

Enabling Sustainable Graduation out of Poverty for the Extreme Poor in Malawi

Overview of the Results from the QuiP Report on Concern Worldwide Graduation Programme, Malawi

The **Graduation Programme** is designed to address the many challenges of extreme poverty by simultaneously boosting livelihoods and income, providing access to financial services, improving people's self-confidence and tackling social exclusion. The intervention in Malawi is an 18 month intense, multifaceted intervention comprising training on a specific livelihood asset, an asset transfer, enhancing access to savings facilities, time-bound cash transfers while on the programme and regular coaching and support visits, as well as introducing and testing an innovative approach to engaging male and female spouses for improved gender equality amongst the programme participants.

Concern is investing in comprehensive research as part of the programme; this includes utilising the *Qualitative Impact Protocol (QuiP)* evaluation methodology. The QuiP is designed to collect credible information directly from intended beneficiaries on significant drivers of change in selected domains of their life over a pre-defined period. Narrative data collected by 'blindfolded' local independent field researchers (they have no knowledge of the hypotheses being tested), is cross-analysed against the project activities to identify unexpected as well as anticipated drivers of change. QuiP studies aim to focus on household-level impacts of an intervention, by gathering intended beneficiaries' perceptions of what has changed in their lives across a series of pre-determined domains and over a set period. QuiP data is not statistically representative of the wider population and findings cannot be extrapolated across wider project target areas, nor is that the intention. The aim of carrying out a QuiP is to conduct a 'deep dive' assessment with a purposively selected group of people in the project target area to understand whether, and if so, how different aspects of their lives have changed in recent years.

A semi-structured questionnaire designed to capture change in the following seven main domains of respondents' lives was used with 24 individuals and four focus groups drawn from the first cohort of participants in the Graduation Programme during March and April 2018, at a point in time before the capital (asset) transfer had been made:

- Household composition and health
- Food production
- Other income generation activities
- Food consumption
- Spending and saving
- Relationships
- Overall well-being

In addition, at the end of the interview, respondents were asked which external organisations they had interacted with, providing an eighth question.

Main Findings

The research identified both positive and negative impacts of the Graduation Programme, though the positive ones appear to be more frequently mentioned and larger in scale. That said, the negative findings have helped identify areas for improvement between the pilot phase and the full phase of the programme, not least the importance of introducing the programme in a clear way to the communities in which Concern works.

Positive impacts

The exercise showed that respondents' perceptions of changes in their lives were overwhelmingly positive across all domains. All reported 'increased food security', 'increased access to savings and loans' and almost all reported 'increased purchasing power', 'increased assets', 'stopped or reduced piece work', and 'no longer going hungry'. Many respondents reported that they had started or were increasing their investment in business, as well as increased income and improved yields. However, given that households had been receiving six months of consumption support at the time of the QuiP, one would expect to see many of these changes as they relate to the consumption of the household.

Other key changes were that in 18 out of the 28 interviews conducted, participants said their hygiene practices had improved, 17 said their nutrition had improved and 16 identified their health had improved; 16 cited that they were using new agricultural conservation techniques, 15 reported using new hybrid seeds and 13 cited using new maize planting techniques.

Four key drivers were identified:

- Cash Transfer
- Village Savings and Loans (VSL)
- Water, Sanitation and Hygiene information
- Agricultural training and advice

The following figure summarises the relationship between the main positive outcomes and associated drivers (the numbers represent the amount of times the relationships between drivers and outcomes were cited across the dataset). This clearly shows the importance of the Cash Transfers across a number of outcomes, in particular the increased purchasing power, but also increased food security and a reduction in piecework. The Village Savings and Loans followed this, linked to improvements in saving behaviour, and then by agricultural training and advice, that was seen to lead to increased yields.

"We used to go to Mozambique for ganyu so that we could earn money, find food and get other things that are needed at household level. Since the coming of Concern Worldwide here, we no longer see the need for going for ganyu because this organization gives us money MK15,000 per month and I have used some of this money to start-up a small business of selling fritters. I have also joined the VSL ran by Concern Worldwide so that I earn more money when we share the money. Overall, the time we spend on doing income generation activities has increased because I am busy selling fritters everyday whilst in the past, it was not everyday that we would find ganyu opportunities. I am planning on growing more groundnuts, soya as well as pigeon peas at the dimba and sell them because these crops fetch a lot of money here in this community."
MJ2-1: D1



| Driver | Outcome | New maize planting technique invested in or started business | New agri practices (general) | Stopped/Reduced piece work | Increased income | No longer go hungry/starve | Increased WASH knowledge | Increased purchasing power | Increased food security | Increased yield | Increased savings/loans | Increased assets | Able to pay school fees/uniform/equipment | Improved hygiene practices | Improved gender equality in household | Improved health | Planting new hybrid seeds | Increased time on own farm | Increased economic independence | Improved nutrition | Increased resilience | New agricultural conservation techniques | Increased livestock numbers to sell | Increase crop diversity |
|----------------------------------|---------|--|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|------------------|---|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Social Cash Transfer (CW) | | 36 | | 40 | 24 | 28 | | 148 | 78 | 2 | 3 | 36 | 16 | | 3 | 4 | 5 | 9 | 10 | 21 | 8 | | 25 | |
| VSL | | 11 | | 4 | 1 | | | 8 | 5 | 1 | 70 | 18 | 2 | | | | | 1 | 12 | 1 | 21 | | 2 | |
| Agricultural training and advice | | 15 | 1 | 18 | | 8 | 1 | | 13 | 28 | | | | | | | 12 | 5 | | 2 | 4 | 20 | | 13 |
| WASH Information | | | | | | | 26 | | | | | | | 27 | | 19 | | | | | | | | |
| Started a business | | | | 1 | 10 | 1 | | 1 | 1 | | | 5 | | | 1 | | | | 1 | | | | | |
| Government HSA | | | | | | | 6 | | | | | | | 6 | | 7 | | | | 1 | | | | |
| Business training | | 7 | | 1 | 2 | | | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | | |
| VSL (NASFAM/other) | | 1 | | | | | | 3 | | | | 3 | 4 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Gender training | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 10 | | | | | | | | | |

Negative impacts

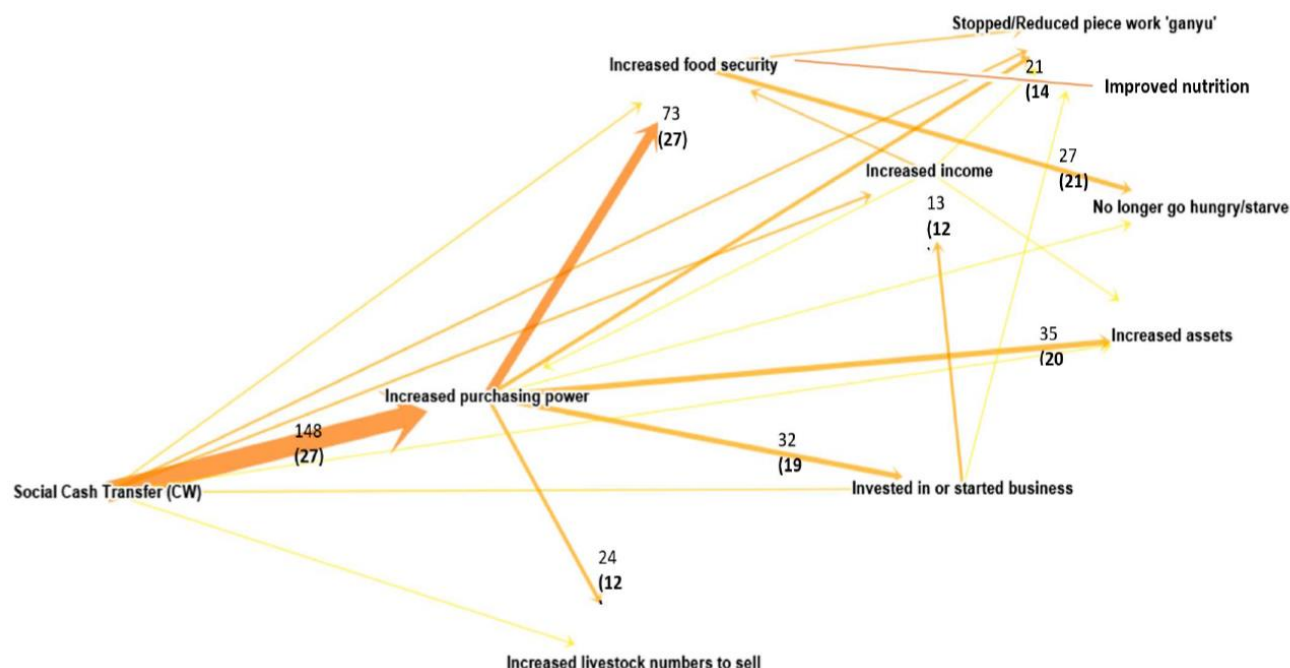
In terms of negative changes in people lives, the majority of those reported by respondents concerned a worsening in community relations as a result of being part of the Graduation Programme, with 14 respondents reporting increased animosity in the community, and six citing being excluded from other projects as a result. (Interestingly, eight respondents had also identified improved community relations as an outcome of the intervention). Other much less commonly reported negative outcomes were 'reduced income' and 'unreliable cash' because of a poorly managed, Government social cash transfer scheme. Reduced yields were also reported because of poor rains and Fall Army Worm. Yet compared to the positive impacts, the count intensity of negative responses is much lower.

| Driver | Economic migration | Reduction in household size | Cash unreliable | Increased borrowing from community | Reduced income | Increased spending on land rent | Reduced farming activity | Reduced yield | Growing less sorghum | Unable to do business | Poor nutrition | Decrease in livestock | Increased animosity in community | Excluded from other projects | Claims that project is satanic cult | Stopped using traditional maize |
|--|--------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------------|----------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Being a project beneficiary | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | | 14 | 6 | 2 | |
| Poor rains | | | | | | | 1 | 6 | 2 | | | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Social Cash Transfer not working (Gov) | | | 3 | 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Poor economy | 2 | 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Crop pests | | | | | | | | 3 | | | | | | | | |
| NASFAM failed to buy soya | | | | | 2 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Death of household head | | 1 | | | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Caring for sick relative | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | | | | | | | | |
| Disability | | | | | | | | | | 2 | | | | | | |
| Animal disease | | | | | | | | | | | | 2 | | | | |
| Poverty | 1 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Drivers of Change

The QuiP focuses on gathering stories of significant change and the key drivers of those changes, allowing the reader to understand the extent the reported outcomes and impacts are attributable to

the intervention. This can then be presented in a graphical format. The following shows the strong link between cash transfers (one of the drivers) and the generation of increased purchasing power, the extent of this link is represented by the thickness of the line (in the graph the large number represents the number of citations and the smaller figure (in brackets) represents the number of respondents giving the reply). The graph goes on to show additional links to increased food security, and how cash transfers also affected individuals ability to invest in, or start, a business, and reduced *ganyu* as a mean of raising income.



Way Ahead

This study looked at participants' perspectives six months into the programme and helped prioritise the need to share better information with the broader community when implementing the programme; monitoring data has subsequently shown an improvement in relations at community level. A second QUIP exercise will be undertaken in 2020, towards the end of support to cohort 2 households, this will allow for more detailed, qualitative examination of some of the issues identified in the baseline and the routine monitoring surveys, and for changes to be made to the implementation of the programme. This will capture participants' views after the full programme cycle, and these timing differences should allow for comparison in how households experience the programme and map how participants see their pathways of change as they progress through the programme.

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