for mainstreaming is still largely limited to the water services department and to the technical and community services officers, and needs to be more broadly integrated into other municipal service sectors. Also important is that WHELL, by helping local government to engage directly with civil society organizations, has broken down barriers on both sides –government’s apprehension of unrealistic or hostile community demands, and the community’s ignorance of and isolation from the decision-making structures that deliver services. With regard to gender equity, WHELL has raised awareness about gender equity within local government. This is manifested in the appointment of more female Community Services Facilitators at the municipal level, and support in the IDP for greater income generating opportunities for women.

### **3.8 Livelihood Models**

Several of the livelihood models implemented show promise for enhancing livelihood security, in

particular the VSLs, seed banks, and PPGs. The VSLs and seed banks also appear to be models that can be quite easily replicated in a wide range of situations. Community-level monitoring of VSLs and seed banks (through use of a scorecard approach) suggest that members themselves feel that well-being is improved, and it is common for members to note that they now can pay school fees and purchase more agricultural inputs as a result of their participation in these models<sup>12</sup>. In SMIHLE, participation by women is high in the VSLs, and PLWHA support groups have their own VSLs; for women especially, the VSLs provide a vehicle to save money for essential expenses in an organized, easily accessible way that did not previously exist. For PLWHA groups, VSLs have introduced social welfare support such as emergency funds for hospital costs, which provide a social safety net and thus enhance their livelihood security. The PPGs have significant potential in improving livelihood security but need more time and monitoring to confirm real changes.

Another model that is still in early stages of development in SMIHLE is the marketing groups. However, because of the weakness in the monitoring and evaluation systems, objective evidence of the impacts of these models is not yet available. The surveys proposed for the program extension will provide empirical evidence.

### 3.9 Achievements per Logframe

The stated purpose of the overall PACS program is:

*To enhance livelihood security and well-being through improving rural communities' access to quality services that mainstream effective responses to HIV/AIDS and address gender inequities.*

The impact of the overall PACS Program was to be measured through:

- The number of women and men who have improved access to quality rural services that mainstream HIV/ AIDS and gender.
- Formal and informal structures/ institutions/ organisations have demonstrated improved capacity to deliver effective basic services that mainstream HIV/AIDS and gender to target communities.
- Models developed and documented that result in enhanced livelihood security and /or wellbeing that are replicable.

The individual sub-programs have reported on some of these purpose-level indicators, although not consistently and without using rigorous monitoring methods. SMIHLE has made some attempts to systematically measure 3organizational changes, primarily through the use of its scorecard approach. The evaluation recommends that formal surveys be undertaken in each of the sub-programs during the program extension. By the end of the extension, the necessary information will be available to measure these two indicators.

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<sup>12</sup> Livelihood security has clear and easily measureable indicators, such as asset ownership, that should be applied by APAC sub-programs in the future. Likewise, for food security there are multiple indicators that, when monitored over time, can clearly show changes at the household and community levels, and be easily be disaggregated based on vulnerable groups. 46

Information obtained during the final evaluation reveals a wide variety of situations across the four sub-programs. The capacities of civil society and government organizations are relevant for the SCORE, SMIHLE and WHELL sub-programs. Observations made during the evaluation indicate that the local government and civil society organizations supported by these sub-programs are developing improved capacity, but the ultimate impacts of these organizations on the welfare of community members cannot yet be observed. There is little evidence that these services have yet effectively mainstreamed HIV/AIDS and gender issues

The components of the logframe for each sub-program are discussed above in Section 2.

## **3.10 Findings on Key APAC Program Themes**

### **3.10.1 Benefits for the Poor**

Overall, the program has succeeded in reaching poor and vulnerable households. In Mozambique and Malawi, the training to the CSOs has stressed the need to be aware of the needs of all members in the communities. For example, the CSOs are coached in how to conduct wealth mapping in their communities. Also, the process for formation of the CSOs is designed to reflect the interests of all groups in the community. Communities vote on members for these committees. Village leaders are included, but only as non-voting observers. One-half of the members are to be women. In South Africa, one of the project's implementing partners, AWARD, now incorporates vulnerability analysis into all its programs. Also, local government officials are now aware that effective service delivery means differentiating between meeting technical standards and understanding the needs of the most vulnerable households. The majority of WHELL pilot group participants were women from poor rural households, many from HIV-affected households.

The membership in groups organized for economic purposes in Mozambique and Malawi (VSLs, CBOs in Mozambique; seed banks, marketing groups in Malawi; women's income generating enterprises in South Africa) have strong representation of poor and vulnerable members. In some cases, as in the seed banks and IGAs, this is a part of the design of the model. In other cases, as for the VSLs, membership in the groups needs to be on a voluntary basis, but the sub-programs in both Mozambique and Malawi have been quite successful in organizing groups that include more vulnerable members of the communities. In Malawi, many of the VSLs are predominantly or entirely made up of women, and several VSLs are entirely composed of PLWHAs.

### **3.10.2 Capacity Building - Individual, Community, and Organizational Levels**

The program approach is based on capacity building, especially focusing on forming and supporting various kinds of groups at the community or village level. Some groups are oriented toward undertaking productive or commercial activities to enhance the livelihood security conditions of group members, while others have a civil society orientation, to identify and find ways to address problems faced within the community at large. The capacity building provided to these organizations generally appears to be quite effective, but objective findings cannot be provided at this stage for two reasons. First, several of the institutional models have only been supported for a short period of time, in particular the CDLs in SCORE and the new model for the PPGs in Lipfund. The programs have developed or adjusted these models for good reasons, but the implication is that the ultimate impacts of these models cannot be assessed at this time. Secondly, the program has not collected the necessary information to be able to make quantitative assessments of the impacts of the capacity building activities.

Discussions about training and capacity-building with group members, however, does shed light on the importance individuals attach to enhancing their capacities. Training is always mentioned as a motivation for group participation, and groups are consistently requesting more training on a given topic, training in new topics, longer training periods (despite the difficulties in taking time out from livelihood activities)

and refresher courses. Capacity-building is a prime motivator for group participation, especially VUCs and CDLs but for all other groups as well. The training individuals receive in their respective groups not only helps them fulfill their group role, but undoubtedly helps them in their personal lives. Beyond the communities, exchanges of learning between communities, such as have been undertaken by WHELL, build useful networks for problem-solving and provide women, in particular, a sense of being connected with a world outside their small communities.

Future efforts on gender mainstreaming need to take into account literacy levels, particularly for females. SMIHLE has been able to leverage some funds for literacy training, and the attendance has been significant and the demand for additional literacy programs strong. Literacy is a cornerstone of mainstreaming gender, and all sub-programs should have considered literacy more seriously in their strategies to mainstream gender.

### **3.10.3 Policy Engagement and Governmental Collaboration**

Governmental collaboration is very high in Mozambique, and all district government officials interviewed during the evaluation praised the support provided to district staff, and stressed the beneficial impacts of the CDLs in the decentralization process. CARE has been quite engaged in inter-agency discussions about how to implement the decentralization of government services. In addition, the project management has adapted very effectively to the evolving policy environment by supporting CDLs as a means to extend the government's "reach" into local communities.

Collaboration with government is less in Malawi, largely because the decentralization process has not advanced in a meaningful way, so it has proved impossible to link village level organizations with local government structures and initiatives beyond the VDC/ADC level and with local extension agents. SMIHLE's successful promotion of VSLs and HIV/AIDS mainstreaming has been noted by the Ministry of Agriculture and civil society organizations in Malawi, and future policy engagement could have significant implications in replicating the VSL approach on a broader scale.

LipFund has influenced government policy through participation in the National Livestock Policy working group, which led to the inclusion of pastoralists and livestock traders in the dissemination of market information by the Livestock Marketing Council, and a revision to the National Livestock Quarantine Regulations that had discriminated against the region in which LipFund is working. The project has strong links to District-level livestock services, and engages government extension agents in training for drought management and animal health.

WHELL has been at its most influential in working with local government (municipalities) to integrate mainstreaming into district five-year Integrated Development Plans. It has increased the capacity of local government officials who are responsible for mainstreaming services but have not received the training to do so. WHELL has strong support at the national level in the Ministry of Water Affairs and Forestry, where there is much interest in continuing to work with CARE on policy and advocacy issues. WHELL's conceptual framework also fits in well with initiatives by South African universities and research organizations to support greater grassroots participation in democratic processes.

### **3.10.4 Australian Non-Governmental Organizations: Value-adding and Inputs to Program Quality**

CARE provides significant value added and provides important inputs to program quality. The organization of field operations and the strategies for working with community organizations implemented in PACS have drawn heavily from CARE's previous experiences in the four countries. Development of CSOs in SMIHLE and SCORE, and the work with municipalities to engage communities more effectively in WHELL are examples of project strategies that have taken good advantage of CARE's experience in community organization. Also, support to livelihoods strategies, such as the VSLs in Mozambique and Malawi, the seed banks in Malawi, and the support to livestock marketing in Kenya have drawn from CARE's knowledge of livelihood systems and previous experiences of promoting livelihoods in those countries.

However, there is potential for CARE to provide even more value added, through more effective coordination of PACS activities with other programs that have complementary activities and work in the same geographic area. For example, SCORE could more effectively coordinate with other livelihoods and HIV/AIDS programs that CARE implements in the same geographic areas. While there are important bureaucratic and administrative problems to be addressed, it should be possible to overcome these problems if they are discussed and negotiated in the program design stage.

CARE-Australia has provided important support to the individual sub-programs, and has played a key role in coordination across the components. Staff from CARE-Australia conducted annual monitoring visits and provided external reviews of each sub-program. For example, the reorganization of LIME into the LipFund followed on input from CARE-Australia, as did the program adjustments in WHELL. A CARE Australia staff member is acting as Program Manager in WHELL since the resignation of the previous manager in January 2009 in order to ensure the quality and continuity of the program. With regard to coordination within PACS, CARE-Australia has supported regular meetings among the four sub-programs to share learning and experience. Also, cross-visits of staff among all the sub-programs have been supported, with funding to support these visits since year 3. These meetings have provided a valued forum for members from each of the sub-programs to share experiences, examine issues, and develop their thinking about their own programs. The Institutional Scorecard model has been promoted across the sub-components through these program-level meetings and through cross-visits.

CARE-Australia has also undertaken initiatives to coordinate with other APACS programs, such as supporting training on the Institutional Scorecard model used by SMIHLE to NGOs such as World Vision, ADRA, and Oxfam. CARE has taken a lead role in meetings of all APAC NGOs convened by AusAID. CARE-Australia will also take a lead role in developing and implementing a decentralization model based on all APAC members in Malawi.

### **3.10.5 Development of Educational and Public Information Resources**

The development of educational and public information resources has been quite variable across the sub-

programs, and not a strong point in any of the sub-programs aside from WHELL. SMIHLE has prepared a number of pamphlets and brochures that describe various project activities and models. PowerPoint presentations describing the institutional scorecard have been developed and shared during various stakeholder meetings. Training and support materials to provide to community groups have been prepared, although the coverage across all program components is incomplete and every sub-program could provide more and better documentation to groups and volunteers. WHELL, by contrast, has developed and disseminated some excellent conceptual materials around the nexus of water, gender, and HIV/AIDS which are highly relevant to the South Africa context. WHELL is also developing case studies on the lessons learned from the pilots for dissemination.

There is substantial opportunity across the entire program during the extension periods to capture and pass on lessons learned, and to inform the wider public in each of the four countries on the strategies that have been used to enhance livelihoods and mainstream HIV/AIDS and gender. This would include the development of technical materials which present innovative or best practice aspects of the program and the models developed by the program.

## **4. Findings by Sector**

### **4.1 Food Security/Livelihoods and Civil Society Development**

A variety of models and approaches have been implemented to enhance food and livelihood security of vulnerable households: the PPGs in Lipfund; VSLs, seed banks, marketing groups in SMIHLE; CBOs and VSLs in SCORE, and the pilots in WHELL that provided water for home gardens and supported female-run micro-enterprises. Based on information collected during the evaluation, the VSLs and seed banks appear to be highly effective models, offering significant opportunities to improve the livelihoods of members, and these models can be effectively be targeted toward vulnerable groups and households. Women with VSL loans for income generation are using some of their profits to purchase household items, which provide a type of safety net as they remain under women's control and can readily be converted to cash when needed. The PPGs in Kenya also appear to provide excellent opportunities for enhancing livelihoods. Although important changes in strategy, namely the use of private banks to provide loans to production groups, are in their early stages of implementation, the economic potential of livestock marketing holds high potential for increasing incomes in pastoral groups.

In Mozambique and Malawi the program has worked quite effectively to develop community level CSOs (CDL in Mozambique, VUC in Malawi). These groups are quite new in Mozambique, and fit integrally into the government decentralization process; they link up in a formal institutional manner with the district government through the consultative councils. The district government perceives the CDLs as useful partners to reach out to the community level. However, there appears to be some lack of direction, particularly in the more established CDLs. This seems to be in part because the CDLs do not yet have a clear role within the decentralization process that is clear and visible to the CDL members and the communities they represent.

In Malawi, the link between the VUCs and the local government structures is weaker, because the decentralization process has not advanced much beyond the planning stage. For now, the majority of the

VUCs appear to be quite active, working to address community problems through their own local actions and through limited non-governmental contacts. Their work with seed banks has had a positive impact on food security, especially for vulnerable households. The enthusiasm with which CSOs have begun to address community problems is a positive sign for Malawi's civil society development, given decades of government encouragement of dependency through handouts and discouragement of independent action.

In South Africa, decentralization is slowly being institutionalized in the municipalities. There is a lot of public interest in participation in democratic processes and the satisfaction of a peaceful election process. The possibility for greater connection with local government and the opportunity to advocate for greater responsiveness exists. WHELL has been able to leverage some of this possibility through the CSOs in its pilots, though much more could be done. In WHELL, pilot groups have developed links with local government for the first time. However, the groups have made little progress in "developing replicable and locally accountable sustainable livelihoods" due mainly to gaps in project support and follow-up.

The challenge now facing the program is to ensure that these CSOs will be able to sustain over time, after the project support comes to an end. One critical factor in this regard is to ensure that CSOs are provided with real authority, either in influencing higher level government decisions about resource allocations, or having direct control over some resources. In Mozambique, the OIIL program offers an important opportunity to sustainably enhance the authority and relevance of CSOs.

## **4.2 Mainstreaming HIV/AIDS and Gender**

Mainstreaming HIV/AIDS and gender within local government service delivery has made a promising start in WHELL, and mainstreaming at the community level has been quite effective in SMIHLE, while SCORE and LipFund have made much less progress in this area. Gender mainstreaming is often seen as having more women involved in training, community activities, and decision making forums. However, the real impact of gender mainstreaming is the reduction of inequalities and discrimination that prevent women from accessing resources on the same level as men. Changing views about the status of women and supporting female empowerment is a challenge in all the sub-program settings, and mainstreaming has shown the most results to date around inclusion of women and PLWHAs in CSOs.

HIV/AIDS and gender training has been emphasized in all sub-programs and is responsible for building greater awareness and motivation to address inequities among key stakeholders. The sub-programs have found it a greater challenge to develop and support coherent strategies to address the issues covered in the trainings in the activities of CBOs and government entities. The VSLs have been the most effective approach for female empowerment because it has given women control over money and the ability to acquire assets of their own; this in turn has allowed them to withstand exploitation. Participation in community forums provides an implicit opportunity to voice their specific concerns, and has helped changed attitudes that underlay biases against both groups in their communities. VSLs have also provided PHLAs with the confidence to participate more fully in community life. PHLA groups in SMIHLE note that discrimination still exists on the part of specific individuals in VUCs, which can have a dampening effect on receptivity to PHLA groups' input in some forums.

For example, SMIHLE, which has made considerable progress in mainstreaming at the community level, has engendered greater participation by and representation of vulnerable women and among office holders in the committees operating in the project (e.g., seed committees and VSLs). This increase in women's participation helps ensure that issues of importance to women are included in development activities identified by the committees, helps break down social resistance (among women as well as men) to female office-holders, and provides role models for other women. Still, female office holders often deferred to men in the groups. This is attributed to lower confidence among women in expressing themselves, largely due to their lower education levels. CARE Malawi is addressing this by incorporating female literacy training into its program. A gender analysis of CARE Malawi projects done in December 2008 notes that while staff commitment to mainstreaming is high, their ability to do operational analysis, especially of gender issues, needs strengthening. The study makes valuable recommendations for building skills for gender mainstreaming in CARE program staff.

### **4.3 Partnership/Governance**

Work on governance has been of particular importance in Mozambique because of the great changes happening there in the decentralization process. The SCORE project has been in a very good position to facilitate the decentralization process, helping to advance decentralization down to the level of communities, and working to ensure that the interests of vulnerable groups within the communities are represented. The program is to be commended for taking strong steps to find an approach that is appropriate in the context of the rapidly evolving decentralization process, and fits in with efforts of the government and other organizations. In particular, SCORE has been able to complement and extend the efforts of GTZ, which has been providing technical support to the decentralization process to government structures at the district and PA levels. CARE has been a member of FOPROI, a group of organizations that support the decentralization process in Inhambane Province. The challenge for SCORE now will be to find ways to effectively integrate the CDLs into the formal government structures.

Successful partnerships depend a great deal on intangibles such as good communication, mutual understanding, and trust. However, these need to be complemented with formal Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) that clearly outline roles and responsibilities, supported by agreement on deliverables, work plans and timetables.

### **4.4 Marketing; Private Sector Engagement; Micro-finance**

Interviews conducted during the evaluation revealed that VSL models implemented in Malawi and Mozambique appear to be quite successful means to enhance household livelihood security. Furthermore they appear to have been used to target women and PLWHA quite effectively. In addition the seed bank model also seems to have been quite successful in Malawi. The seed bank members and the VUCs that were interviewed indicated a strong interest in the seed bank model. This model also appears to be quite effective in targeting toward vulnerable households including PLWHA. However, these impressionistic findings should be verified by quantitative surveys of the VSL and seed bank groups. These surveys should be undertaken in both Malawi and Mozambique (for VSLs) during the project extension phase to provide quantitative information about the impacts of these models.

Observations from the Lipfund and SCORE sub-programs, as well as long experience of economic development projects around the world, suggest that projects designed to promote private sector activities should avoid providing outright grants or subsidies for commercially viable activities. These types of interventions only distort incentives. If activities are commercially viable, the agents (individuals or groups) should expect to pay the market costs of all inputs.

## **4.5 Water and Sanitation**

The water and sanitation sector focus has been addressed through the WHELL sub-program in South Africa. WHELL has focused on improved water service delivery models that also reflect good governance principles by strengthening local government capacity to identify the needs of and deliver services to vulnerable households. This approach is innovative in that it brings essential services and awareness on rights and responsibilities among constituents and duty-bearers together around two critical social issues, HIV/AIDS and gender.

The WHELL framework enjoys the advantage of a supportive constitutional and legal framework for its approach as well as strong interest from the responsible Ministry. However, the water and sanitation sector is a complex one in South Africa. It is a multifaceted sector whose services are delivered through the newly decentralized local government bureaucracies that are still building their own capacity to carry out their duties. Government is interested in greater engagement with CSOs but is uncertain how to do so. Mainstreaming is a new concept in water and sanitation services, and WHELL has had a significant impact on local government's interest in improving water service delivery to vulnerable households. It is an achievement of WHELL that it has been able to influence how water service delivery technical specialists now think about vulnerability, and what appropriate service delivery to vulnerable people is, in a new way. It has forced government service providers to confront questions about what service delivery means in districts where the majority are unemployed, and how scarce public funds should be targeted.

On a practical level, the program has built the capacity of pilot groups to obtain more diversified water and sanitation services from municipalities. WHELL's training has helped poor, disempowered communities isolated from government decision-making structures to understand issues around water, sanitation, health, and to exercise their rights to service delivery in a constructive manner.

## **5. Management Issues**

### **5.1 Program Design**

The evaluation team identified a number of concerns in regard to the initial design of PACS. One concern is the lack of a clear M&E plan, discussed in more detail below. In addition, although the program purpose emphasizes mainstreaming HIV/AIDS and gender awareness, the design of the sub-programs do not demonstrate a clear logical framework for how this mainstreaming would actually be carried out. The result is that there has been significant variation across the sub-programs with respect to mainstreaming HIV/AIDS and gender.

The design of the SCORE sub-program was too dispersed, with a lack of focus and no clear explanation of the logical integration among the program components. As a result, the program activities are not very well integrated, although they could be. In particular, the program could work to develop more explicit links between the CBOs and the CDLs, with the CDLs on the one hand helping to establish CBOs that include or support the most vulnerable in the communities, and on the other hand representing the interests of CBOs to governments and other outside organizations.

LipFund, and its earlier incarnation as LIME, had no clear linkage between the development of livestock production groups and HIV/AIDS mainstreaming. Even its linkage to gender was somewhat superfluous. These factors are tangential to actual livelihood change strategies promoted by LipFund activities.

The geographical dispersion of the pilot projects in WHELL made project support and oversight difficult and costly. Among the selected pilots, only the Tshiungani Water Users Committee in Mutare municipality was a good fit for operationalizing the WHELL framework.

APACS developed an overall program logframe only in 2006. This logframe was designed to integrate each of the NGO initiatives, and to indicate the overall program coherence. In practice, however, this logframe has not been integrated into reporting to APACS. In particular, PACS has not reported against the APACS logframe.

## **5.2 Monitoring and Evaluation**

Monitoring and evaluation has been a significant weakness in all of the PACS sub-programs. The problem is inherent in the initial design proposal, which does not include an explicit M&E plan. In addition, the indicators described in the logframe were not clearly defined, and no targets were established. The budget for M&E is very small, approximately AUS 100,000 in year one, 150,000 in year five, and 55,000 in year three<sup>13</sup>, and less than 10,000 for the remaining years. Overall, M&E costs are about 4 percent of the total budget.

The lack of an explicit M&E plan and the small allocation of resources in the initial design led to a weakness throughout the rest of the program. None of the sub-programs have useful information from baseline surveys, so there is no benchmark to use to measure program impacts over time. With the exception of SMIHLE (Malawi), the sub-programs do not have any staff with the primary responsibility of coordinating M&E efforts. In Mozambique, the country office M&E officer has overall responsibility, but is based far from the project office and has many other responsibilities.

SMIHLE has promoted the use of the Institutional Scorecard as a community-based, participatory monitoring tool that empowers communities to participate and ensure accountability of decision-making bodies at all levels. This has been the only visible and innovative use of M&E in any of the four sub-programs. The scorecard has been a useful tool for assessing accountability, transparency, inclusion and responsibility from service providers by service users. One of the municipalities participating in WHELL

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<sup>13</sup> This corresponds to the years for baseline, mid-term, and final impact assessment studies.

plans to test the use of the scorecard in 2009 to assess water services delivery. The scorecard is a valuable capacity-building exercise for communities. It is not, however, a particularly useful or efficient tool for project-level monitoring, although if it were streamlined it could provide some project-level data.

### **5.3 Documentation and Reporting**

The program reporting documents do not always provide clear information, either quantitative or qualitative, about progress against goals<sup>14</sup>. The reports only describe the indicators, and do not report on how indicators are changing over time, across locations, or among groups. The reports do not follow the usual reporting format, which includes the following components:

- reporting of current activities and outputs achieved;
- comparison of actual activities and outputs with previously established targets;
- reasons for failure to achieve targets, if relevant; and
- targets for upcoming reporting period.

This reporting format provides all the necessary information to track program activities in relation to targets, reasons for departure from plans, and the possibility to adjust future targets based on current conditions. Future programs should adopt activity reporting formats that include these components.

### **5.4 Staff Turnover**

Staff turnover has been a very serious problem in SCORE and WHELL. This turnover, along with the weaknesses in the M&E system and documentation and reporting described above, has led to a serious loss of institutional memory and discontinuity of efforts in the program. While there may be little that CARE can do to avoid the problem of staff turnover in the short run, it is important to make sure that management systems and programming strategies are sufficiently well defined that new staff are in a position to continue program activities with few start-up costs. Equally important is ensuring that the project is adequately staffed to begin with; this would have helped avoid some of the gaps in coverage in both SCORE and WHELL. Staff turnover in WHELL, compounded by the lack of management support and oversight and inadequate staffing mentioned in Section 3, meant that partner weaknesses in achieving outputs were not identified and addressed by CARE in a timely manner. In addition, WHELL underwent several external reviews during the life of the program, but lacked adequate staff to implement many of the recommendations.

## **6. Recommendations**

### ***Future Programming***

Future programming needs to build on the lessons learned from the current sub-programs. The following general recommendations on program design and monitoring/evaluation are aimed toward developing

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<sup>14</sup> SMIHLE does have some documentation on lessons on HIV/AIDs and gender mainstreaming within its models, as well as documentation on SMIHLE's contribution toward addressing the underlying causes of poverty in Malaysia.

more effective sub-programs in the ‘next generation’ of assistance. Please also refer to the specific recommendations made under each sub-program review.

1. Future programs need to place special emphasis on project design. It is not evident that the current program was designed using well-established design principles. While the overall purpose and objectives of the PACS assistance are rationale, there are serious gaps in logic within the overall logframe. Future design should be based on sound cause-effect logic, first using a comprehensive problem-opportunity analysis to formulate the logic, and then identifying opportunities along identified cause-effect streams. Linkages between, for example, food or livelihood security and targeted groups (e.g., vulnerable households, women, PLWHA) should be made more explicit in the logical hierarchy. Outcomes, based on behavioral changes (practices) and the systems (CBOs, local government, networks, NGOs, private sector) should be explicit and clearly defined.
2. Monitoring and evaluation plans need to be developed from the outset, appropriately funded, and then conducted with accepted methods and appropriate rigor. Particular attention should be placed on designing, conducting, and analyzing baseline studies for all new programs. Use of a variety of baseline designs (longitudinal studies, appreciative inquiries, randomized household surveys) should be considered based on sound analysis and use of in-house or contracted experts. Decisions made in baseline studies have a profound impact on future monitoring efforts in a project, so appropriate attention and resources should be devoted to the design of all future baseline studies.
3. All future programs should develop exit strategies during their first year of implementation and updated annually. These exit plans focus primarily on aspects of sustainability, and identify early on what the program expects to be in place when program assistance is withdrawn. These plans then provide important input into annual workplans and implementation.

### ***For Sub-Program Extensions***

Findings under Section 2 above outline important steps to be taken during the extension period for each sub-program. The following actions are recommended to be undertaken over the course of the project extension for all sub-programs:

1. One of the critical activities to be undertaken in the project extension is to take stock of the impacts of the program, and to catalogue lessons learned in the implementation of the four sub-programs in order to be able to make well-informed plans for follow-up activities. One component should be to undertake a series of surveys of project participants. These surveys should be designed to obtain necessary information about project impacts on the participant groups and information about the strengths and weaknesses of the support provided by the project. All these surveys should include sections on HIV/AIDS and gender mainstreaming. The surveys should be designed using quantitative and qualitative methods and should seek the advice of qualified monitoring and evaluation specialists, either in-house or out-sourced.

The following groups should be surveyed in each of the sub-programs:

- SCORE:
  - CBOs (with separate instrument for VSL groups)
  - CDLs and consultative committees
  - Community members (to ask about services provided by CDLs, CBOs)
- SMIHLE:
  - VUC members
  - Seed bank groups
  - PLWHA support groups
  - VSLs
  - Community members (to ask about services provided by VUCs)
- Lipfund
  - PPGs
  - Non-PPG members raising livestock
- WHELL
  - Water Services Department and the Local Economic Development Department in the partner municipalities; DWAF, DPLG)
  - CSO pilot groups
  - Partner implementers (Mvula Trust, AWARD)

The projects should also plan to undertake more qualitative reviews with partners and other collaborating organizations. These reviews should address the process of collaboration with APACS, suggestions for how to alter the collaboration in the future, on the basis of perceived strengths and weaknesses in the project implementation, and expected future changes in the operational environment. This information will be useful to inform country office strategic planning for future interventions. It will also provide input for future planning by CARE-Australia, will provide background information for the proposal for the next phase of APACS.

2. The institutional scorecard model should be trialed in Mozambique, with CBOs, VSLs, and consultative committees. This model is an effective tool to strengthen organizations by asking them to identify their objectives, explore their strengths and weaknesses, and develop effective plans to pursue their objectives. It is important to emphasize that the institutional scorecard is not only a monitoring tool, but more importantly is a model to help organizations enhance their capacities. The projects will also need to conduct surveys, of the form described above, in order to make independent assessments of the capacities of the collaborating organizations.
3. All sub-programs should ensure that proper training and support materials are left behind for community groups, and that all volunteers have sufficient documentation to carry out their functions, and to train future volunteers.

## **7. Conclusion**

The evaluation team has found that all of the four sub-programs of PACS have made important strides to establish effective community-level organizations which help to support livelihood security of vulnerable populations. These civil society organizations show promise to become effective and sustainable within their communities. Each of the sub-programs has shown good initiative in developing effective models to develop and support local organizations over the course of the current program. However, because of a combination of staff turnover, internal reorganizations, changes in partnerships, and evolving political environments, the implementation of these models has been delayed, and the community organizations still require continued support. Based on these observations, CARE-Australia should consider strategies to continue the models that have been developed under the PACS program. However, several weaknesses in the PACS design must be addressed, and avoided in future proposals. In the project extension, each of the sub-programs needs to develop and implement plans to obtain necessary qualitative and quantitative information to assess the impacts of their programs in participating communities. In the longer term, follow-up proposals need to be well-designed, with clearly defined logic that relates all activities to the objectives in an integrated and coherent way. The proposals need to have a well defined monitoring and evaluation plans, with sufficient staffing and resources to be able to carry out the plan effectively. Future proposals must also provide for the necessary staffing to successfully carry out the proposed activities achieve the desired objectives.

## **Appendix A: Terms of Reference for Final Evaluation of PACS**

CARE Australia is seeking the services of a number of experts to undertake a final program evaluation of its Poverty Alleviation through Civil Society Strengthening Program (PACS).

Position Title CARE Australia Consultancy Final Evaluation Africa Program

Start Date February 2009

Completion Date: 28 April 2009

Closing Date COB Wed 3 Dec 08

PACS is funded under the Australian Partnerships with African Communities (APAC) Australian Aid program. It consists of four sub-programs implemented in Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa and Kenya. While each of the sub-programs is unique and is based in a different country, they all share a set of common goals, reflected in the overall purpose.

The final program evaluation will cover all four sub-programs, with one overall report to be submitted to CARE Australia on or before 28 April 2009.

The gender balanced final evaluation team will consist of a team leader and two or three experts who specialize in one or more of the following sectors:

- Monitoring and Evaluation
- Food security/Livelihoods and civil society development
- Water and Sanitation
- Partnership/Governance
- Marketing and private sector engagement
- Gender and HIV/AIDs mainstreaming
- Experience in working in an African context
- Portuguese Language skills (one team member must be fluent)

The final evaluation team will be required to spend at least 10 days in each of the four countries for meetings with the key stakeholders and for field visits.

Terms of Reference

APAC/PACS - Final Evaluation

Draft

### 1. Background:

The CARE Australia managed "Poverty Alleviation through Civil Society Strengthening" Program (PACS) began in 2004 and consists of four sub-programs implemented in Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa and Kenya. The PACS program is funded under the Australian Partnerships with African Communities (APAC) Australian Aid program that seeks to "contribute to poverty reduction and achievement of sustainable development in targeted

countries in southern and eastern Africa". The PACS program seeks to enhance livelihood security and well-being through improving rural communities' access to quality services that mainstream effective responses to HIV/AIDS and address gender inequities.

The four sub-programs in PACS program are:

1. Sub-Program 1 (Malawi): Supporting and Mitigating the Impact of HIV/AIDS for Livelihood Enhancement (SMIHLE)
2. Sub-Program 2 (Mozambique): Strengthening Civil Society for Rural Empowerment (SCORE)
3. Sub-Program 3 (South Africa): Water, Health and Livelihoods (WHELL)
4. Sub-Program 4 (Kenya): Livestock Purchase Fund (LipFund)

Each of the four PACS sub-programs has its own focus specific to the sub-program, works in a different country context and has its own historical background as to how the program emerged.

Nonetheless, each sub-program shares a set of common goals, reflected in the overall purpose. These include civil society strengthening, improved livelihoods security and, or improved well-being for poor rural communities, improving service delivery, mainstreaming gender and HIV/AIDS and promoting social inclusion.

The impact of the overall PACS Program is to be measured through:

- The number of women and men who have improved access to quality rural services that mainstream HIV/ AIDS and gender.
- Formal and informal structures/ institutions/ organisations have demonstrated improved capacity to deliver effective basic services that mainstream HIV/AIDS and gender to target communities.
- Models developed and documented that result in enhanced livelihood security and /or wellbeing that are replicable.

In line with APAC contractual agreement with AusAID, CARE is expected to undertake a final program evaluation covering all four subprograms and submit one overall program evaluation report, including an executive summary, by end of April 2009. More importantly, CARE Australia is committed to undertaking systematic evaluations of projects and programs in order to improve program quality through the ongoing learning and reflection that evaluations offer.

## 2. Objective of the Evaluation

The Objectives of the final evaluation are:

Asses the impact of the PACS program through two areas of focus:

At the program level, to measure the impact of the PACS program purpose as per log frame (Positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by the program, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended)

- At the subprogram level, impact and outcomes on specific objectives of each of the subprograms.

- Assess overall performance in terms of the following:
- Effectiveness: The extent to which the program objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance.
- Efficiency: A measure of how economically resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) have been converted to results.
- Relevance: The extent to which the objectives of the program have remained consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, country needs, global priorities and partners' and donors' policies, i.e. to the operating context.
- Sustainability: The continuation of benefits from the program after completion of the program. The probability of continued long-term benefits. The resilience to risk of the net benefit flows over time.
- Further, the evaluation report should concisely present findings with reference to the key APAC program themes ( Benefits for the poor, Program approach, Capacity building - individual, community and organisational levels, Policy engagement and governmental collaboration, ANGO value-adding and inputs to program quality, Development of educational and public information resources) and cross cutting issues, particularly gender & HIV/AIDS.

### 3. Evaluation Team and methodology

#### 3.1 Evaluation Team Composition & Responsibilities

As the PACS program consists of a number of various sectors & sub-programs, the evaluation of the program requires the input of a mix of experts. The gender-balanced evaluation team will consist of a team leader; and two to three other experts specialised in various sectors covered by each of the subprograms. One of the consultants/ members must be fluent in Portuguese language in order to conduct the field investigations and other discussions with SCORE sub-program in Mozambique. Experience working in the African context highly desirable. The following experts will be recruited to ensure that all project sectors and sub-programs are sufficiently covered:

- Monitoring & Evaluation expert with sufficient knowledge on one or two of the other sectors appearing below (Team Leader);
- Food security /Livelihoods and Civil society Development
- Water & Sanitation
- Partnership/Governance
- Marketing, private sector engagement, Micro Finance
- gender & HIV/AIDS Mainstreaming

The team leader will coordinate and be responsible for the timely preparation, planning, and implementation of the evaluation, including the final report.

The evaluation team will be responsible for designing and implementing the evaluation plan including sample selection, evaluation key questions, methodology of obtaining related information (meetings, focus groups, sample surveys, secondary data etc.) collection including consultation with key stakeholders including community members and government officials in

various countries, method of analyses, and method of documentation and reporting.

Evaluators will maintain the highest possible professional, ethical and personal standards, ensure the honesty and integrity of the evaluation process, and respect the security and dignity of the program stakeholders.

### 3.2 Methodology

CARE Australia promotes using a participatory evaluation methodology while inviting external participation. Whenever possible, the evaluation will include significant participation and high level of influence of project and program participants and partners (both women and men) in planning for implementation, analysis, and utilisation of evaluations. In addition, when ever appropriate, project and program participants must be provided the opportunity to define their own measures of success and failure, including indicators.

The participation of stakeholders at all levels is expected to reflect actual results (benefits/harms) and impact on specific groups, such as women, ethnic minorities and the like and adoption of lessons learned and recommendation especially at the grass-root level. Baseline data should be used to make before-and-after comparisons with this evaluation [1]. In addition it is believed that such a methodology would reflect problem areas or positive issues that were not originally included in the evaluation plan or project design.

In addition, the evaluation will:

- Include an analysis of the degree and consequences of implementation of the CARE International Program Principles and Standards and Underlying Causes of Poverty.
- Use a gender analysis framework and will reflect and report upon the relative impact of the sub-programs upon women and men, changes in their material well-being as well as social positions [2].
- Include a mix of qualitative and quantitative evaluation methodologies to triangulate findings.
- Use professional inter-agency and sector standards whenever possible.

### 4. Evaluation report

All the data collected will be analysed by the evaluation team and a draft report will be prepared and shared with CARE Australia before it is finalised. If necessary before the final draft is prepared, a workshop could be organised to discuss the findings with the sub program staff in one of the countries program is been implemented to ensure findings are clear and to clarify any further issues etc.

The final report must include a title, a table of contents, a summary, a detailed analysis, a conclusion and recommendations on consolidating the outcomes of the programs in the extended year. The report should be no longer than 40 pages plus annexes. The executive summary should be no more than five pages and include the overall assessment of the project, the lessons learned and recommendations for consolidation of program activities in the extended year.

The report should also have an extensive lessons learned section for each of the sub-programs explaining the reasons for successes or otherwise in relation to the initial problem analysis and program objectives.

The team leader is responsible for the preparation of the final report based on data analysis and feedback received from other team members and the outcome of the final evaluation workshop if conducted as proposed earlier.

This evaluation should be concluded and the final report should be submitted to CARE Australia on or before 28th April 2009.

## 5. Timeline

1. Literature review: 4 days
2. Preparatory work: In-country 2 days (including meetings with CO staff, Project staff and other stakeholders at national level)
3. Field visits: 10 days per Country for data collection (includes discussion with the project team, other stakeholders at sub national level, randomly selected community based organisations and other civil society organisations, Beneficiaries, and sample surveys, FGDs etc )
4. Data analysis & report preparation: 4 days
5. Report Finalisation by team leader: 5 days
6. Final report to be submitted to CARE Australia on or before 28th April 2009
7. Key documents

- AusAID APAC Guidelines
- PACS programme Design document including logframe and other attachments
- Program & Sub-program progress reports (narrative and financial) and annual plans
- PACS program review (2005)
- PACS Mid term reviews for all subprograms and AusAID cluster evaluation (2007)
- Annual program review meeting reports
- All documents produced by subprograms including training manuals Tool kits etc.
- Baseline survey data and reports
- Case studies/ FGD notes from various subprograms
- Field visit and monitoring reports by CARE Australia and AusAID
- The Approach of CARE Australia to Programming that Addresses the Underlying Causes of Poverty & Social Injustice Policy

[1] Baseline data is available for only 2 out of 4 sub-programs and no baseline data available at Program level.

[2] Social positions relate to people's efforts and capacity to take control of their lives and fulfill their rights, responsibilities and aspirations, and reduction in inequality and discrimination.

## Appendix B: SMIHLE EOP Evaluation Schedule

Day and Date	Morning Activity	Afternoon Activity	Location	Responsibility
Wednesday, 25 <sup>th</sup> March 09	Airport pick up at 11:25 am	Meeting with CARE Mlw Management, SMIHLE PM and M&E Coord (discuss program)	Lilongwe	Lemekeza and Jeremiah
Thursday, 26 <sup>th</sup> March 09	Meeting with project staff at 9:00 am	Meeting with other national consultants who have once worked on SMIHLE studies; Bright Sibale – Gender study, while Blessings Botha and Dr. Charles Jumbe – SMIHLE MTE	Lilongwe	Lemekeza and Jeremiah
Friday, 27 <sup>th</sup> March 09	Field data Collection to meet Mwaphira VDC, Kawala and Kamwana VUCs, Musacheuke Irrigation Club, Kamwana Village seed Group, Marketing Committee representatives, Local Leaders; Tadala and Tigwirizane VS&L groups, Chankhali and Kamwana HBCs	Field data Collection to meet Umodzi PLWA Support Group, Mponela Aids Information Counselling Centre (MAICC at 4:00pm), 6 Community Volunteers, 2 government extension staff and one community	TA Dzoole of Dowa	Jeremiah and Simeon
Saturday, 28 <sup>th</sup> March 09	Field data Collection to meet Sungeni and Nakutepa Seed groups, Mtawa and Mphanda madzi VSL groups, Local leaders, Sungeni and Njilambo VUCs, Mgwirizano PLWA Support Group	None	TA Chakhaza of Dowa of Dowa	Jeremiah and Mwangi
Sunday, 29 <sup>th</sup> March 09	None	None	Lilongwe	None
Monday, 30 <sup>th</sup> March 09	Field data Collection to meet Kasitu and Maswana VDCs, Chiwavi, Kaledza and Kamkosi VUCs, Tithokoze, Sanjelekani and Mgwirizano VSL groups, Marketing Committee representatives, Local Leaders	Field data Collection to meet 6 community volunteers, one community	TA Chiwere of Dowa	Jeremiah, Ivy and Wongani
Tuesday, 31 <sup>st</sup> March 09	Field data Collection to meet Mchotsankhawa PLWA support group, 2 government extension officers	Field data Collection to meet Dowa District Assembly Director of Planning and Development and his team	TA Chiwere of Dowa of Dowa	Jeremiah, Ivy and Wongani

Wednesday, 1 <sup>st</sup> April 09	Field data Collection to meet Masula VDC, Undi and Magwelo VSL groups, and Kalino community	Field data Collection to meet One community, 2 seed groups and 6 Community volunteers, Marketing Committee representatives, Local Leaders	TA Chitekwere of Lilongwe	Jeremiah, Mussa and Charles
Thursday, 2 <sup>nd</sup> April 09	Field data Collection to 6 Community volunteers, Chinkombe VDC and community, Mkata and Chingoli seed groups  Wrap-up Meeting	Field data Collection to meet Chingoli VUC, Chikondi and Chisomo VUCs, Marketing Committee representatives, Local Leaders	TA Kalumbu of Lilongwe	Jeremiah, Mussa and Charles

## Appendix C: LipFund EOP Evaluation Schedule

<b>Group/Entity</b>	<b>Time/Date</b>	<b>Interview Type</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Topic</b>
KAAH Women's Group	March 10	Focus Group Discussion	4-6 Members	Empowerment; activities, achievements, future outlook
Livestock Marketing Group #1	March 10	Focus Group Discussion	4-6 Members (mixed)	Experiences, positive and negative outcomes, sustainability
Livestock Marketing Group #2	March 11	Focus Group Discussion	4-6 Members (male)	Experiences, positive and negative outcomes, sustainability
Livestock Marketing Group #3	March 12	Focus Group Discussion	Management Committee	Management of LM groups, lessons learned
District Livestock Production Office	March 11	Key Informant Interview	1-2 Livestock Production Officers	Livestock production challenges, changes over time, future outlook
Arid Lands Resources Mgmt Program Office	March 11	Key Informant Interview	1-2 ALRM Officers	Resource changes, access to water and pasture
Field Staff/LipFund PMU	March 9	Group Discussion/Open Forum	Chege Ngugi, Anne Njuguna, Matthew Ngunga	Experiences, lessons learned, impact of activities, sustainability
Equity Bank - Nairobi	March 9	Key Informant Interview	Equity-CARE Portfolio Manager	Loans, Sharia Compliance
SIMAHO (CBO) – HIV/AIDS	March 11	Group Discussion or Key Informant Interview	2-5 staff	Experiences of providing HIV/AIDS services, gaps, outlooks

## Appendix D: WHELL EOP Evaluation Schedule

Date	Day	Time	Location	What?	Contact Person/s	Organisation
30-Mar-09	Monday	16:10	Johannesburg	Sarah G arrives Joburg QF63	Sarah G	CARE
		17:25	Johannesburg	Jeanne arrives Joburg	Jeanne	TANGO
31-Mar-09	Tuesday	am?	Johannesburg	Flight to Phalaborwa	Jeanne, Sarah, Monene	
		08:30 - 10:30	Hazy View	Meeting with AWARD	Vusi	AWARD
		10:30 - 11:30	Justicia	Drive to Justicia		
		12:00 - 14:30	Justicia	Pilot Activity	Grace, Mavis, Mathebula, Victor, Clr	Justicia Food Garden
		14:30 - 15:30	Justicia	Drive to Hazy View		
		16:00 - 19:00	Hazy View	Meeting with IDP manager, Water Service manager and community services	Dennis, Rodgers	Bushbuckridge Local Municipality
01-Apr-09	Wednesday	08:30 - 11:00	Hazy View	Drive to Tzaneen		
		11:00 - 13:30	Tzaneen	Meet with Tzaneen local municipality	CDF, LED officer, Public Participation Unit, LED Manager	Tzaneen Local Municipality
		13:30 - 14:30	Tzaneen	Drive to Mawa		
		14:30 - 16:30	Mawa	Pilot Activity		Mawa Food Garden

Date	Day	Time	Location	What?	Contact Person/s	Organisation
		16:30 - 17:30	Mawa	Drive to Polokwane and Tzaneen	Connie Malatjie, Makson and Sam	
02-Apr-09	Thursday	07:30 - 08:30	Tzaneen	Drive to Mawa		
		08:30 - 11:00	Mawa	Pilot Activity	Connie Malatjie, Makson and Sam?	Mawa rainwater harvesting households/members
		11:00 - 13:00	Mawa	Drive to Thohoyandou		
		13:30 - 16:00	Thohoyandou	Mutale Municipality	Maxwel Chauke, Rudzani and Clr Chinavhe	Mutale Municipality
03-Apr-09	Friday	08:00 - 09:00	Thohoyandou	Drive to Tshuingani		
		09:00 - 11:30	Tshuingani	Pilot Activity		Tshuingani water committee members
		11:30 - 14:00	Tshuingani	Pilot Activity		LED sanitation group members
		14:30 - 16:00	Tshuingani	Drive to Polokwane		
04-Apr-09	Saturday		Johannesburg			
05-Apr-09	Sunday		Johannesburg			
06-Apr-09	Monday	09:00 - 11:00	Don	Meeting with Partner	Mvula Regional	
		11:30 - 12:00	CARE Office	Drive to office		

Date	Day	Time	Location	What?	Contact Person/s	Organisation
		12:30 - 15:00	Mvula National Office	Meeting with Partner	Mvula National	
			CARE	Drive to hotel		
07-Apr-09	Tuesday	07:30 - 08:30	Johannesburg			
		08:30 - 09:30	Johannesburg			
		10:00 - 11:30	Johannesburg	Meet with Randwater	Chandu	Randwater
		11:30 - 12:30	Johannesburg			
		13:30 - 15:30	Pretoria	Meet with DWAF		DWAF
		15:30 - 16:30	Pretoria			
08-Apr-09	Wednesday	09:00 - 09:30	Johannesburg			
		09:30 - 12:30	CARE			Debrief with CARE
		13:30 - 16:00	CARE			Continued discussion / follow up
		16:-00 - 16:30	Johannesburg			
09-Apr-09	Thursday		Johannesburg			
			Johannesburg		Jeanne	
			Johannesburg		Monene	

## Appendix E: SCORE EOP Evaluation Schedule

Day	Activity	Time
<b>Monday, 16 March</b>	Meeting with Administrator and technical team Vilanculo	14:00 - 15:00
	Meeting with Kukula representative Vilanculo	16:00-17:00
<b>Tuesday, 17 March</b>	Travel to Govuro	6:30 - 8:30
	Meeting with district technical team of Govuro	8:45 - 9:45
	Meeting with CBO Kuzwanana ka vamamani	9:50 - 10:35
	Travel to Machacame	10:30 - 11:00
	Meeting with CDL of Machacame	10:30 - 11:30
	Meeting with CBO of Machacame	23
	Lunch	12:15 12:15
	Travel to Singue	12:30
	Meeting with CDL in Singue	13:00 - 13:55
	Meeting with Govuro Administrato	14:00 -15:00
	<b>Wednesday, 18 Marh</b>	Meeting with Adminstrator and technical team of Inhassoro
Meeting with CBO Kachane( Agriculture)		10:30
Meeting with CBO Kachane (VSL group)		10:30
Meeting with CDL of Chitsekane		12:45
Meeting with CDL of Tiane		2:15
Return to Vilanculo		15:30
<b>Thursday, 19 March</b>	Travel to Mabote	
	Meeting with Adminstrator and technical team of Mabote	
	Travel to Murrambe	
	Meeting with CBO of Murrambe	
	Travel to Tsumbo	
	Meeting with CDL ofTsumbo	
	Travel to Massinguil	
	Encontro com CDL de Massinguil	
	Travel to CARE field-staff compound	
	Lunch	
	Return to Vilanculo	
<b>Friday, 20 March</b>	Travel to Chiculecule (Vilanculo district)	7:00 - 8:30
	Meeting with CDL of Chiculecule	8:30:00- 9:30
	Travel to Chipanela	
	Meeting with CDL of Chipanela	8:30 - 9:30
	Travel to Huluquela	
	Meeting with CBO of Huluquela	10: 15 - 10:45
	Meeting with CBO of Matique	10: 15 - 10:45
	Travel to CARE field-staff compound Mapinhane	10: 45 - 11:15

	Lunch	11:30 - 12:30
	Meeting with CCL Mapinhane	13:30 - 14:30
	Meeting with CDL Mulungo	12: 45 -14: 00
	Meeting with GTZ representative in Vilanculos	15:10 - 16:00
Monday, 23 March	Meeting with GTZ representative in Maputo	16:00 - 17:00

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