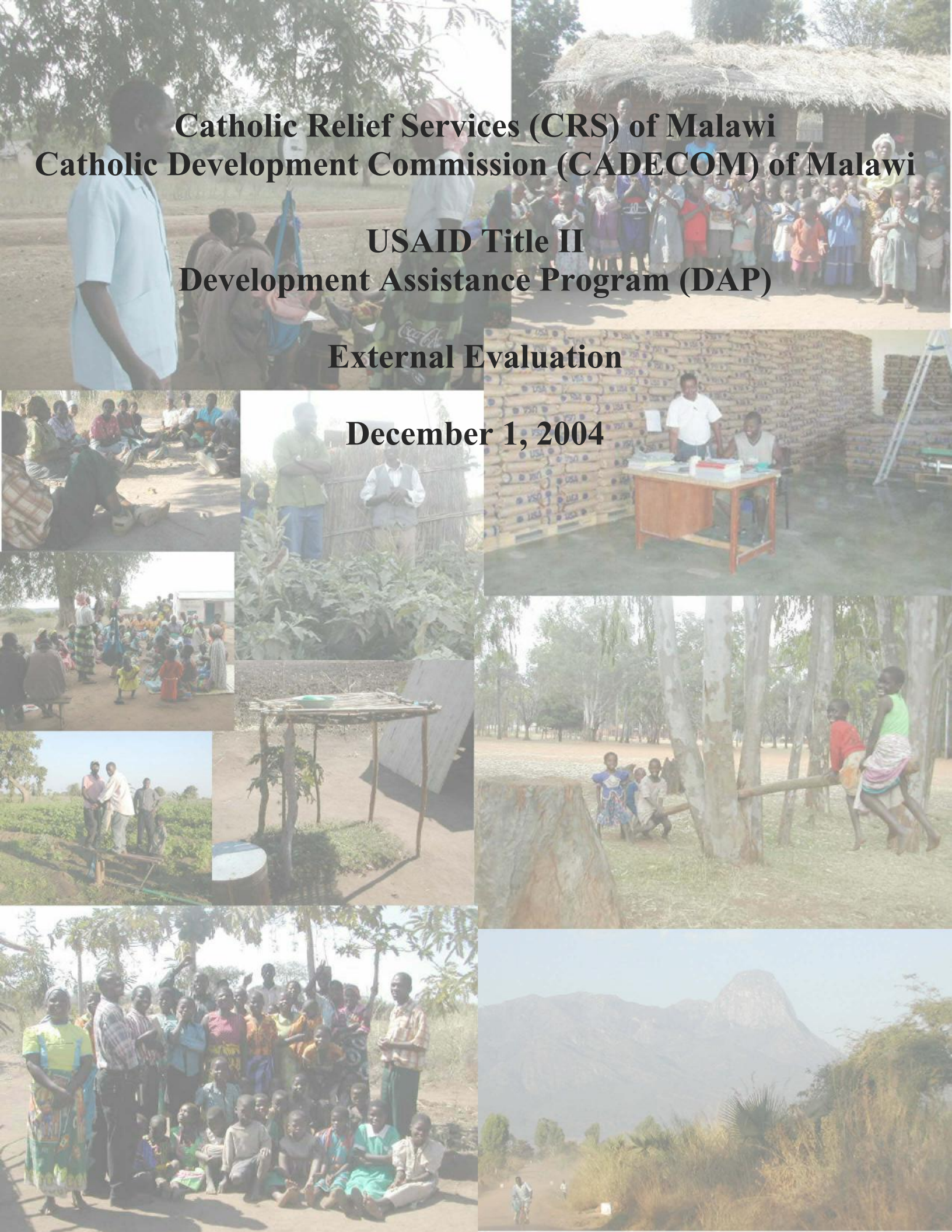


**Catholic Relief Services (CRS) of Malawi
Catholic Development Commission (CADECOM) of Malawi**

**USAID Title II
Development Assistance Program (DAP)**

External Evaluation

December 1, 2004



**Catholic Relief Services (CRS) of Malawi
Catholic Development Commission (CADECOM) in Malawi**

**USAID Title II
Development Assistance Program (DAP)
FY2000-2004**

Final External Evaluation

Final Draft: November 20, 2004

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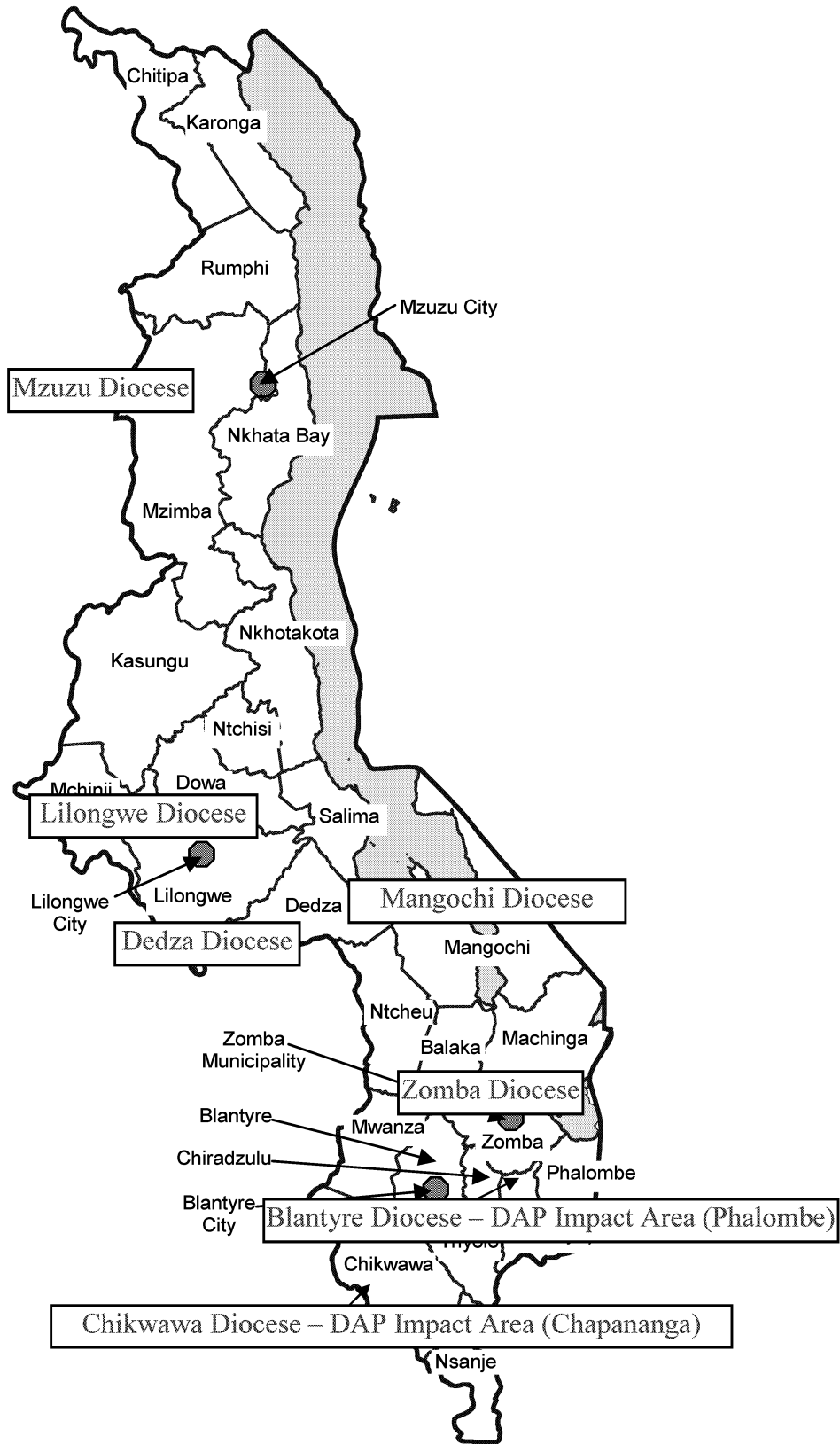
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MAP OF MALAWI - DAP IMPACT AREAS (PHALOMBE AND CHIKWAWA)



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List of Acronyms

| Acronym | Description |
|---------|---|
| Ag/NRM | Agriculture / Natural Resource Management |
| ADD | Agricultural Development Division |
| AEDO | Agriculture Extension and Development Officer |
| ADF | Agriculture Development Facilitators (CADECOM extension) |
| ADS | Agricultural Development Specialists |
| AEDO | Agricultural Extension Development Officer (formerly FA) |
| AIDS | Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome |
| CADECOM | Catholic Development Commission in Malawi |
| CBCC | Community-Based Child Care Centers |
| CBCS | Community-Based Childcare Specialist (CADECOM) |
| CBHCS | Community Based Healthcare Specialist |
| CBO | Community-Based Organization |
| CDA | Community Development Assistant (MoG) |
| CHAM | Christian Hospital Association of Malawi |
| C-IMCI | Community Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses |
| CCJP | Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace |
| CK | Chikwawa |
| CR | Country Representative |
| CRS | Catholic Relief Services |
| CRS/HQ | CRS Head Quarters |
| CS | Cooperating Sponsor (an NGO Cooperating Sponsor in Title II) |
| C-SAFE | Consortium for Southern Africa Food Security Emergency |
| CSB | Corn Soya Blend (similar to Likuni Phala) |
| CSPO | Child Survival Project Officer |
| CSR4 | Cooperating Sponsor Results Report and Resource Request (USAID Title II Annual Report) |
| CU2 | Children Under 2 years of age |
| CU5 | Children Under 5 years of age |
| DANIDA | Danish Foreign Aid Agency |
| DAP | Development Activity Proposal (USAID/Title II) Or, Development Assistance Program (the CRS/Malawi DAP's official title) |
| DD | Diarrheal Disease |
| DEHO | District Environmental Health Officer |
| DHO | District Health Office |
| DHS | Demographic Health Survey |
| DIP | Detailed Implementation Plan |
| DRD/PQ | Deputy Regional Director/Program Quality |
| DRF | Drug Revolving Fund |
| DRFV | Drug Revolving Fund Volunteer |
| EPA | Extension Planning Area (MoAI) |
| FA | Field Assistant (MoAI) |
| FACS | Food Assisted Child Survival |

| | |
|---------|--|
| FANTA | Food Aid and Technical Assistance Project (Title II/USAID) |
| FFW | Food for Work |
| FGD | Focus Group Discussion |
| FHH | Female Headed Household |
| FO | Forestry Officer |
| f/u | Follow-up |
| GM | Growth Monitoring |
| GMV | Growth Monitoring Volunteer |
| GOM | Government of Malawi |
| GTZ | Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (German Development Agency) |
| HBC | Home Based Care |
| HC | Health Centre (MoH) |
| h/h | Household |
| HHH | Head of Household |
| HIV | Human Immunodeficiency Virus |
| HRM | Human Resource Management |
| HSA | Health Surveillance Assistants (MoH) |
| ICRISAT | International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics |
| IEC | Information, Education and Communication |
| IFSNP | Integrated Food Security and Nutrition Program |
| IITA | International Institute for Tropical Agriculture |
| IPPT | Indicator Performance Tracking Table |
| IR | Intermediate Result |
| I-Life | Improving Livelihoods through Increasing Food Security |
| ITN | Insecticide Treated Net |
| ITNV | Insecticide Treated Net Volunteer |
| IWMI | International Water Management Institute |
| JCE | Junior Certificate of Education |
| KPC | Knowledge, Practice and Coverage |
| LO | Logistics Officer (CRS & CADECOM) |
| LOA | Life of Activity |
| MAFEP | Malawi Agroforestry Extension Project |
| MASAF | Malawi Social Action Fund |
| MCA | Malawi College of Accountancy |
| MHH | Male Headed Household |
| MK | Malawian Kwacha |
| MoAI | Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation (currently Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Food Security) |
| MoG | Ministry of Gender |
| MoH | Ministry of Health (previously Ministry of Health and Population) |
| MOU | Memorandum of Understanding |
| MSCE | Malawi School Certificate of Education |
| MUAC | Mid Upper Arm Circumference |
| M&E | Monitoring and Evaluation |

| | |
|---------|---|
| MVAC | Malawi Vulnerability Assessment Committee |
| NABW | National Association of Business Women |
| NAPHAM | National Association for People Living with HIV/AIDS |
| NASFAM | National Association of Smallholder Farmers in Malawi |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organization |
| NRC | Natural Resource College |
| NRM | Natural Resource Management |
| OCC | Orphan Care Committees |
| OPV | Open Pollinated Varieties |
| ORS | Oral Rehydration Salts |
| OVC | Orphans and Vulnerable Children |
| PAEC | Public Accountants Examination Council |
| PE | Phalombe |
| PQSD | Program Quality Support Development Unit (at CRS/HQ) |
| PRA | Participatory Rural Appraisal |
| PSI | Population Services International |
| PSLCE | Primary School Leaving Certificate |
| RSA | Republic of South Africa |
| RRA | Rapid Rural Appraisal |
| RTA | Regional Technical Advisor |
| SADC | Southern Africa Development Committee |
| SARO | Southern Africa Regional Office (CRS) |
| SARRNET | Southern Africa Root Crops Research Network |
| SNC | Safety Net Coordinator (CADECOM) |
| SNPO | Safety Net Project Officer (CRS) |
| SO | Strategic Objective |
| SOW | Scope of Work |
| SSI | Semi-Structured Interview |
| SWOT | Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats |
| TDY | Temporary Duty |
| TfT | Training for Transformation |
| TLC | Total Land Care (ex MAFEP) |
| TOR | Term of Reference |
| UNIMA | University of Malawi |
| USAID | United States Agency for International Development |
| VAM | Vulnerability Assessment Mapping |
| VHC | Village Health Committee |
| WFP | World Food Programme |

Executive Summary

This report describes the results of the final external evaluation of the CRS/Malawi P.L. 480 Title II Development Activity Program (DAP), which occurred between July 12 and August 12, 2004. The DAP was approved in March 1999 and will officially end September 30, 2004. In August 2004, USAID approved a one-year no-cost extension specifically for the health activities, which will extend work in this target area through September 30, 2005.

CRS/Malawi is implementing the DAP with its principal national development partner, the Catholic Development Commission in Malawi (CADECOM). While program execution through a national NGO is the norm for CRS, the DAP was the pilot test of this implementation model in Malawi. The DAP was also the first non-emergency Title II Program funded by United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in the country. For these reasons there is interest in extrapolating the lessons learned from the evaluation to future Title II and CRS programs in Malawi.

The goal of the DAP is to enhance food security for vulnerable populations. Specifically, the project aims at achieving the following four Strategic Objectives (SOs) (DAP 1999) to achieve three Sub-goals:¹

- SO1: Increased agricultural production by smallholder farmers (Sub-goal² 1: sustainable increase in food availability);
- SO2: Improved natural resource management (NRM) (Sub-goal 1: improve food utilization);
- SO3: Improved nutritional health status of young children (Sub-goal 2: improve food utilization); and
- SO4: Improved safety net for destitute children (Sub-goal 3: improve access to food).

To achieve these Strategic Objectives (and Sub-goals), the DAP worked in 40 villages in Chikwawa District and 44 villages in Phalombe District, which fall respectively under the Catholic Dioceses of Chikwawa and Blantyre. The project targeted 11,400 households with 0.5 ha or less and over 6,000 orphans through community-based orphan care committees.

The direct execution of the activities and supervision of the project is through the two diocesan-level CADECOM offices.³ CRS support to the CADECOMs was orchestrated through a semi-autonomous DAP Support Unit or DSU, which housed the DAP Coordinator as well as four Technical Advisors (agriculture/NRM;⁴ safety nets; health; information, education and

¹ SOs and Sub-goals are phrased exactly as in the DAP Proposal.

² The original DAP proposal included Sub-goals and objectives under sub-goals. The objectives were numbered individually in terms of the sub-goal. To facilitate compliance with the USAID standard format for IPTTs (Annex 1.a) and numbered references to specific indicators, the objectives were renumbered sequentially.

³ Henceforth references to CADECOMs (plural) refer to the two Diocesan CADECOMs for Blantyre and Chikwawa.

⁴ One Technical Advisor oversaw the combined activities under SO1 (Agriculture) and SO2 (Natural Resource Management).

communication (IEC); and monitoring and evaluation (M&E). The project budget of \$14,309,000⁵ comes from various sources that include the monetization of U.S. commodities.

Sections One through Four of this executive summary presents the main conclusions of the evaluation for each of the Strategic Objectives (SOs) and for the major cross-cutting questions related to the effectiveness of the project organization and processes that were posed in the evaluation Scope of Work. Section Five includes a list of recommendations for the no-cost extension. Section Six provides cross-cutting lessons learned for future programming beyond the no-cost one-year extension.

1.0. Sub-Goal One: Sustainable Increase in Food Availability
Strategic Objective One: Increased Agricultural Production by Smallholder Farmers
Strategic Objective Two: Improved Natural Resource Management

Strategy and Activities: After analysis of farmers' constraints and opportunities through Participatory Rural Assessments (PRA), farmers were presented with a menu of potential innovations through an intensive extension campaign. From these, farmers chose those that seemed appropriate for their circumstances. Three broad categories of activities were undertaken to these activities.

- (1) *Improvement of extension services coverage.* Twenty-three extension agents were hired to complement the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation (MoAI) agents in the target areas and bring the staffing level up to the Ministry's prescribed standard. Ministry and program agents received the same training and worked in collaboration to promote program innovations.
- (2) *Community mobilization and organization.* Farmer groups were strengthened, or, in their absence, created to provide a focus for extension efforts. These became the driving force behind adoption of new technology.
- (3) *Linkages with research institutions and development agencies.* The program has collaborated with MAFE, ICRISAT, SARRNET (IITA), and the research branch of the MoAI for introduction of new technologies and support services.

Results: Based on the analysis of the project's monitoring and evaluation data, the evaluation team reached the following conclusions.

- (1) There have been high levels of adoption of composting and direct application of manure, and maize/pigeonpea intercropping for *Improvement of soil productivity (Intermediate Result [IR] 1.1)*.
- (2) The effort to promote *Crop diversification (IR 1.2)* to reduce over-dependence on maize has resulted in increased planting of pigeonpea, groundnuts, sweet potato and cassava.
- (3) There has been *Increased use of improved varieties (IR 1.3)* coincident with the increased planting of secondary crops. The introduction of an improved open pollinated maize variety is considered by program stakeholders to be one of the most beneficial interventions overall.

⁵ US\$1,180,804 from CRS, \$62,151 from CADECOM, US\$464,044 from the Government of Malawi, and US\$ 59,329 from local sources.

- (4) Treadle pump irrigation as a means to achieve *Improved use of naturally occurring wetlands (IR 1.4)* has been well received by farmers who have purchased pumps through a revolving credit scheme.
- (5) Efforts to bring about *Increased use of soil conservation practices (IR 2.1)* have resulted in an estimated 50% of cropland being protected from erosion by contour ridges. These are often further enhanced by tied/box ridges and occasionally by planting of vetiver grass.
- (6) Targets for *Increased forestation (IR 2.2)* were well exceeded in terms of tree seedlings planted, area planted and survival. Total number of trees surviving after one year for three years of planting was 1,820,210. This is much better than would have been expected given that the area suffered from severe rainfall deficits in two of the four crop years when trees were planted.

Other information obtained in village focus group discussions and consultation with other program stakeholders revealed these achievements:

- (1) *Food Security*: Higher yields are being obtained through adoption of improved varieties and agronomic practices. Resilience to adverse weather conditions has been enhanced by increased planting of drought tolerant crops.
- (2) *Income/Assets*: An abundance of circumstantial and anecdotal evidence indicated that a sizeable measure of economic benefit has been brought to the targeted communities. Particularly noteworthy is that, over and above material assets, *knowledge* gained from participating in the program is widely viewed by participants as a highly prized asset.
- (3) *Synergy between agriculture/natural resource management interventions and the safety net component*: The Safety Net Program relieved the most chronically food insecure households from the necessity of engaging in *ganyu* (wage labor on other farmers' fields), which allowed them to better tend their own crops. At the same time, adoption of program-introduced innovations further enhanced their food production. The synergy between the two interventions has allowed program participants to break out of a vicious cycle of poverty and food deficits.

Issues: The major problems that affected the efficiency and impact of the sector interventions were: (a) loss of, and failure to promptly replace, key staff; (b) closure of the DAP Support Unit in Blantyre (its essential functions for agriculture and NRM could not be adequately provided from Lilongwe, being remote from program activity areas.); and (c) failure to develop an effective exit strategy/plan for sustaining the project's activities once the DAP funding ends.

2.0. Sub-Goal Two: To Improve Food Utilization

Strategic Objective Three: To Improve the Nutritional Health Status of Young Children

Strategy and Activities: Although originally seen as an integral part of the four-pronged food security “model” of the project, USAID recommended delaying this sub-component of the DAP until year three. With the onset of a series of emergency food operations in 2002 and 2003, the DAP’s health activities were pushed back even further. Based on the baseline Knowledge, Practice and Coverage (KPC) survey, which was conducted in June 2003, several of the activities and intermediate results (IRs) that were outlined in the DAP (e.g., a clean water sub-component, and the decision to hire and train village health facilitators) were dropped from the program strategy. The same delays, combined with the increased demand for trained staff from emergency programs, made it difficult to hire and retain CRS and CADECOM health staff to oversee the new activities. When the final evaluation started, many activities had only been operational for four months. To compensate for this, CRS requested and received a one-year no-cost extension of the project’s health component through to September 30, 2005.

For all these reasons, the team’s assessment of this sub-component is considered to be a mid-term, rather than a final evaluation. As a mid-term evaluation, the evaluators were expected to assess **progress toward the achievement of targets** (not results), as well as examine the likelihood of current strategies achieving official final targets, and, if this was not likely, to recommend strategy shifts that would make achievement of these targets more likely.

Results: The evaluation concluded that overall the child health activities are going extremely well considering the slow start-up of the program, the changes in support staffing, and the gaps in funding.

Major achievements to date include:

- (1) The pre-emptive organization of the *growth monitoring (GM) activities (IR 3.1)* that were envisioned for the health sub-component under the project’s safety net sub-component starting in 2002. These activities were assessed as having strong potential for having a major impact on improving the health of children when combined with the other components.
- (2) A more recent achievement during the last six months that can be strengthened under the no-cost extension has been to lay the groundwork for a sustainable, community-based *Drug Revolving Fund (DRF) (IR 3.2)* system for acquiring and managing basic drugs. This activity combined with other components (improved water access) may have a major impact on reducing the diseases that reduce children’s growth and well being (as monitored by the growth monitoring program) and that reduce productivity of adults.
- (3) The project has also developed within a very short time period the district-level systems for distributing *Insecticide Treated Nets (ITNs) (IR 3.3)* to reduce malaria incidence.

Issues: The major problems that affected the efficiency and impact of the DAP’s health activities stem from the decision to delay execution to the third year, followed by the subsequent six month delay due to the 2002-2003 emergency. Although it was necessary to reduce the scope of the project because of the delays in start-up, the water component should not have been

dropped. The statistics and focus group discussions place access to clean water at the top of the list to improve food and nutrition security.

The project design and implementation for all three programs (i.e., GM, DRF, and ITN) should focus more on local resources and systems to achieve sustainable results.

Not surprisingly, the M&E system for the health component is still in its infancy with relatively little harmonization between data collection and analysis of individual activities. One reason is that the activity has just started. The other reason (which will become more important as the activity is extended under the no-cost extension) is the lack of an appropriate data collection system. Basic problems with the current system include the fact that the registration books for the volunteers in Growth Monitoring, the Drug Revolving Fund, and the Insecticide Treated Net components are not set up properly to monitor the progress and impact of many program activities. There are too many indicators (17 for IR 3.2 and 10 for IR 3.3 alone) and many of them are poorly defined and are not clearly linked to specific data collection efforts.

3.0. Sub-Goal Three: Improved Access to Food **Strategic Objective Four: Improved Safety Net for Destitute Children**

Strategy and Activities: The project strategy for this objective focuses on helping vulnerable households, defined as those fostering orphans, caring for a chronically ill person(s), and/or having malnourished children under the age of five years. Vulnerable households are helped to “build the assets” that they need to reduce their dependency on food aid to satisfy basic needs.

Results:

- (1) The project has more than doubled its original target figures for providing vulnerable children and households (not just orphans) corn soy blend (CSB) food supplements through the Orphan Care Committees (OCCs) as a strategy of promoting *Increased adoption of child care practices by orphans guardians/families (IR4.1)*;
- (2) In terms of *Increasing community participation in the support of vulnerable groups (IR 4.2)*, the project has surpassed its original target for facilitating vulnerable peoples’ adoption of new higher yielding crop technologies and participating in the project’s health activities by over 50 percent (in each case);
- (3) Under promoting *Increased reliance of orphans (IR4.3)*, the project has:
 - Provided skills training for 583 (versus a target of 350 orphans) orphaned and non-orphaned youth in 56 of the 83 project villages; and
 - Contributed to a 15 percent increase in the number of orphans attending school through a combination of advocacy and food aid, which reduced some of the pressure on orphans to drop out of school in order to work to buy food.
- (4) Two other district and community-level achievements which are not documented in the IPTT are: (a) the increased capacity of the CADECOMs to manage, stock and allocate food assistance, and (b) a strong network of OCCs in each of the project villages.

Issues: A major weakness of the safety net component was the dearth of M&E data with which to assess the real impact of the safety net activities on the beneficiaries’ lives. Other issues were: (a) that food did not always arrive when it was needed and was often supplied when it was not

needed (e.g. ruptures in the commodity pipeline); (b) expensive, large-scale food utilization trainings seem to have done little to change food and nutrition behavior; and (c) some of the activities, as well as the food assistance itself, may have inadvertently contributed to the local peoples continued reliance on maize as their central foodstuff, which can actually increase their long-term vulnerability to food insecurity, poor health, drought and famine.

Another weakness was the strong reliance of the OCCs on food aid to implement their programs, which makes it unlikely that they will have the means to continue their current roles once the project closes in September 2004. Although the two CADECOMs covered by the DAP (Chikwawa and Blantyre) will continue to have access to certain types of food aid acquired through Catholic charities, this is insufficient and the CADECOMs do not usually work with other donors of food aid (e.g., World Food Program [WFP]).

4.0. Project Organization and Processes

Strategy and Activities: An additional objective of the evaluation was to assess the effectiveness of “project management and organizational structure,” including the project M&E system in carrying out the project and achieving its wider goals for CADECOM and community-level capacity building. Given CRS’s rigorous system of internal audits, CRS did not include a financial review in the evaluation Scope of Work.

Results: Although the DAP project structure of execution through a national NGO is the norm for CRS projects, this was the first time CRS had utilized this methodology in Malawi. The strength of execution through the CADECOMs is that it dramatically increases the prospects for sustaining project impacts once project funding ends. The inherited legitimacy of the CADECOMs, combined with CRS’s use of private funds to “front load” a pilot phase of the project, enabled CRS to get the DAP up and running in both areas within two months. This type of quick start-up is almost unheard of in Title II programs.

The strength of linking CRS to the diocesan CADECOMs was that it provided the types of technical backstopping and financial systems that the dioceses needed to manage a larger, complex development and emergency projects. Another strength of the model was the creation of a decentralized DAP Support Unit that facilitated on-site mentoring and oversight. A third strength of the program was the extensive investment of the DAP in: (a) co-training government and CADECOM staff, (b) and training village volunteers and committees.

Another major achievement of the project was the creation of a successful village based monitoring system. Especially important was the innovative creation of a system of monthly and quarterly review meetings that provided a forum for using this information to inform project decision-making. The program’s strong commitment to collaboration with MAFE in the design and execution of the M&E system had a major impact on results by opening the door to new cutting edged technologies and technical support from the major national and international centers of excellence

Issues: The chief factors that affected the effectiveness of the major project structures and processes were: (a) the high rates of staff turnover that plagued both the CRS DSU staff and

Phalombe projects after mid-term; (b) the persistent reliance on international CRS staff for knowledge about Title II and CRS regulations and reporting; and (c) the dramatic increase in CADECOM and CRS emergency programming in 2002 and 2003.

In general the introduction of the CRS financial system was a major achievement that strengthened the overall capacity of the CADECOMs to manage larger projects. The principal weakness was the **weak systems for baseline and recurrent training** in the new financial system.

The chief weaknesses of the DAP M&E system were:

- The project's adoption of a series of impact and monitoring indicators that did not adequately track the impact of the project's major agricultural, NRM, and safety net innovations;
- The weak capacity of the CADECOMs for M&E which was exacerbated by the lack of M&E specialists within the CADECOM structures; and
- Inadequate training of both CADECOM and CRS staff in the analysis and write up of the data.

5.0. Key Challenges for the No- Cost Extension for the Project's Health Activities

Strategy:

- *Water:* Given the critical importance of *water* to the achievement of the project's goals for the no-cost extension, CRS/CADECOM should reassess the availability of water in the catchment areas and address shortfalls according to the approved DAP extension as soon as possible. In the absence of reinstating the clean water sub-component that was originally envisioned in the DAP design, it is unlikely that the project can obtain its wider goals for improved infant, child and maternal health.
- *Staff:* Turnover in CRS and CADECOM staff during the initial design and execution of the DAP's health activities should be treated with utmost concern and every effort made to include a highly focused, stable technical team to work with the Ministry of Health Surveillance Assistants (HSAs) who are working under the Ministry of Health and Population in developing and executing program activities.
- *Collaboration with MoHP:* The no-cost extension offers CRS and CADECOM the opportunity to develop the types of grassroots co-planning with the Ministry of Health and Population that they had with the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation under the DAP for SO1 and SO2. This type of careful planning was rendered difficult by the emergency and post-emergency context under which the early health activities started.
- *Documentation:* For staff development and government coordination to progress properly under the no-cost extension and any future program, they need to be backstopped by a user-friendly documentation system for the health activities, both at CRS and CADECOM levels. This documentation system is a tool that can reduce the time needed to orient new staff and to develop complementary grants and support.

Growth Monitoring:

- CRS and CADECOM need to review some of the curricula and themes being recommended (In particular, nutritional themes need to emphasize the use of local foods based on Malawi's six food groups and more appropriate IEC materials).

- The project must also ensure that the Growth Monitoring Volunteers are able to replace damaged scales or weighing pans and bags using local materials. Care must also be taken to work with the Ministry of Health and Population to develop more efficient processes of weighing, recording and counseling; and
- Strengthen the GMV systems of data collection on referrals so that the Ministry gets feedback on the activities.

Drug Revolving Funds:

- Expand the drugs carried by the Drug Revolving Funds (to the extent that is possible given that the Drug Revolving Fund Volunteers [DRFVs] are not qualified health workers)⁶ and retrain the DRFVs to diagnose and treat these illnesses;
- Assist MOHP staff in restocking drug supplies and monitoring DRFV's purchase and management of their drug stocks;
- Refill DRFV vacancies and training the new volunteers; and
- Strengthen DRFV's ability to monitor referrals and follow-up on referrals by the Growth Monitoring Volunteers (GMV) and DRFVs.

Insecticide Treated Nets (ITN):

- Try to resolve some of the supply issues and to increase public understanding of the insecticide treated nets by better incorporation of this theme into the project's IEC messages.
- Better monitoring of malaria incidence and its link to use of treated nets is needed if the government is to have the means or interest to support net use once the project ends..

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E):

- Conduct a comprehensive review of the indicators being used to monitor this activity;
- Develop user-friendly M&E systems for the Growth Monitoring, DRF, and ITN volunteers that better link to the DAP no-cost extension and MoH planning and assessment efforts.

⁶ Because of this CRS/CADECOM cannot include some of the drugs that the MOH is including in their DRF, such as Cotrimoxazole (a broad spectrum antibiotic). The project has avoided stocking drugs that require prescription by a certified clinician.

6.0. Major Lessons Learned and Recommendations for Future Programming

6.1. SO1 and SO2 Agriculture and NRM

- An agricultural development project can benefit greatly by collaborating with research/development organizations that can provide invaluable technical support.
- Technical competence of staff must be recognized and efforts made to retain those who display a high level of achievement in getting village level results that increase food security and living standards of the project beneficiaries.
- Careful attention should focus on the selection of M&E indicators to ensure that they are meaningful and provide as much information as possible to guide program implementation.
- CRS regional technical advisors can play a valuable role in program implementation as they did during the first half of this project for agriculture by:
 - Providing technical oversight with regular periodic visits, as well as visits at critical times in implementation, e.g. start-up, design of M&E system, addition of new program component, etc.; and
 - Developing linkages with research and development organizations.
 - It is suggested that the regional advisors' role could be expanded in the future to include assisting in evaluation of technical capacity of key program staffs.

6.2. SO4 Safety Nets

- Food distribution sites should be as close as possible to beneficiaries or local options for transporting food from the distribution site to households (e.g., animal driven carts) should be considered.
- Orphan Care Committees can play a major role in targeting safety net assistance to vulnerable households. For this role to be sustained beyond a donor financed program, however, the OCC's need to develop other sources of supplementary food besides food aid distributions such as food banks and/or sustainable gardens.
- Food utilization training and open days are likely to have a greater impact if located where participants can assist in preparing meals and tasting them. They should also strengthen the DAP's emphasis on reducing maize dependency and increasing crop diversification at all levels of production and consumption (see Chapter Four for suggestions about how to do this).
- To avoid dependency and better track food aid and its use, future projects need to strengthen their M&E systems in order to monitor: the number of households who are identified as being in need that actually receive aid and in which periods this food aid is most critical; who "graduates" from safety nets and why; the impact of technology adoption by safety net beneficiaries on their level of food insecurity and dependence on food aid; appropriate long-term interventions and help households graduate from all the categories of vulnerability that made them eligible for food aid in the first place; and the long-term impacts of village-level training on the need for food aid.
- Future projects need to include better systems for tracking the multiple needs (social as well as food) of the chronically ill—especially people living with HIV/AIDS—to evaluate the project's response to these needs.
- The type of skills training provided should match the available resources in the area and build on local skills. Future programs need to monitor how trainees use the training and the impact this has on their food security, income and living standards.

6.3. Project Organization and Processes

The DAP four-pronged intervention model:

- Endeavor to start all activities together in order to capitalize on “synergies;”
- Improve training records;
- Monitor local community capacity (M&E) and consider putting a local capacity indicator in the official Indicator Performance Tracking Table (IPTT).

Execution through the CADECOMs:

- Continue to clarify partnership relationships (as was done under the DAP) in signed memoranda of understanding and partnership agreements;
- Continue to strengthen communication with and the capacity of the Diocesan officials in districts where CRS collaborates with its CADECOM partners;
- Complement baseline capacity assessments of the CADECOMs (as was done under the DAP) with annual reassessments consider including a at least one program capacity indicator in the official IPTT;
- Train and retrain CADECOM partners in USAID rules and regulations;
- Hire on-site project coordinators.

Creation of a decentralized project support unit (like the DSU):

- Post qualified technical staff to the units as was done under the DAP;
- Develop better CRS systems for recognizing, rewarding and retaining competent technical staff in decentralized units like the DSU when it was at Blantyre;
- Review the technical training and skills needed by a DSU coordinator based on lessons learned under the DAP;
- Strengthen in-house training and basic documentation and orientation materials;
- Build risk and vulnerability into future designs and monitor preparedness as part of the program capacity index described under recommendations for “execution through the CADECOMs.”

CRS/CADECOM partnership coordination mechanisms:

- Consider reworking the statutes, format, and periodicity of the DAP Advisory Board;
- Try to schedule meetings of the CRS/CADECOM Stakeholder Reflection Meetings, the national CADECOM with more advanced notice so more people can attend;
- Encourage CRS Technical Advisors to attend the CADECOM quarterly staff review meetings for the DAP (when deemed appropriate by the CADECOMs);
- Continue the recent practice of inviting ADFs to all or parts of the CRS-CADECOM quarterly technical review meetings and to insure (whenever possible) that these meetings occur regularly.

CRS technical backstopping:

- Train and empower national staff to manage critical national partnerships;
- Help the CADECOMs adopt the CRS system of “handover” notes that can be used to orient new staff when a position turns over;
- Develop better orientation materials for future projects and positions within projects;
- Making greater more consistent use of CRS’s excellent system of regional technical experts to backstop particular positions (not just individuals).

Financial management:

- Reflect on ways to better inform the CADECOMs in advance regarding the amount of money for which they can budget in general and for specific sub-categories of activities;
- Explore whether or not the global project accounting and budget system could track expenses by strategic objective, as well as cost center, as they did under the DAP at the CADECOM level.

Networking:

- Keep better records of how many government workers in particular Ministries and positions have been trained under a project;
- Develop formal signed memoranda of understanding that outline the institutional relationship and communication channels between CRS, CADECOM and the major **agricultural technology partners** (like MAFE, ICRISAT) that are understood by all the parties in order to sustain the relationships when staff positions turn over.

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E):

- Complement PRAs with quantitative surveys;
- Provide structured feedback to field and CADECOM level staff on issues raised in monthly and quarterly M&E reports;
- Build CADECOM and CRS staff capacity on basic M&E concepts and the analysis and write-up of M&E results;
- Facilitate local government partners’ participation in data analysis and write-up as well as setting up the M&E system;
- Monitor follow-up on recommendations made during evaluations and basic studies. Link government and CADECOM M&E capacity efforts to the development of phase out plans to sustain activities beyond the project;
- Give priority to hiring staff trained under current projects on new CRS and CADECOM projects (i.e. promotions);
- Establish simple user-friendly **bibliographies** and **documentation** systems as soon as a project starts;
- Build CRS M&E Capacity for Title II Programming through special in house training and mentoring on Title II and FANTA guidelines, recommendations and examples of best practice for food security programming.

7.0. Conclusion

To conclude, despite various oscillations in partnership relations, the basic CRS/CADECOM DAP methodology for agriculture, NRM, and safety nets outlined in the DAP has been maintained and has achieved or over achieved the majority of its original targets over the last four years (Annex 1.a.). There is also ample qualitative evidence (that is not adequately analyzed in the M&E system) that the associated increases in production have improved village living standards and food security against considerable odds that include two successive years of drought. A major and inadequately documented result of the project has been to dramatically increase the institutional capacity of the two diocesan-level CADECOMs—Phalombe and Chikwawa.

In contrast, the health strategy that was outlined in the DAP has been only partially executed due to various delays. The health evaluation sub-team feels that given appropriate support and direction for at least one (or if possible two) additional years, there is a strong possibility that the program can achieve its anticipated results.

While these achievements are significant they must be viewed in a national context that situates the pilot nature of the DAP both for the two principal partners. The DAP was a learning process from whom a wide variety of lessons can be learned for future programming.

Chapter One Introduction

A. Brief Description of the Project (DAP)¹

The Development Assistance Program (DAP) is an integrated program that was initiated by Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and its principal development partner in Malawi, the Catholic Development Commission of Malawi (CADECOM), in 2000/2001. The goal of the project was: “to enhance food security of vulnerable populations” in two of the most food insecure areas of the country--the Mpinda and Tamani Extension Planning Areas (EPAs) in Phalombe district and Kalambo in Chikwawa district.

The rationale for targeting these EPAs was based on findings of national vulnerability assessment mapping (VAM), which revealed that the southern region of Malawi needed more food security interventions relative to the central and northern regions. Specifically, three EPAs were selected based on the following criteria:

- Unavailability of NGOs serving the communities;
- High incidence of poverty (based on VAM indicator for the country);
- Accessibility through government district level operations and physical accessibility; and
- Community receptiveness.

The overall goal of the DAP is to enhance food security for vulnerable populations. Specifically, it aims at achieving the following Strategic Objectives (SOs) and Sub-Goals (DAP 1999):

SUB-GOAL ONE: SUSTAINABLE INCREASE IN FOOD AVAILABILITY

SO1: Increased agricultural production by smallholder farmers,

SO2: Improved natural resource management (NRM),

SUB-GOAL TWO: TO IMPROVE FOOD UTILIZATION

SO3: Improved nutritional status of young children,

SUB-GOAL THREE: IMPROVED ACCESS TO FOOD

SO4: Improved safety net for destitute children and other vulnerable children.

To achieve these Strategic Objectives, the DAP covered 40 villages in Chikwawa and 44 villages in Phalombe. The project targeted 11,400 households with 0.5 ha or less and over 6,000 orphans through community-based orphan care organizations.

In addition to improved food security, the DAP identified “improved capacity of the CADECOMs” as one of the anticipated impacts as well as an implementation strategy of the DAP. This emphasis on capacity building mirrored the DAP’s emphasis on local capacity building as both an implementation and a sustainability strategy from the start.

¹ Source: CRS/Malawi, DAP, Rapid Rural Appraisal Report, Draft, July 2004, Lilongwe: CRS/Malawi. Page 1.

The project budget of \$14,309,000² comes from various sources that include the monetization of U.S. commodities. This is the first time that monetization was used for a development project in Malawi.

B. Objectives of the DAP External Evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation was: “to determine the impact of the project's activities, strategies and methodologies in order for communities, CRS and its partners, and USAID to utilize this information to improve future programs” (CRS Malawi, SOW I2004: 4). It was expected that the evaluation would be used to: “refine the I-LIFE Consortium DAP 2005-2009 approaches, improve activities in the remaining period of the current project and proposed no-cost extension, provide information to USAID for managing the current project and the next DAP, and give communities information to plan their next steps” (CRS/Malawi SOW 2004.: 4). The scope of work envisioned a four person core team comprised of three external experts, a CRS non-DAP M&E specialist, and various support staff from the national CADECOM and CRS DAP Support Unit (DSU) staff (Annex 9.c).

Five evaluation objectives were outlined (Box 1.a and Annex 9.c):

- Objective 1: Measure the achievement of project goals and strategic objectives (impact);
- Objective 2: Identify the major lessons learned for future implementation and planning;
- Objective 3: Examine how well needs of different groups (divided by gender, age, and socio-economic status) were met by the project (participation);
- Objective 4: Determine the effectiveness of project organization and processes;
- Objective 5: Indicate the potential levels of project sustainability.

C. Composition of the External Evaluation Team and Evaluation Sub-Teams



To address these five objectives, the external evaluation team divided into three sub-teams (Table 1.a). The first sub-team led by Frank Brockman³ (with technical backstopping from Senior Project Officer for Agriculture, Norias Kayira) focused on the project's agriculture and natural resource management (NRM) subcomponents.

External evaluation team member, Frank Brockman, preparing a preliminary list of findings and “lessons learned” from interviews at Chikwawa for discussion with the CADECOM team.

² US\$1,180,804 from CRS, \$62,151 from CADECOM, US\$464,044 from the Government of Malawi, and US\$59,329 from local sources.

³ Agronomist Frank E. Brockman worked for 20 years in research and research project management for the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) in Tanzania, Zaire, and the SAFGRAD (Semi-Arid Food Grains Research and Development) regional project and for Auburn University (South-east Consortium for International Development) in Haiti. From 1997-2001 he worked for CRS as Senior Agricultural Technical Advisor (Headquarters, Baltimore 1997-1999 and in the Southern Africa Regional Office in Harare, 2000-2001). Since leaving CRS he has worked as a consultant in Tanzania, Malawi and Zambia.

Box 1.a. Objectives of the DAP External Evaluation as Outlined in the Scope of Work

Objective 1: Measure the achievement of project goals and objectives (impact). To what degree have the project strategic objectives and intermediate results been met? Why or why not?

- Were indicators realistic and relevant?
- What is the value of integration at the community level?
- Where the objectives realistic and relevant to priority needs of the target population?
- What are the unintended positive and negative effects of the project?

Objective 2: Identify the major lessons learned? What limitations and hindrances have been encountered?

- Have basic assumptions and potential for solutions changed since project formulation?
- Have strategies been appropriately designed and effectively carried out?
- How have initial strategies been adapted given changing situations?

Objective 3: Determine how well needs of different groups (divided by gender, age, socio-economic status) have been met by the project. Has the project responded to the felt needs of the participants?

- Did the project reach the intended target groups?
- Did the target groups effectively take part in the project? How?
- Which group(s) benefited most from the project? How?
- What are the factors that have hindered participation?
- Has CRS's institution building efforts with its partners been effective?
- Were any local advocacy issues identified or acted upon over the course of the program?

Objective 4: Determine the effectiveness of project organization and processes⁴. Have the activities and methodology been effective in attaining project strategic objectives both in quantitative and qualitative terms?

- Is the resource input reasonable in relation to results (cost-benefit)?
- Has the project management and organizational structure been effective in carrying out the project?
- Are the interventions and activities appropriate in terms of cost and given the local conditions (socio-economic and environmental)?
- Have the community organization efforts been appropriate, effective and are they sustainable?
- Has CRS adequately networked with other institutions and organizations in order to ensure meeting project objectives?
- Has the project's M&E system collected appropriate, timely, and accurate information? Has that information been used for project decision-making?

Objective 5: Project the level of project sustainability.

- What processes/activities will most likely continue after project closure?
- What processes/activities will most likely cease after project closure?
- What are the constraints to increased viability, local control, and continuation of activities and approaches post-project?

Source: CRS/Malawi. 2004. Scope of Work. Final Evaluation Methodology. May 19, 2004. Lilongwe: CRS/Malawi. Page 7. See Annex 9.c.

⁴ Given delays in preparation and inadequate staff on the evaluation team, the Evaluation Team Leader and CRS/Malawi Head of Programming agreed to delete two questions from the evaluation. These were: (1) How did monetization perform in terms of cost-recovery, fair market price, and in terms of the timeliness of sales versus cash flow needs? Was the Bellmon analysis successful in creating a consensus in Malawi? Did the process of monetization influence programming at all? Did the monetization influence the commercial sector or government policy? (2) Has food commodity management and logistics been adequate? What was the level of food losses?

Chapter One: Introduction

Table 1.a. Objectives of the External Evaluation and Methodologies Used in Assessment by the CRS/Malawi DAP Final Evaluation

| | Scope of Work (SOP) Objective | Technical Sectors | | | Management Organization and Process | | | | |
|--|-------------------------------|--------------------|------------|-----------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | SO1 & SO2 AG & NRM | SO3 Health | SO4 Safety Nets | M&E | | Other | | |
| | | | | | 4.1. Attainment of project strategic objectives based on agreed upon monitoring and impact indicators in IPTT | 4.7. M&E system and impact on decision making | 4.3. Effective project management (CRS and CADECOM level) | 4.5. Community organization efforts (appropriate, effective, sustainable) | 4.6. CRS networking with other institutions and organizations |
| Major Questions | | | | | | | | | |
| Achievement of goals and objectives | 1 | X | Mid-term | X | | | | | |
| Participation | 3 | X | X | X | | | | | |
| Sustainability | 5 | X | X | | | | | | |
| Effectiveness of project organization and processes | 4 | X | X | X | | | | | |
| Lessons learned | 2 | X | X | X | | | | | |
| Data Sources used to answer questions | | | | | | | | | |
| IPTT (official indicators) | | X | X | X | X | X | | | |
| Literature review (FY00-FY04) | | X | X | X | X | X | X | | |
| Interviews: | | (specific) | (specific) | (specific) | Indicators | SWOT* | SWOT* | SWOT* | SWOT* |
| Village leaders/focus groups (randomly chosen from sample) | | X | X | X | | | | Tech reports | |
| Diocesan CADECOM staff | | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | |
| Other diocesan officials | | | | | X (general terms) | | X | X | X |
| CRS | | X | X | X | | X | X | X | |
| Others: CADECOM Secretariat, MAFEP, district government | | X | X | X | | X | X | X | |

*SWOT: strength, weakness, opportunities, threats/risks

D. General Data Sources

Five major sources of data were used (Table 1.a):

- (1) The Indicator Performance Tracking Table (IPTT);
- (2) Published and unpublished project archives, data collection forms, and published reports;
- (3) Village matrices on which the CADECOM supervisors ranked specific village activities in terms of their perceived success (A=high levels of adoption; C=low levels);
- (4) Focus groups and interviews with individual specialists and village leaders at eight villages in each site (16 villages total or a 20% sample of the project villages); and
- (5) Individual and group interviews with CADECOM, CRS, and government technical specialists and administrators.

D.1. Indicators/IPTT

The starting point for any Title II project's M&E system is for the project administrators working with USAID and the Food and Nutrition Technical Assistance project (FANTA) to reach a consensus regarding the official indicators used to evaluate the project. To protect the project from "free floating project revisions" and to provide a clear measure of the targets used in the project evaluation, USAID guidance requires contractors to portray indicators in an indicator performance tracking table (IPTT) that displays targets for the project period, project achievements, and percent achievement of pre-identified targets for a given time period. This indicator performance tracking table (IPTT)—and the indicators outlined in it — provided the starting point for each of the technical evaluations (Annex 1.a).

D.2. Literature Review

A second source of information was an intensive review of special technical reports, as well as monthly, quarterly and annual reports of the project.

D.3. Village Matrices for the Evaluation of Farmer Adoption of Technologies/Practices and the Success of Health/Safety Net Activities

One key innovation of the methodology was the decision to create village matrices:

Construction of the Matrices

This tool has been successfully used to describe the multiple innovations that are introduced, and may be adopted, in a village during a complex Title II program¹. It consists of a table (Annexes 9.a and 9.b) with lists of villages in the first column (vertical axis) and the sector specific interventions across the top. Twenty-four technologies/practices were listed for the agriculture/NRM subcomponent (horizontal axis). Thirteen activities were listed for health including the establishment of Drug

Revolving Funds, distribution of insecticide-treated nets, and growth monitoring activities. Twenty-two activities were listed for safety nets.

The form was distributed to the field staff most knowledgeable about each of the villages. S/he was instructed to indicate which technologies/practices/activities were introduced in each village by placing an “x” in the appropriate box in the matrix. Then, s/he was asked to take a second copy of the form and, for each intervention indicated with an “x” on the first copy, rate the “success” of that specific intervention in that specific village by entering A, B, or C (A = highly successful; B = moderately successful; C = minimally successful or unsuccessful).

Use of the Matrices by the Technical Evaluation Teams

Each of the technical teams reviewed the matrices to compare the level of implementation for each of the introduced innovations and activities. In **agriculture and natural resources management**, the tool was used to evaluate farmer adoption of innovations from the menu of new technologies/practices. As such, the matrix was a very useful tool for assessing which technologies were, in the eyes of the field staff, widely adopted across villages and which were not.

Although some villages did choose not to initiate all of the proposed **health and safety net** activities, most of them did. The rankings on the matrices for health and safety net activities are therefore an indication of how successful the new activities have been in the short time period that have been underway.

D.4. Field Visits in 16 Villages Selected from the Matrices

Based on the rankings in the village matrices, the two technical specialists on the external evaluation team chose a sample of villages for field visits. This selection was based on the level of adoption of program innovations (for agriculture and natural resource management) or activities (for safety nets or health). In each target area, two villages with a high level of adoption/success and two with lower levels of adoption/success for the activities related to specific Strategic Objectives were visited. To avoid overwhelming villages, the health/safety net and agriculture/NRM teams visited separate villages. A total of 16 villages were visited which represents approximately 20 percent of the study sites.

D.5. Partner Interviews

In addition to the village interviews, official M&E data (indicators), and the literature review, each technical team interviewed the most relevant government officials and partners that had collaborated with the project for their particular sector.

E. Sector Specific Methodologies

The sector fieldwork occurred in three phases.

Stage One (July 12-17) Preplanning and Documentation

The full evaluation team⁵ spent the first week in Lilongwe working with CRS/Malawi staff to gather basic documents, finalize objectives, and develop a detailed draft table of contents for the technical chapters based on the Scope of Work. Relevant project documents were reviewed and discussions were held with key CRS technical staff and a few key partners. The team was briefed by the USAID/Malawi Economic Growth Officer on what the agency expected to gain from the evaluation effort.

Stage Two (July 18-July 31)

Two weeks were spent conducting field visits to the two program target areas: Chikwawa and Phalombe. In each area, briefings/discussions were held with the regional (diocesan) headquarter staff of the implementing partner, Catholic Development Commission (CADECOM). Meetings were held with district-level government officials, including the district commissioner (together with the Director for Planning and Development in Chikwawa) and other relevant sector specific, district personnel.

Stage Three (August 1-August 12)

Following the site visits, the evaluation team returned to Lilongwe to clarify outstanding questions; analyze, interpret, and discuss findings among themselves; and verbally present results to CRS/Malawi.

E.1. Agriculture/Natural Resource Management

The evaluation of the agriculture and natural resources management components of the DAP was carried out by an external consultant, Agronomist Frank Brockman (with technical backstopping by Senior Project Officer for Agriculture, Norias Kayira).

A cornerstone of the agriculture/NRM component has been collaboration with technology generating institutions and partnership with development agencies. Two special meetings were arranged with the Regional Director of Total Land Care (TLC) and the Malawi director of TLC, the NGO that has grown out of the Malawi Agro-forestry Extension Project (MAFEP). MAFEP has played a key role in providing technical support in the DAP implementation.

At the district level, the agriculture/NRM team met with the district Agricultural Development Officer and the Extension Coordinator in Phalombe. In Phalombe, the team conferred with the District Forestry Officer and the District Forestry Extension Officer.

⁵ The health/safety net evaluator joined the team on the third day.



Village meeting, CRS/Malawi DAP Final Evaluation: Site Visit, Tsekukhomo, Phalombe District.

Eight villages were visited (four in each target area). In each village, the CADECOM Agricultural Development Facilitator (ADF) was met along with (where available) his Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation (MoAI) counterpart, the Agriculture Extension and Development Officer (AEDO). The agriculture/NRM evaluators (without the ADF or AEDO present) then interviewed the village headman and conducted focus group

discussions with two groups. The two groups were selected by the Village Executive Committee to represent villagers of relatively upper and lower economic status. Each group was composed of six heads of households: three from male-headed and three from female-headed households, and, where appropriate, the head of a child-headed household. The points discussed with both the village headman and in the focus groups were:

- Program impact in terms of:
 - Food security
 - Income and assets
- Program interventions (most and least beneficial)
- Seed supply (singled out as a particularly critical issue)
- Areas of potential future improvement

The villagers, in the focus groups, and the village headman in his interview, were asked to compare food security from year to year over the past five years. A line was drawn in the sand representing an “average” year. Results indicate that participants generally considered the year 2000 to have been “average”. A bottle cap was placed on the line and then, for each succeeding year, they were asked whether it was better or worse than 2000 and to place a bottle cap above or below the line to indicate how much better or worse. In the process of the villagers’ arriving at a consensus, the evaluator received a great deal of information about long-term trends and impacts. And it was noteworthy that within a village, the two focus groups and the village headman came up with very similar time trend lines independently. Although weather was a major factor in determining whether a year was “good” or “bad”, the discussion that accompanied the exercise helped to control for weather and get at least a crude picture of how farmers viewed the effect of the program on their food security.

During the last week of the final evaluation in Lilongwe, the agriculture/NRM evaluators availed themselves of the opportunity to meet with the DAP M&E Officer who had served with the program from initiation of activities until January 2004. This was extremely useful, permitting a full understanding of the large body of information that was available in the various reports that had been produced during her tenure.

All together the agriculture/NRM team interviewed almost 120 persons in individual and group meetings (Table 1.b).

Table 1.b. Focus Groups and Persons Interviewed by the Agriculture/NRM Team During the CRS/Malawi DAP Final External Evaluation

| VILLAGE | All | Interview s (individual) | | Focus Groups | | | |
|---|------------|-----------------------------|---|--------------------------|-----------|---------------------------|-----------|
| | | M | F | Lower Economic Status | | Higher Economic Status | |
| | | | | M | F | M | F |
| “A” Villages⁶ | | | | | | | |
| 1.Dausi-Chikwawa | | | | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| 2 Timbenao I-Chikwawa | | | | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| 3. Mpinda-Phalombe | | | | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| 4.Ndunguya II Phalombe | | | | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| “C” Villages | | | | | | | |
| 5 Muonda Chikwawa | | | | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| 6 Patalao-Chikwawa | | | | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| 7 Henele-Phalombe | | | | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| 8. Tsekakhomo Phalombe | | | | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| <i>Subtotal</i> | | | | <i>24</i> | <i>24</i> | <i>24</i> | <i>24</i> |
| ADFs | | 5 | 1 | | | | |
| Village Headmen and Traditional Authorities | | 8 | 1 | | | | |
| Ministry of Agriculture, MAFEP, Forestry Department Officials | | 4 | | | | | |
| MAFEP | | 2 | | | | | |
| ICRISAT | | | 1 | | | | |
| Total | 118 | | | | | | |

E.2. Health and Safety Nets

The health/safety sub-team, led by Registered Dietitian and HIV/AIDS Specialist Stacia Nordin, with technical backstopping from Kwame Mspato, Child Survival Project Officer and Fidelis Mgowa, Safety Net Project Officer), followed the same format as the agriculture/NRM team of interviewing in two randomly selected villages per day. To avoid overloading the villages, however, the health/safety net team chose different villages.

⁶ Chosen by consultants based on village matrices that ranked innovations “A”, “B”, and “C” (highly successful, moderately successful, minimally successful/unsuccessful, respectively).

The health/safety net team started its work in each village with a general introduction to the village that was typically organized by the CADECOM Agricultural Development Facilitator (ADF).⁷ After this introductory meeting, the CADECOM ADF was interviewed by the newly appointed CRS Health Officer. This interview also attempted to gather basic health statistics on the village (Table 1.c). Some villages did not have statistics, which is indicated by the “-“ in Table 1.c.

Table 1.c. Health Statistics in the Eight Villages Interviewed by the Health Sub-Team During the CRS/Malawi Final External Evaluation, July-August 2004

| dist. | village | pop | male | fem. | h/h | mhh | fhh | youth # | s.n. # | grad # | ag # | u/5 | | |
|---------------|-----------|-------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | | | | | | | | | | | | total | orphan | maln |
| CK | Novu2 | 801 | 383 | 418 | 145 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 137 | - | 10/ 86 |
| | Nsaliva I | 327 | 150 | 177 | 72 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 65 | 15 | - |
| | Chatenga | 452 | 218 | 234 | 117 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 77 | - | - |
| | Maluwati | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| PE | Phelele | 463 | - | - | 84 | 45 | 39 | 63 | 59 | 28 | 68 | 123 | 35 | 14 |
| | Katolozwe | 130 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| | Mala | 521 | - | - | 104 | - | - | 203 | 85 | 30 | 104 | 88 | 57 | 32 |
| | Selenje | 856 | - | - | 214 | 116 | 98 | - | 117 | 80 | 185 | 154 | 46 | 45 |
| Totals | | 3550 | 751 | 829 | 736 | 161 | 137 | 266 | 261 | 138 | 357 | 644 | 153 | 101 |

Source: S. Nordin, Health Sub-team Reports. August 2004.

Note: The symbol “-“ indicates health statistics were not available.

Once the introductions were completed the team interviewed village chiefs, any available government workers from the Ministry of Health (Health Surveillance Assistants [HSAs]) and Ministry of Gender (Community Development Assistants [CDAs]), and then broke the team up to conduct the six focus groups. The evaluators attempted to meet with six overlapping groups in each village that regrouped (Table 1.d):

- (1) Parents and guardians of children under five years of age who had benefited from the project’s safety net programs—five still malnourished and five graduated (i.e. whose situation improved to a point that they were no longer eligible to receive food rations);
- (2) Parents, guardians, and children associated with the project-sponsored Community Based Childcare Centers (CBCC);
- (3) Community members: a broader cross section of households heads who had benefited from the safety net programs—five households still in safety nets, five who have graduated, and five never in safety nets;
- (4) Youth participating and not participating in the project;
- (5) Orphan Care Committee (OCC) members and CBCC teachers; and
- (6) Village Health Committee (VHC) members: Growth Monitoring Volunteers (GMVs), Insecticide Treated Net (ITN) Volunteers, and Drug Revolving Fund Volunteers (DRFVs).

⁷ An estimated 500 people attended these information sessions in the eight villages.

Given the large number of interviews per site (three focus groups, three key informant interviews) the diverse constituencies for the health sector activities, the team developed a core questionnaire that they used to structure interviews and record responses.⁸

In addition to the village format and the CADECOM sector supervisors, the health evaluator conducted sector specific interviews with six representatives of the district health offices in Phalombe and Chikwawa, and two representatives of the district social work office. The team also interviewed the CADECOM sector supervisors (5), ADFs, and government officials. A total of 257 persons were interviewed individually and in groups (Table 1.d).

Table 1.d. Total Number of Persons Interviewed Individually and in Focus Groups by the Health Sub-Team DAP External Evaluation Team, July-August 2004

| Type of Interview | Total Interviewed | Male | Female |
|--|-------------------|------------|------------|
| <i>Focus groups</i> | | | |
| 1&2. Parents and guardians: malnourished and graduated; utilizing Community Based Childcare Centers (CBCC) | 72 | 20 | 52 |
| 3. Community members: broad cross-section | 59 | 3 | 56 |
| 4. Youth | 21 | 15 | 6 |
| 5. Orphan Care Committees (OCC), CBCC teachers | 43 | 26 | 17 |
| 6. Village Health Committees | 31 | 17 | 14 |
| <i>Other village-based interviews</i> | | | |
| Community Development Assistant (CDA) | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Health Surveillance Assistant (HSA) | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| Agricultural Development Facilitators (ADFs) employed by CADECOM (project funded positions) | 9 | 7 | 2 |
| Village chiefs | 5 | 5 | 0 |
| <i>Subtotal</i> | <i>244</i> | <i>97</i> | <i>147</i> |
| District Health Office | 6 | 1 | 5 |
| District Social Work Office | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| CADECOM IEC/Safety Net, and Community Based Health Care Specialists (CBHCS) | 5 | 2 | 3 |
| Total | 257 | 101 | 156 |

In addition to the 257 individuals directly interviewed, approximately 278 village members attended the introduction and closure ceremonies in the eight villages selected in the external final evaluation for a total of 535 people participating in the process.

E.3. Project Organization and Processes, Monitoring, and Evaluation

The external evaluation used a “mixed” methodology to examine the five priority cross-cutting questions that the Scope of Work identified for this sub-component (Table 1.a). Each technical team addressed the cross-cutting issues in their sector interviews and analyses (Chapters Two, Three and Four) (Table 1.e). In addition, the team leader: (a) worked with a “management sub-team” comprised of the DAP coordinator, the two

⁸ This questionnaire became a “living” document that was modified based on input from the field.

CADECOM Directors, and the national CADECOM Director and (b) interviewed a variety of stakeholders involved in the direct administration of different levels of the project's activities (Table 1.e).

Table 1.e. Methodology for Assessing Cross-Cutting Project Management and Organizational Structures: (Scope of Work Objective Four)

| | Sites where Interviews Conducted | | | Types of Interviews Conducted (x=conducted) | | | |
|---|----------------------------------|--------------------|-----------|---|------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| | Lilongwe/ Regional | Chikwawa | Phalombe | Structured Interviews | General SWOT* | Specific SWOT** ⁹ | Review M&E System/ IPTT** |
| Interviews-Management Specific (Chapters 5-6) | | | | | | | |
| 1. CADECOM Directors and P. Coordinators | | 1 | 2 | X | X | | X |
| 2. CADECOM Tech. Specialists | | 1 | 6 | | | | |
| 3. CADECOM ADFs | | 1 | 7 | X | X | X | X |
| 4. CADECOM National | 1 | | | X | X | X | |
| 5. Diocesan Officials | | 3 | 3 | X | X | | |
| 6. CRS/Malawi DAP TAs | 4 | **** ¹⁰ | **** | X | | | X |
| 7. CRS/Malawi DAP Admin. | 2 | | | X | X | X | |
| 8. Blantyre Regional Office | 2 | | | | | X | |
| 9. CRS Regional Staff | 1 | | | X | | | |
| 10. DCs, Regional Dev. Staff, NGO and Gov. Tech. Partners | 1 | 3 | 1 | X | | X MAFEP | |
| 11. Traditional Chiefs | | 1 | 1 | X | | | |
| 12. USAID | 1 | | | X | | | |
| Total | 12 | 10 | 20 | | | | |
| Interviews - M&E Specific | | | | | | | |
| a. CADECOM Directors | ^ | ^ | ^ | | | X | X |
| b. CADECOM Technical Specialists | ^ | ^ | ^ | | | X | X |
| c. CRS Tech. Advisors | ^ | ^ | ^ | | | | X |
| d. Revise IPTT | ^ | ^ | ^ | | | | X |

Source: Management and M&E Sub-team, External Final Evaluation, July 2004.

*SWOT: strength, weakness, opportunities, threats/risks

**IPTT: Indicator performance tracking table

^Multiple formal and informal interview

Although some people were interviewed only once, many key informants were interviewed several times or over several hours of group interactive meetings (with the ADFs), during which time they were asked to comment on the project's strengths and areas where improvement was needed. These general ideas were then grouped into a

⁹ Regarding specific interventions, management, and coordination structures. For M&E specific M&E processes.

¹⁰ Worked together at the field sites as well.

series of simplified strength, weakness, opportunities, threats/risks (SWOT) tables for the different informant groups to review and amend. A summary stakeholder SWOT is attached in Annex 5.a. Over forty people were included in these special sub-interviews.

A separate set of interviews were organized by the Senior CRS/Malawi M&E Advisor, Stephen Nkoka (a non-DAP position), in order to verify and update (through May 2004) the project IPTT, and to assess (in terms of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) the project monitoring and evaluation system (Table 1.e).

F. Organization of the Chapters

Each chapter starts by describing the evolution of activities for the sector that it is discussing. This is followed by an assessment of the evidence for household and population level impacts for the intermediary results, as they were adapted over the five-year project cycle. It then concludes with an assessment of participation patterns, project organization and processes, and sustainability.

Chapter Two focuses on agriculture and natural resource management (SO1 and SO2). Chapter Three focuses on health and Chapter Four on safety nets. Chapters Five and Six assess the cross-cutting project organization and processes, monitoring and evaluation systems. A more detailed description of the monitoring and evaluation system is in Annex 1; Annexes 3-4 re-group additional tables for the technical sector reviews. Annex 5 includes summary tables on project organization and processes for the two CADECOMs and CRS/Malawi. The list of key informants, evaluation schedule, references, final evaluation matrices, and scope of work are included in Annexes 6-9.

Chapter Two
SUB-GOAL: SUSTAINABLE INCREASE IN FOOD AVAILABILITY
Strategic Objectives One: Increased Agricultural Production by Smallholder Farmers
Strategic Objective Two: Improved Natural Resource Management

Sub-Goal One of the DAP has two Strategic Objectives (SOs):

SO1: Increased Agricultural Production by Smallholder Farmers.

SO2: Improved Natural Resource Management.

These two Strategic Objectives are both discussed in this chapter, as they have been intimately linked in strategy and implementation.

Section A describes the project strategy and activities. This is followed in section B by a detailed review of the results that have been achieved for each of the major Intermediary Results (IRs). These IRs were developed to aid in achievement of the two Strategic Objectives (SOs) and are based on the different sources of information that the evaluation team reviewed. This is followed in sections C by a review of the major problems that had an impact on the effectiveness of project organization and processes in this sector. Section D examines the major challenges for sustainability. The final section (E) summarizes lesson learned and recommendation for future programming.

A. Strategy and Activities

A.1. Interventions to Create Conditions Necessary to Achieve Intermediate Results (IRs)

A.1.1. Improvement of Extension Services Coverage

CRS, CADECOM, and the MoAI (Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation) have worked together to form a partnership for strengthening extension services in the target areas. MoAI standards call for one Field Assistant (FA) per 500 households. At the time of program initiation there were approximately 21 FAs covering the target areas, which encompassed 30,556 households, giving a ratio of 1:1,500. Twenty-one Agricultural Development Facilitators (ADFs) were hired to complement FA counterparts and achieve the government standard in targeted villages. In addition, two Agricultural Development Specialists (ADSs), one for each district, were engaged to supervise the ADFs. As a part of establishing the CRS/CADECOM and MoAI partnership, participation of FAs in technical training for ADFs, has been facilitated by the program. FAs take part in field days organized by the program and ADFs and FAs have jointly organized special programs for dissemination of messages on improved or new technologies, such as treadle pump irrigation. FAs, as well as their superiors at the EPA (Extension Planning Area) level, take part in DAP quarterly technical review and planning meetings. This strategy of partnership between CRS/CADECOM and MoAI has helped avoid one of the biggest shortcomings of many NGO agricultural projects where the NGO works entirely separately from the government extension service, thereby creating resentment and leaving little behind in the way of extension services when the project ends after a few years. It cannot be claimed that this partnership assures sustainability, but together, with the potential developed by the program for a community based extension system (see section D.2. below), it could help provide continued access to technical assistance.

A.1.2. Community Mobilization and Organization

The DAP program worked with existing farmer groups, and in their absence, facilitated formation of interest groups around specific activities. The result has been that, under the Village Development Committee, groups focused on natural resource management, agriculture, and other community interests (e.g., livestock and small-scale irrigation) have been established. These groups provide a focus for the extension effort and become the driving force for activities such as tree planting, soil conservation, setting out demonstration plots for evaluation of improved agronomic practices, and new crop varieties.

A.1.3. Linkages with Research Institutions and Development Agencies

A centerpiece around which the program was designed and has been implemented has been collaboration with research and development organizations. These have been invaluable resources for introduction of new technologies with high adoption potential, as well as for provision of highly useful support services. The project has worked closely with (Table 2.a): (a) the Malawi Agroforestry Extension Project (MAFE), which has developed into the NGO Total Land Care Malawi (TLC); (b) International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT)/Malawi; (c) Southern Africa Root Crops Research Network (SARRNET), which is associated with the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA); and (d) the research branch of the MoAI. These organizations have provided seed or cuttings of improved varieties and training for project staff in recommended and “best bet” practices in soil and water conservation, agro-forestry, small-scale irrigation, and husbandry of specific crops. The project has exposed farmers to these innovations through an intensive program of on-farm, farmer-conducted demonstrations from which they can choose to try what seems most promising for their conditions. In addition MAFE assisted the project in developing a community-based M&E system through training and technical backstopping. (Table 2.a).

Benefits from the collaboration between CRS/CADECOM and research and development organizations have flowed in both directions. In the DAP, CRS/CADECOM put the farmer in the center of the evaluation/refinement phase of technology development. Information on farmer’s adoption, identification of problems, or rejection of an innovation has been fed back to the research/development organizations in reports and meetings. This enables them to show impact, refine the technology or look for new approaches. The Malawi Director of Total Land Care (formerly MAFEP) rated CRS/CADECOM “among the top 5 percent” of the 77 partners (NGOs, government, projects, CBOs, and private sector) that MAFE has worked with, taking into account “both results on the ground and feed-back received” (personal communication, Zwide Jere, July 2004).

A.2. Technologies/Practices Introduced to Achieve Intermediate Results

After joint (CRS/CADECOM field staff and farmers) analysis of farmers’ constraints and opportunities through Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) techniques, farmers were presented with a menu of potential interventions that might relieve constraints and exploit opportunities. This was achieved through an intensive extension campaign that included on-farm demonstrations, field days, farmer training, and exchange visits. From the range or “menu” of innovations presented, farmers selected innovations they perceived as having potential to improve their production and livelihood (Box 4.a). They were assisted in trying

the new technologies and practices by program field staff who provided the technical backstopping and seeds needed to facilitate adoption.

Table 2.a. Technical Assistance for DAP Agriculture and NRM Components (FY00–FY02)*

| Collaborator | Activities |
|----------------------------------|--|
| MAFE/TLC | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training for ADFs and FAs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Soil Improvement Technologies: Under-sowing, intercropping, rotations, dispersed systematic tree planting ○ Afforestation: Tree nurseries, out planting ○ Soil Conservation: Contour ridging, vetiver planting • Assistance in field evaluations and in conducting field days • Provision of seed of agro-forestry species • Field visits to provide technical backstopping • Assistance in development of M&E system and training in utilization • On-the-job training of two ADSs and two ADFs in treadle pump irrigation: week in field with MAFE extension specialist • Provision of treadle pumps • Inclusion of CRS in annual planning meetings |
| ICRISAT/ Malawi | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion of CRS in ICRISAT/NGO planning meetings • Training (one day) for ADFs and FAs in establishment and management of groundnut demonstrations • Seed and protocols for groundnut and pigeonpea demonstrations • Assistance in organizing field days (direct participation in limited number) • Training for ADSs in groundnut and pigeonpea production courses |
| SARNNET | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of cassava and sweet potato cuttings of improved varieties for demonstrations • Visits by SARNETT staff to assist in evaluation, field problem-solving and field days. |
| MoAI (research branch) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of seed of Masika (OPV) |
| IWMI (Durban sub- station) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hydrologist and Socio-economist invited by CRS to discuss collaboration in dambo development (treadle pump irrigation). Field visits to select sites. Plans made to conduct socio-economic and hydrologic studies including potential environmental impacts; did not materialize due to lack of follow-up after departure of CRS Regional Agriculture Technical Advisor. |

*Technical Collaboration continued through FY04 (especially with MAFE) but was less intense after start-up phase.

Source: CRS/Malawi, DAP Final Evaluation Interviews, July 2004.

Box 2.a. Menu of Technologies and Practices that were Extended by the CRS/Malawi DAP Project in Chikwawa and Phalombe Dioceses

SO1: Increased Agricultural Production by Smallholder Farmers

IR1.1: Improved Soil Productivity

- Composting and use as soil amendment
- Direct application of animal manure
- Incorporation of crop residues
- Alley cropping with *Gliricidia sepium* and *Senna spectabilis*
- Undersowing *Tephrosia vogelii* with maize
- Intercropping maize with pigeonpea
- Dispersed systematic tree planting with *Faidherbia albida*

IR1.2: Increased Crop Diversification

Introduction of improved varieties of secondary (other than maize) food crops:

- Pigeonpea
- Groundnuts
- Soybean
- Cowpea
- Beans
- Cassava
- Sweet potato
- Sorghum
- Pearl millet

IR1.3: Increased Use of Improved Varieties of Important Crops

There is an overlap between IR1.2 and IR1.3. In reporting for M&E, the list of crops has included all crops under IR1.2 plus:

- Open pollinated maize varieties (OPVs)
- Hybrid maize varieties

IR1.4: Improved Use of Naturally Occurring Wetlands

- Treadle pump irrigation

SO2: Improved Natural Resource Management

IR2.1: Increased Use of Soil Conservation Practices

- Contour ridging
- Tied/box ridges
- Contour vetiver strips
- Gully control

IR2.2: Increased Forestation

- Nursery production of tree seedlings and outplanting
 - Woodlot planting (Done with Food for Work)
 - Homestead and boundary planting
 - Fruit tree planting

B. Achievement of Project Goals and Objectives

Normally the Indicator Performance Tracking Table (IPTT) would be the first point of reference for a quantitative measure of results obtained in a Title II program. However, interpretation of this program's IPPT is fraught with a number of problems that relate to the specific indicators used (see IPTT in Annex 1.a):

- Some have little meaning and are not measurable:
 - Indicator 1.2: Area (ha) under specific soil improvement techniques
 - Indicator 2.1: Area conserved
- Some indicators did not include all activities undertaken to achieve the intermediate result:
 - Indicator 1.1: Number of farmers adopting specific soil improvement practices
 - Indicator 1.4: Total small holder area planted to all crops other than maize and tobacco
 - Indicator 1.2: Area (ha) under specific soil improvement techniques
 - Indicator 2.1: Area conserved
- The description of some indicators is not clear:
 - Indicator 1.1: Number of farmers adopting specific soil improvement practices
 - Indicator 1.4: Total smallholder area planted to all crops other than maize and tobacco
 - Indicator 1.5: Number of farmers planting improved crop varieties
 - Indicator 2.1: Area conserved
- Some indicators could have been improved and more meaningful information obtained from the data collected:
 - Indicator 1.1: Number of farmers adopting specific soil improvement practices
 - Indicator 1.2: Area (ha) under specific soil improvement techniques
 - Indicator 1.4: Total smallholder area planted to all crops other than maize and tobacco
 - Indicator 1.5: Number of farmers planting improved crop varieties
 - Indicator 1.6: Area planted to improved crop varieties
 - Indicator 2.1: Area conserved
 - Indicator 2.2: Number of farmers conserving their land

In order to derive as much quantitative information on impacts as possible, it appears useful to examine each indicator in the Indicator Performance Tracking Table (IPTT, Annex 1.a), the manner in which the raw data was collected, the manner in which the indicator was calculated, and the conclusions concerning achievement that can be drawn from the indicator and from use of other M&E information, as well as the final RRA survey and external evaluation focus group discussions. Much of the information presented here was obtained through discussion with the previous DAP M&E Officer who left the position in January 2004.¹ The position has not been refilled. A newly appointed CRS M&E Officer is responsible for M&E for all CRS/Malawi programs. It is clear from the reporting of data that, since the departure of the DAP Officer, there has not been a good understanding of the

¹ Her input was necessary since the methods used for calculating many of the agricultural indicators were not documented in the position's handover notes and data management system (CRS/Malawi Notes, November 2004).

DAP M&E system. This is evident in: (a) the “DAP Final Evaluation Rapid Rural Appraisal Report – July 2004” (which is improperly titled as it presents quantitative data collected in 2004 for M&E as well as qualitative RRA information) and (b) the IPTT (updated to May 2004). Thus, it seems useful to go into the detail given below.

B.1. SO1: Increased Agriculture Productivity by Smallholder Farmers

B.1.1. IR1.1: Improved Soil Productivity

B.1.1.a. Indicator 1.1: Number of farmers adopting specific soil improvement practices

M&E Quantitative Data

The official indicator in the Indicator Performance Tracking Table (Annex 1.a.) is *the number of farmers adopting specific soil improvement practices*. However, the actual figure reported is the *number of farmers employing one or more soil improvement practices*. After departure of the DAP M&E Officer, CRS staff² were not aware of this and attempted to manipulate data using invalid assumptions (see DAP Final Evaluation Rapid Rural Appraisal Report – July 2004). The figures in the revised IPTT (Annex 1.a) were corrected during the final evaluation mission by the Senior Monitoring and Evaluation Project Officer Stephen Nkoka (who served as the external, e.g. non-project funded member of the final evaluation team).³

The data was collected (Baseline, FY01 – FY 03) by a survey of all households (Annual Household Survey) in each target village. The data is collected on each of the practices the program has introduced to farmers. Thus, much more useful information could have been presented if it were reported on the basis of each practice. For monitoring purposes, it would have been very useful to show which practices are being accepted and which are not. **It should be noted that the original DAP M&E system did use as an indicator the number of farmers adopting each practice listed separately.** The Fiscal Year 2000 Results Report (CSR4) did use this indicator to present baseline data and targets. However, in a meeting with the USAID Agriculture Officer in December 2000 (see Trip Report 13 – 18 December 2000, CRS Regional Agriculture Technical Advisor), he required that all project-promoted practices be lumped together to give only one figure. In order to comply with this, the indicator was modified to its present form. Another weakness of the indicator is that it is being used to report information on only the originally-introduced practices, (i.e., undersowing with *Tephrosia*, Pigeonpea intercropping, systematic planting of *F. albida* and alley cropping). It does not include composting, direct application of manure, or residue incorporation, all of which were introduced later. However, data has been collected on these practices. Until these results are recalculated correctly using data collected in FY04, the IPTT (the figures reported in the official DAP IPTT) is only valid for period FY01 – FY 03. Between 2001 and 2003, there was a steady increase in the number of farmers using one or more of the specified practices; each year the number of farmers adopting these strategies exceeded targets. During the first three years of the project, the number of participating farmers increased from 2,506 to 6,718, an increase of 268 percent. This is likely an

² This change in the indicator was inadequately documented in the data base that was maintained by the DAP M&E Officer and handover notes which led to problems in the preparation of the DAP Final Evaluation Rapid Rural Appraisal (CRS/Malawi, M&E Office, evaluation review notes, November 10, 2004).

³ He was assisted by the external evaluation team leader, Della McMillan, in regard to issues, such as format

underestimation due to the fact that it does not include the practices introduced later (although they were not included in baseline either).

In an effort to extract a more complete set of information, reference was made to the Final Evaluation Rapid Rural Appraisal Report. This presents data on farmer use of each of the practices introduced. Unfortunately, this data did not correspond with data reported in the IPTTs. It needs to be traced back to its source and carefully scrutinized. Accurate data on farmers' adoption of specific practices would be most useful.

Information from Other Sources

The Village Activity Matrix, as designed by the agriculture/NRM team, gives a good indication of farmer adoption of program interventions as seen by the CADECOM field staff (Annexes 9.a and 9.b). Of course, the best source of information on farmers' assessment of innovations is direct farmer feedback as was obtained in the final evaluation's focus group discussions. These two sources of information closely agreed and include the following.

- Various practices were introduced to farmers through demonstrations. They were presented as a "menu" from which farmers selected practices that seemed appropriate for their situation. These were tried on a limited scale, which increased in subsequent years if found beneficial.
- Farmers consider composting and direct application of manure to be very beneficial. It was surprising to the senior member of the evaluation team that direct application of manure was not a traditional practice. However, farmers stated that they had not recognized the benefit before it was demonstrated by the program. The means of increasing the quantities of soil amendment by composting with only small amounts of manure was favorably regarded. In Chikwawa, with a large livestock population, considerable quantities of manure are available. Some farmers have as many as fifteen compost heaps. If these heaps are estimated at approximately 200 kg each, this amount applied to most responsive (or highest value) crops should have a substantial effect on yield (and income, if marketed). The extent of composting in association with treadle pump irrigation was noteworthy.
- Maize/pigeonpea intercropping has been widely adopted due to the program's introduction of an improved, short-duration variety from ICRISAT for which farmers have given a name in *Chichewa*, which means "the one that escapes June" (as it matures before cold weather sets in).
- Although farmers were encouraged to try *Tephrosia* undersowing on a small scale and *Tephrosia* seed was provided, there was little long-term adoption. At the time the program was designed, this was considered a "best bet" practice by MAFE and regarded favorably by other research and development organizations.



CRS/Malawi DAP efforts to promote tree planting were widely recognized.

However, experience has shown that, among other factors, it is difficult to adopt because it requires simultaneous sowing with maize and this represents a time constraint at planting time. MAFE has dropped this practice as a “best bet” and now advocates a *Tephrosia* fallow on farmers’ poorest land (on which (s)he would expect very low yields and would best be abandoned).

- Alley cropping has not been adopted. It is considered to require too much labor for pruning and farmers are reluctant to give up a portion of their cropland for hedgerows.
- Dispersed systematic inter-planting with *Faidherbia albida* has not been popular. The long time required to have tangible benefits results in little farmer interest.

B.1.1.b. Indicator 1.2: Area (ha) under specific soil improvement techniques

M&E Quantitative Data

In the first year of the program (FY01), this indicator was estimated based on the quantities of seed distributed, including *Tephrosia* (for undersowing), *Gliricidia sepium* and *Senna Spectabilis* (for alley cropping), pigeonpea and *F. albida* for intercropping. It was also based on the assumption that all seed was used for soil improvement practices and that it was planted according to program recommendations. For the baseline and in FY02 and FY03 this indicator was estimated by visiting the fields of three farmers in each village who were found, in the Annual Household Survey (which covered all village households), to be using the practice and measuring the area on which the practice was used. This sample was used to extrapolate for the whole village the total area under specific soil improvement techniques based on total number of farmers using the practice. Since some of these practices were used in combination, the figure reported was the figure for the practice used on the largest area. It is obviously an underestimation of total area. As mentioned above, use of compost, incorporation of crop residues and direct application of manure were not included in calculating this indicator.

Again, it must be noted that, until it is recalculated correctly with data taken in FY04, the IPTT is valid only for the period FY01 – FY03. Over this period, the IPTT shows an increase over target for this indicator for each year. Overall there was an increase of 170 percent, from a baseline of 1,256 to 2,123 hectares of land. For reasons mentioned above this is probably a gross underestimate. However this cannot be stated with certainty as the same deficiencies were inherent in calculation of the baseline as in the reported figures for each year of program activity.

Information from Other Sources

It is reasonable to assume that the area under soil improvement techniques would correspond, at least in general, with the number of farmers adopting the techniques. In fact, in the case where farmers are adopting a technique, the increase in area over time would likely be more than a direct linear relationship as a farmer would be expected to try a new technique on only a limited area. If (s)he finds it beneficial, it would be expected that in subsequent year(s), (s)he will put more of his/her land under that technique.

Field observations made during this final evaluation were:

- Sizeable areas of pigeonpea were observed in both target areas. Field visits were made after maize harvest but it can be assumed that, in large part, these had been maize/pigeonpea plantings. This observation was particularly noteworthy for Chikwawa because before the program started there had been little planting of pigeonpea in the area.
- Little area was observed to be devoted to alley cropping.
- Compost making was commonly observed in the villages visited. The extent of composting in association with treadle pump irrigation was particularly noteworthy.
- Recent plantings (obviously planted since the start of the program) of *Faidherbia albida* were seen, but these were on a very limited scale.

B.1.1.c. Indicator 1.3: Increased maize yield output per unit area (kg/ha)

M&E Quantitative Data

This data comes from the DAP Annual Crop Estimate Survey. In December, the area planted to maize by each of five households (chosen at random) in each village was measured. In April/May, the harvested output of maize from the fields of three of these was determined. Output was measured in units such as sacks, baskets, or oxcarts, for which an average weight was determined. The yield figure obtained is assumed to be an average for the village. Apparently it was assumed that program interventions would result in an overall increase in maize yield throughout the village and that this would be measurable. The evaluators feel that is a very poor assumption for several reasons. Most importantly, the variation from year to year in amount and distribution of rainfall has a much greater effect on yield than changes in farming practices. Additionally, it is unrealistic to expect to detect a trend over a four or five year period even if an attempt had been made to take rainfall data into consideration. Also, agronomic practices vary considerably from farmer to farmer, or even on the same farm in different fields. Differences included intercropping (almost all maize is intercropped but there are a range of different associated crops), planting density, variety, date of planting, etc. Finally, an average yield for a village where only a limited number of farmers are using soil improvement practices on only a limited area of land cannot be expected to show effect of program interventions.

No conclusion is possible. The indicator is not useful.

Information from Other Sources

Farmers indicated that they did feel that they obtained higher maize yields with application of manure. They saw little or no effect from other practices and even a decrease in yield from alley cropping due to loss of area planted to maize because of hedgerows and competition from hedgerows.

B.1.2. IR1.2: Increased Crop Diversification

B.1.2.a. Indicator 1.4: Total smallholder area planted to all crops other than maize and tobacco

M&E Quantitative Data

The data was obtained from the Annual Crop Estimate Survey described above, which also included measurement of crop areas and harvested output for crops other than maize and tobacco (sample of three households per village). It should be noted that reporting this indicator is complicated by the fact that almost all crops in the target areas are grown as intercrops. Thus, if 0.2 ha was planted to maize intercropped with pigeonpea, the plot would be recorded as 0.2 ha of pigeonpea. For clarity the indicator description should have been: *Total smallholder area planted to all crops other than sole crop maize*. In another situation, a 0.1ha field of intercropped groundnut and pigeonpea would be reported as 0.1 ha of groundnuts and 0.1 ha of pigeonpea. Thus double (or even triple) counting of the same piece of land occurred.

Although area was over estimated in the annual reporting, it was also, for the same reason, overestimated in the baseline. Thus, a comparison with baseline over the period FY2001-FY2003 is valid. This shows that targets were met or exceeded each year and that the area planted to secondary food crops increased to 158 percent over the baseline in FY2003.

This indicator would have been more useful if it had been broken down by individual crops. The data collected would allow this, but all crops were lumped together to comply with USAID/Malawi's requirement. (See discussion of a similar situation for Indicators 1.1 and 1.2 for IR1.1).

Information from Other Sources

The crops most widely adopted for planting on a larger scale appear to be pigeonpea followed (in order) by groundnuts, sweet potato and cassava. Pigeonpea, cassava, and sweet potato are appreciated by farmers for their drought tolerance. Wider adoption of sorghum (which is drought resistant) was restricted according to farmers because the varieties introduced were susceptible to bird damage. This was particularly true in Phalombe.

B.1.3. IR1.3: Increased Use of Improved Varieties of Important Crops

B.1.3.a. Indicator 1.5: Number of farmers planting improved varieties

M&E Quantitative Data

For clarity, this indicator should have been: *Number of farmers planting improved varieties of one or more crops*. The number was taken directly from the Annual Household Survey. The number exceeded the target every year from FY01 through FY03 and in FY03 showed an increase of 178 percent over the baseline. Data collected on individual crops and, once again, more useful information would have been obtained if the indicator had been broken down by crop, as was prescribed in the original M&E plan (IPPT FY 00). Again the "lumping" was to satisfy USAID/Malawi's requirement.

Information from Other Sources

The comments under IR 1.2 (section B.2.2.) pertain here as well. However, an additional intervention covered under this IR was the introduction of open pollinated maize varieties (OPVs): Masika and, on a smaller scale, *Mchotsanjala* (one who relieves hunger). OPVs

have a major advantage over hybrid varieties in that seed can be saved for replanting for several generations and they are less demanding of fertilizer. Both varieties, but especially Masika, were well received by farmers. In all eight villages visited, the introduction of Masika was considered among the most beneficial program interventions. Varieties of other crops that have received widespread acceptance are the groundnut variety CG7 from ICRISAT and the pigeonpea variety ICEAP 00040 from ICRISAT. Because of its early maturity this pigeonpea variety has been named by farmers “*Mthawajuni*” which means “escapes June” (i.e., cold weather).

B.1.3.b. Indicator 1.6: Area planted in improved crop varieties

M&E Quantitative Data

This indicator used the same data as the indicator for crop diversification with the addition of area planted to OPV maize. The same considerations concerning intercropping pertain and the figures should be considered to be overestimations. Targets were exceeded each year, 2001 – 2003. By FY03 there was a 170 percent increase over baseline. The same comments about “lumping” together data on all crops in Indicator 1.1 pertain here.

Information from Other Sources

Assuming a correspondence between number of farmers adopting improved varieties and area planted, observations on crops/varieties noted for Indicator 1.1 should pertain.

B.1.4. IR1.4: Improved Use of Naturally Occurring Wetlands

B.1.4.a. Indicator 1.7: Number of farmers participating in small-scale irrigation

M&E Quantitative Data

This indicator pertains only to treadle pump irrigation. Calculation of the indicator is straight-forward, but it should be noted that the number includes farmers who individually own and use a treadle pump and those who are in a group that share one or more pumps. Targets were set with the assumption that pumps would be used by groups of ten. However, many farmers purchased pumps for individual use. Therefore, targets were well above achievements. However, from a baseline of zero, the number increased to 246 in FY03.⁴

Information from Other Sources

Farmers demonstrated a high interest in treadle pump irrigation both to supplement their food supply and to generate income. Pumps are being made available to farmers on a revolving credit scheme. The scheme seems to be working satisfactorily. Crops being grown are maize for grain and for green ears and vegetables, including tomatoes, onions, peppers, cabbage and Chinese leaf. Constraints to wider participation have been limited accessibility to of pumps and the lack of a reliable water source in a number of places.⁵

⁴ Recent communication with the project staff indicates that by the end of September 2004 the number of farmers participating in small-scale irrigation increased to 872 with the issue of 144 new pumps (CRS/Malawi, November 2004).

⁵ Cost is also an important factor. Most farmers, particularly in Phalombe, could not afford the deposit on a pump, which was a requirement for access (CRS/Malawi, November 10, 2004).

However, in places with a good water source and a good market for green maize and other vegetables, this appears to be an intervention with considerable potential for improving livelihoods.

B.1.4.b. Indicator 1.8: Area under small-scale irrigation

M&E Quantitative Data

This indicator also only pertains to treadle pump irrigation. The indicator is calculated in a straight-forward manner by measurement of the irrigated area. Except for FY01, achievements exceeded targets. From zero in the baseline, the area grew to 27 ha in FY03.

Information from Other Sources

Training in treadle pump irrigation was provided by MAFE to the ADS and one ADF from each of the two project sites. They, in turn, trained the other ADFs and FAs who trained farmers in their villages. Sites visited showed skill in laying out the irrigated area, constructing canals and basins, nursery management and crop husbandry. Farmers regarded composting as an important element in their small-scale irrigation operations.



Two Technologies Highly Favored by Farmers in Tsekukhomo Village: Treadle Pump Irrigation and Composting Making (Note: Compost Piles in Background)

B.2. SO2: Improved Natural Resource Management

B.2.1. IR2.1: Increased Use of Soil Conservation Practices

B.2.1.a. Indicator 2.1: Area conserved

M&E Quantitative Data

A sample of three farmers was taken from among those found to have done contour ridging in the Annual Household Survey and the fields where the contour ridging had been done were measured. The average area from this sample was multiplied by the total number of farmers in the village using this soil and water conservation practice. The total average area for all villages was combined and this was the figure reported. Thus the indicator would more accurately have been labeled: *Area conserved by contour ridging*.

The program has also promoted tied/box ridging, contour vetiver strips, and gully control. Tied/box ridging requires contour ridging as a first step and so would be captured by this indicator. Vetiver contour strips are usually, but not always, planted in association with contour ridges. Figures for area of gully control would be over and above the figure for area with contour ridging. Thus calculation of this indicator could, in theory, underestimate total area conserved. However, this would not generally be significant as areas occupied in gully control are insignificant in comparison with areas with contour ridges. Nonetheless reclamation of small gullies is an important soil conservation practice that should be monitored and reported in some fashion.

It should be noted that the area reported in the IPTT is the total area (resulting from past activities plus area conserved in the past year) found in the Annual Household Survey. The area conserved with contour ridges (sometimes combined with box/tied ridge and/or vetiver contour strips) increased annually and each year targets were exceeded. From 2,176 ha at the time of baseline it grew 160 percent to 4,349 ha. If the number of participating households is 11,400 and the average landholding is 0.5 ha, the total land area held by participants is 5,700 ha. The figures indicate that 75 percent of program participants' land is protected with contour ridges.

Information from Other Sources

It was observed in the field that extensive areas are protected with contour ridges, although 75 percent of cropland may be an overestimate (perhaps it is closer to 50%) for the villages visited. Tied/box ridges were seen on approximately 50 percent of land protected with contour ridges. Vetiver contour strips were seen on a very limited area.

As mentioned for other indicators it would be of interest to have a "break-down" giving area on which each soil/water conservation measure is used.

B.2.1.b. Indicator 2.2: Number of farmers conserving their land

M&E Quantitative Data

This figure is taken directly from the Annual Household Survey. It has exceeded targets each year (2001 – 2003) and increased from a baseline figure of 5,444 to 7,191, an increase of 132 percent. When compared to figures for land area under soil/water conservation practices these two indicators show that not only are more farmers adopting soil/water conservation measures, but they are using them on a larger portion of their landholding.

Information from Other Sources

In focus group discussions, it was evident that farmers recognized the need for soil conservation and saw the benefits of contour ridging in terms of reduced water run-off and, therefore, less soil erosion and better soil moisture conditions. Farmers were conversant with use of the A-frame for marking contour lines.

B.2.2. IR2.2: Increased Forestation

Tree seedlings were planted in communal woodlots, and in homestead and boundary plantings. Fruit trees were included in homestead plantings. Among the species planted are:

Acacia polyacantha, *Azadirachta indica*, *Khaya nyasica*, *Melia azadirachta*, *Senna siamea*, and *Senna spectabilis*. Tree planting was carried out as a food-for-work activity. Village Natural Resources Management committees were organized and they played an important role in mobilizing the community and managing activities. To prevent livestock damage to young trees (particularly in Chikwawa), a system was devised whereby participants took turns guarding the woodlots. With the large number of villagers participating, it was not a heavy burden on any one individual. By the time of the evaluation, by-laws had been drawn up for management of communal woodlots.

B.2.2.a. Indicator 2.3: Number of seedlings planted

M&E Quantitative Data

The target was to plant 600,000 seedlings per year over the life of the program. In FY01 planting fell far short of the target (<60%). However, in FY02 and FY03 the target was exceeded by more than two and three times, respectively. By May 2004, a total of 5,658,785 trees had been planted, which is 235 percent over the Length of Activity (LOA) target. This is a sizable achievement.

Information from Other Sources

The Village NRM committees appear to be strongly motivated and seem to have been highly effective. When asked in focus group discussions, what would happen when the program ends and there is no longer Food for Work, the group responded that they are aware the project is ending but that the NRM Committee will continue its work, that local seed is being collected, and that there is no question that a village nursery will be established in August. The benefits in terms of firewood and poles for construction are clearly appreciated.

B.2.2.b. Indicator 2.4: Area planted

M&E Quantitative Data

With a target of 600,000 trees planted a year, the annual target was set at 200 ha. Calculation of the indicator was based on the number of trees planted for each purpose (woodlot, homestead, or boundary) and the spacing used in planting for that purpose. Except for the first year (FY01) the target has been exceeded in each succeeding year. By May 2004 a total of 1,596 ha had been planted, which is approximately double the four-year LOA target of 800 ha.

Information from Other Sources

Driving through the program areas one cannot fail to be impressed with the number, size, and condition of the communal tree lots.

B.2.2.c. Indicator 2.5: Survival after one year

M&E Quantitative Data

The target for tree survival for each year was calculated as 80 percent of the number of trees planted. Survival fell below target each year. It was 73, 75, and 45 percent of the target in FY02 (trees planted in FY01), FY03 (trees planted in FY02) and FY04 (trees planted in FY03), respectively. Looking directly at actual survival rates they were 58, 60, and 36 percent for trees planted in FY01, FY02 and FY03, respectively. It is obviously too early to measure one year survival for trees planted in FY04. The most important piece of information, however, is the total number of trees that survived for one year. For the first three years, that number is 1,820,210. This can be compared with a figure of 1,440,000, which would be the total number of trees that survived one year if only the target number of 600,000 trees per year had been planted and the survival rate was 80 percent. Thus, the bottom line is that in terms of trees standing after three years of planting (assuming little loss after one year), the target has been exceeded by 126 percent.

Information from Other Sources

The very low survival rate of seedlings planted in FY03 was due primarily to damage by harvester ants/termites and drought.

B.2.3. Achievements Not Captured by M&E System

The village focus group discussions and interviews with Village Headmen provided information on very significant achievements that were not reported through the M&E system.

B.2.3.a. Food security

Food security has not been attained. Last season's harvest was poor and below "average" in many villages in the target areas. This was due to a very late start of the rains, followed by sporadic rainfall, and then early cessation of the rains. Nevertheless, discussions in focus groups and with Village Headmen in village site visits (using food security time line technique described in the methodology section of Chapter One), as well as with the District Commissioners and District Agricultural Development Officers, leave no doubt in the evaluators' minds that there is a consensus that the program has improved food security. Farmers are obtaining higher yields through adoption of



Complete food security time line showing villagers' perception of their food security status for years 2000/01 through 2004/05 during the CRS/Malawi Final Evaluation (Tsekukhomo Village)

improved varieties and new agronomic practices and their resilience to adverse weather conditions has been enhanced by growing crops other than maize on a larger scale, in particular, cassava and sweet potato. This might well be summed up in the words of the Group Village Headman, Tembenao I village: “*Even in a drought year we get something which is better than before.*”

B.2.3.b. Impact on income/assets

The evaluators have no quantitative measure of the DAP program’s impact on income and assets of farmers in the target areas. However, an abundance of circumstantial and anecdotal evidence was found indicating that the program had brought a measure of economic benefit to the communities.

In the village focus group discussions, the participants were asked if the program had improved their lives and, if so, in what ways. In the lower economic status group, the responses centered on improved food security and decreased necessity to engage in *ganyu* (work as a temporary paid laborer). In the higher economic status group, the discussion went beyond this to numerous individual accounts of economic improvement. Most of these accounts were prefaced by remarks about how little they had had in terms of economic assets before the program affected their lives. In fact, many had, at one time, been receiving food under the DAP’s safety net activities (Chapter Four). Among those things cited as economic improvements in their lives, which they attributed to their participation in program activities, were:

- Ability to better clothe the family;
- Ability to pay school fees and buy school uniforms;
- Acquisition of livestock (cattle, goats, chickens);
- Improvement of housing, especially steel roofing or even construction of a new home;
- Purchase of a bicycle;
- Purchase of a radio;
- Opening a grocery store;
- Opening a restaurant; and
- Starting a fish vending business.

However, it was notable that, irrespective of economic group (“better-off” or “less well-off”), *knowledge* gained from participating in the program was a highly prized asset. This was heard from farmers in various villages.

The District Commissioner and District Director of Planning and Development, Chikwawa offered what they saw as evidence of the economic impact of the DAP program. They observed that, despite unfavorable growing seasons, there has been a noticeable increase in traders’ vehicles entering the target area and carrying out produce (maize, cassava, sweet potato, pigeon pea, groundnuts). Farmers have been able to sell more and increase their income.

B.2.3.c. Synergy between agriculture/NRM interventions and the safety net program

As mentioned in the section above, when villagers were asked in focus group discussions, how the DAP program affected their lives, the subject of *ganyu* frequently came up. Before program interventions, many had been compelled by lack of food to earn income through *ganyu*, i.e. work off their own farms. This usually consists of casual labor for better-off

farmers or on estates. Wages are meager and the availability of such work commonly coincides with peak periods for work required on their own farms. Inadequate husbandry of their own crops results in a substantial loss of food production and so the household is trapped in a vicious cycle of food deficits and poverty.

However, with the safety net program, a farmer is relieved of the need to perform *ganyu* and is able to properly tend his own crops. This, alone, improves the household's food production. Then, by using program-introduced innovations, yields are further enhanced. With this improvement in food production, the household "graduates" out from under the safety net program and is able to continue without *ganyu*.

C. Project Organization and Processes

The evaluators noted several matters that appeared to have resulted in loss of efficacy in program implementation.

C.1. Loss of Key Staff: CRS DAP Agricultural Advisor, CRS DAP M&E Officer, CADECOM ADS/Phalombe

There is ample evidence (written progress reports and verbal communication with their colleagues in MoAI, with their technical collaborators, and with field staff who worked under them) that these staff members were highly productive.

- There was a ten-month lapse after departure of the CRS DAP Agricultural Advisor before the post was refilled. As an example of the void that was left, MAFE had 500 treadle pumps destined for the DAP program but was not able to make contact with anyone at CRS who could say where they should be delivered (personal communication, Malawi Director, TLC). As a consequence, they were delivered to the National CADECOM office and from there were distributed to each of the diocesan offices. All of the pumps should have gone to Chikwawa and Phlombe but only a portion did.
- The CRS DAP M&E Officer was not replaced, but instead a new M&E position with responsibility for all CRS/Malawi programs was created. As discussed in Section 3.2.1, since the departure of the DAP M&E Officer in January 2004, there has not been a good understanding of the DAP M&E system.
- The CADECOM ADS/Phalombe was replaced by a person with considerably less experience.

C.2. Closure of DAP Support Unit (DSU) in Blantyre and Transfer of Agricultural Advisor and M&E Officer to Lilongwe

This transfer put the CRS/DAP Technical Advisors for agriculture and M&E at a greater distance from the field and reduced their effectiveness. Oversight of field activities was much reduced and there was a weakening of relations between them and CADECOM diocesan DAP staff.

C.3. Addition of a Livestock Component

It is not clear how this subcomponent, which was not part of the original DAP, was added. It was added in 2003, too late to be effective, and was fraught with difficulties. Goats were to have been properly housed and improved male goats were to have been distributed as well. These aspects of the program were only partially realized.

C.4. Exit Plan

Attention to the design and execution of an exit plan was very belated and what exists does not have much substance. It seems doubtful that, at this late date, much can be accomplished to correct this.

D. Sustainability

D.1. Major Issue: Seed Supply

- *Observation:* Introduction of improved varieties was one of the program's most beneficial interventions. However, the matter of seed supply was never properly addressed.⁶ Except for cassava and sweet potato, seed was distributed every year. In general, farmers did not develop capacity for self-sufficiency in seed.
- *Recommendation:* Before the DAP program ends, make a final distribution to the farmers who are without seed. However, along with this the following actions should be taken:
 - Conduct an intensive campaign to sensitize farmers to the need to provide for their own seed supply by individual and/or community action, provide sound information/training on seed storage techniques; and
 - Ensure that key members of NRM/Agriculture committees, the FAs, in whose sections targeted villages fall, EPA and district level staff of MoAI have information on varieties that have been adopted and on where the seed of those varieties can be accessed.

D.2. Enhancing Factors

- *Community Organization:* It was observed that committees (Village Development, NRM/Agriculture, Irrigation, Livestock), which have been formed under program aegis are cohesive and have been effective. Villagers give the impression that these committees will carry on in the absence of program support. There are hopeful signs that tree planting, soil/water conservation, communal livestock husbandry, and irrigation will continue and that villagers will cooperate to sustain progress made in improved crop production.
- *Knowledge Instilled:* Farmers have been introduced to a range of new technologies and practices, many of which have been seen as beneficial and have been adopted. It seems reasonable to believe that farmers will continue to use these. Farmers' horizons have been expanded and some, at least, will seek and be receptive to new

⁶ Seed banks were established in every village and seed was distributed every year except in the case of cassava cuttings and sweet potato vines. This resulted in farmers not saving seeds with the village seed bank, since they looked forward to receiving new seed from the program each year (CRS/Malawi November 10, 2004, comments to the evaluators).

innovations. As Maligezi Mathibwi, Group Village Headman, Mulambo, Phalombe District stated: “*CADECOM will leave but the knowledge will stay with us.*”

E. Lessons Learned

- (1) *Collaboration*: An agricultural development project can benefit greatly by collaborating with research/development organizations that can provide invaluable technical support.
- (2) *Staff*: Technical competence of staff must be recognized and efforts made to retain those who display a high level of technical competence and performance.
- (3) *M&E*: Careful attention should be given to selection of M&E indicators to ensure that they are meaningful and provide as much information as possible to guide program implementation.
- (4) *CRS Regional Backstopping*: CRS Regional Technical Advisors can play a valuable role in program implementation by:
 - Providing technical oversight with regular periodic visits as well as visits at critical times in implementation, e.g. start-up, design of M&E system, addition of new program component, etc.;
 - Developing linkages with research and development organizations; and
 - Assisting in evaluation of technical capacity of key program staff.

Chapter Three
SUB-GOAL TWO: IMPROVED FOOD UTILIZATION
Strategic Objective Three: Improved Nutritional Health Status of Young Children

This chapter provides a brief overview of the evolution of the Development Assistance Program's (DAP's) health and nutrition sector strategy, from conceptualization to implementation on the ground. It is important to note that most SO3 activities have only been running for four months, therefore the evaluation of SO3 health and nutrition is a *mid-term evaluation to assess the progress toward SO3 goals*. A no-cost extension was formally awarded in late August 2004, therefore recommendations will be provided for the extension.

The goals of a mid term evaluation according to guidance (Bonnard 2002:2) are to:

- Assess *progress* toward meeting objectives;
- Evaluate what the DAP intended to accomplish;
- Assess the relevant indicators; and
- Work with the local staff to develop recommendations.

With these goals in mind, and given the guidance in the Scope of Work for the final evaluation (Annex 9.c), the health chapter is divided into four sections. The first section (A) provides a brief overview of the evolution of the strategy and project activities and organization for this component starting with the original DAP and ending with what is actually being executed. This is followed in section B by a detailed review of the progress toward the achievement of the project IRs and objectives. Given that this is a mid-term evaluation of the activities under this Strategic Objective, the analysis of "project organization and processes" (section C) reviews the indicators and suggests improvements. The final section (section D) summarizes the major lessons learned and priority recommendations

A. Strategy and Activities

A.1. Evolution of the Sector Strategy and Activities

A.1.1. Original Concept in the DAP

The original concept of the project envisioned improved child health as an integral part of its four-part strategy to improve food security and health. After initial discussions with the USAID and CRS headquarters, CRS/ Malawi was asked to delay the start of the health and nutrition strategy. The reasons cited were the magnitude of the DAP since this was their first DAP and their anticipation that time would be needed to build the capacity of both CRS/Malawi and the CADECOM counterparts. CRS/Malawi agreed to this change, so the health component in the approved DAP was scheduled to start in the third year of the DAP (October 2002).

A.1.2. Delays in Start-up

In actuality, preparations for the implementation of the health and nutrition component started four months later than planned because of a prolonged “maize” emergency that hit Malawi in FY02-03, which required staff to divert their attention.

A.1.3. Changes from the Approved DAP

In June 2003 the Knowledge, Practice and Coverage (KPC) survey was conducted, which used a questionnaire to collect baseline data. Childhood illnesses including malnutrition, diarrhoea, and malaria were chosen as the top killers of children under five (CU5) and the child health program was designed around this. Due to the delay in implementing the child health component, several activities and intermediate results that had been planned in the approved DAP were omitted in the actual implementation schedule (Table 3.a.). It seems that these changes were decided after the KPC survey and subsequent stakeholder and planning meetings.¹

Table 3.a. Evolution of Intermediate Results (IRs) for Strategic Objective Three (Health) of the CRS/Malawi DAP

| 2000 Approved DAP | 2003 Changes after KPC | Final SO3 Decisions |
|--|--|---|
| IR 3.1. Improved nutritional status of children | Combined into one IR | IR 3.1. Improved recognition and management of malnutrition in children under five years of age. |
| IR 3.2. Improved infant feeding practices | | |
| IR 3.3. Improved immunization coverage | Eliminated | None |
| IR 3.4. Improved home management of diarrhoea disease, pneumonia and malaria and better recognition of symptoms that necessitate medical treatment | Maintained and expanded ITN to include it's own IR | IR 3.2. Improved recognition and management of sick children focusing on danger signs, diarrhoeal disease and malaria. IR 3.3. Improved accessibility and usage of ITNs for malaria prevention in children under five years old. |
| IR 3.5. Improved knowledge of modes of HIV transmission | Eliminated | None |
| IR 3.6. Improved water sources in selected communities | Eliminated | None |

Source: DAP Final Evaluation, July-August 2004.

Another major change from the approved DAP was staffing at the extension level. The approved DAP planned on hiring Village Health Facilitators (VHFs) to focus on health extension activities, but in the end this did not happen leaving the Agricultural Development Facilitators (ADFs) to cover all four of the project's Strategic Objectives (SOs) (Table 3.a.). After the IRs were decided upon there is reference to meetings that were held around July 2003 to develop the Detailed Implementation Plan (DIP)² and monitoring indicators. The process was not transparent because of a lack of records available for review.

A.2. Assessment of the Revised Strategy

Fine tuning and reducing the scope of the child health component appears to have been an appropriate adaptation considering the delay in implementing the health component.

¹ Documentation was not available to review how or why the changes took place.

² Only pages 13-16 of one of the meetings could be found during the final evaluation.

Documentation of this process is lacking, however, so it is difficult to understand the reasons for reducing the activities to the extent that the project did. There are four areas that CRS/Malawi should reconsider for the no-cost extension and similar health projects in the future.

A.2.1. Water

The issue of access to water was raised repeatedly during the final evaluation interviews. A review of the documents available and information from interviews supports more emphasis on improving access to water. The original DAP emphasized in the text that water was a priority concern identified during the design phase Participatory Rural Appraisals (PRA) (CRS 1999:27-28). The DAP stated that the program areas were shown to have a severe shortage of potable water in the majority of communities, often resulting in women and children walking several kilometres to access frequently contaminated water (CRS 1999:28). The plan in the DAP was to partner with the non-governmental organization Christian Service Committee (CSC) who is experienced in development of safe water sources. The DAP budget included provisions for drilling a total of 65 safe water sources during the life of the project. The PRAs that took place in November 2000 confirmed the lack of access to clean water. The DAP plan was to rehabilitate shallow wells, maintain broken boreholes and pipes, and to drill more boreholes.



Clean drinking water is still a major constraint in many villages that benefited from the CRS/Malawi DAP.

The KPC survey indicated that most mothers (82.5%) obtain water for drinking from boreholes and it was decided that interventions related to water would not be a part of the health program. The KPC also pointed out that 51 percent of children under two years of age had diarrhoea, but this was attributed to sanitation and hygiene. Final evaluation interviews reported that the stakeholders disagreed with dropping the project's water activities and didn't agree with the KPC findings that 83 percent of households have access to safe water. Part of the issue raised was that the Government of Malawi apparently defines a village as having safe access to clean water when the water source is within a 15 minute walk (0.5 km) and has no more than 250 persons using it.

During the final evaluation, access to water was raised as a key constraint in the eight villages visited. The villages reported that lack of water was affecting their ability to cultivate backyard home gardens around their home and water was also reported as a factor in contributing to a high incidence of diarrhoeal diseases, especially in the rainy season. Many of the villages reported using the river as a water source.

A review of the Drug Revolving Fund (DRF) records confirmed the presence of diarrhoeal diseases, even during the dry season. Especially disturbing were the interviews with guardians who have children under five years of age (CU5) in the safety net program. Using the children's growth cards and probing into the reason for the child's weight loss, every

mother reported that the weight loss started with an episode of diarrhoea.

Using the example below from one the DRF registers (Table 3.b.), it is possible that almost half of the diseases seen in the first 2.5 months of the program could be related to either lack of drinking water or drinking water from unsafe sources.

Water makes up about 70 percent of our body and it is the most crucial nutrient in terms of survival. The diseases that are being reported are probably also related to sanitation issues, but this does not negate the fact that a high number of people report that they use unsafe water sources because the nearest borehole is too far or not working.

Table 3.b. Information from DRF Register Selenje Village, Phalombe Gathered During the DAP Final Evaluation

| Date | Malaria | Diarrhoea | Headache |
|------------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------------|--------------|
| April 10 th start | 4 | 3 | 2 |
| May | 4 | 1 | 2 |
| June | 8 | 1 | 2 |
| Totals | 16 | 5 | 6 |
| <i>27 cases total</i> | <i>59 %</i> | <i>18.5%</i> | <i>22.5%</i> |
| | | <i>drinking water-related 41%</i> | |

Source: DAP Final Evaluation, July-August 2004.

A.2.2. CADECOM and CRS Health Staffing

All of the staff, but especially at the CRS level, should have started earlier in the life of the project (at least in February 2003 when the first external support came for planning the child health component) and less emphasis should have been placed on the TDY for the completion of duties. This would have built the capacity of the CRS/Malawi and CADECOM staff to have more autonomy over the planning process and only use the TDY for support.

Chikwawa CADECOM had stable health staffing during the life of the project, but both CRS/Malawi and Blantyre/CADECOM, especially the Phalombe field office, had staffing gaps during key implementation periods (January 2004 – present) (Table 3.c.).

In view of the fact the no-cost health extension was approved in August 2004, CRS/Malawi should follow their plan to hire an additional CSPO so that the current CRS CSPO can focus on the I-Life DAP.

A.2.3. Extension Work

The project's Agricultural Development Facilitators (ADFs) have agricultural backgrounds, not health backgrounds; a person with a health background might have identified and addressed some of the problems identified in this final evaluation. The ADFs will no longer be employed as of 30 September 2004 and all assistance will be routed through the government HSAs, which is the most realistic and sustainable project design. There is one HSA for 4,629 people in the target area (which extrapolates to about 1 HSA for 800 households or 8 villages) (see Table 3.d.).

Table 3.c. Health Staffing Over the Life of the Malawi/CRS DAP Project

| Level | Position | Name | Dates |
|---------------------|----------|------------------------------|----------------------|
| CRS | CSPO | Stanely Mwase | May 2003 to Feb 2004 |
| | | Vacant | Vacant |
| | | Kwame Msapato | Aug 2004-present |
| Chikwawa CADECOM | CBHCS | Rosemary Mpetiwa | May 2003-present |
| | IEC | Victor Jonasi | July 2003-present |
| Phalombe CADECOM | CBHCS | Stella Sagawa | May 2003 to Jan 2004 |
| | | Owen Chamdimba | Jan 2004 - present |
| | | Vacant * IEC covering | Vacant |
| | IEC | Patricia Kamba | July 2003-present |

Source: CADECOM and CRS Project records

Table 3.d. Reported Number of HSAs in the CRS/Malawi DAP Target Areas Compared to Population

| District | EPA | HSAs | Population | Ratio HSA:Pop |
|--------------|---------|-----------|----------------|------------------|
| Chikwawa | Kalombo | 21 | 67,180 | 1 : 3,199 |
| Phalombe | Mpinda | 7 | 38,450 | 1 : 5,493 |
| | Tamani | 5 | 47,150 | 1 : 9,430 |
| Total | | 33 | 152,780 | 1 : 4,629 |

Source: CADECOM and CRS Project Records

The current plans call for compensating the HSAs with a bicycle from the stock used by the ADFs and a 25 percent increase in salary³ paid by DAP to take on the health activities under DAP. Given the fact that the proposed incentive package is still under review, CRS/Malawi needs to seriously consider the impact that the salary incentive and/or the bicycles might have on the sustainability of their efforts.⁴ One alternative proposed by the external evaluation team is to provide technical and M&E support to the current DHO systems and to transfer the bicycles to the DHO. Given the critical role that the HSAs will play in data collection and report writing, CRS/Malawi and the DHO need to continue their discussions on this topic. The DAP should not be designing activities that the DHO system is not able to sustain.

A.2.4. Collaborations

During the final evaluation interviews, it was raised that earlier joint planning on projects should have happened between the CADECOMs and MOH, as opposed to the MOH being given a project plan and then asked for input. At the village level, the ADFs and HSAs say they work with each other for joint planning and meetings. Interviews at the district level indicated critical issues with motivation and allowances for HSAs at the beginning of the project but that the issues were resolved. These issues were not raised at the extension level.

³ The proposed incentive package is still under review and further study.

⁴ The work that the HSAs are doing with DAP is no different than their current duties with the DHO. There is therefore **no** reason to pay the HSAs additional money to do the work that they are supposed to be doing anyway, nor to provide them with bicycles for only a year. Why would the HSAs continue those duties after the money stopped and the bicycles were taken away? What will other NGOs do in the future in order to collaborate with HSA staff? CRS/CADECOM will be setting a bad precedent if they proceed with this plan.

B. Achievement of Project Goals and Objectives

Overall, the child health activities are going extremely well considering the slow start-up of the program, the changes in support staffing, and the gaps in funding. **From the results of the final evaluation, USAID's decision to grant a no-cost extension is supported in order to solidify the child health activities. It is recommended that another extension also be considered through 2006, as there will be a different set of circumstances in staffing.**

Under the extension, the project has a great opportunity to work through government channels to strengthen the groundwork which was laid under the DAP. The arrangement

under the extension, where all work will take place through the HSAs, is much more realistic and has a better chance of being sustainable in the long-run.

This section will make recommendations for each of the current intermediate results that the project supports (IR3.1 Malnutrition, IR3.2 Drug Revolving Fund, and IR3.3 Insecticide Treated Nets) (See Table 3.a.).

B.1. IR 3.1: Improved Recognition and Management of Malnutrition in Children Under Five (CU5)

Under IR 3.1, the project listed three sub-strategies to recognize and reduce malnutrition in the villages (Annex 3.b). One strategy is to build the growth monitoring system, the second strategy is to educate about breastfeeding, and the final strategy is to promote nutritious weaning foods.

B.1.1. Assessment of IR 3.1

Strategy 3.1.1: Growth Monitoring

The primary activity taking place under this IR is to strengthen the growth monitoring (GM) system that had already been introduced under SO4 safety net, which began in FY01.

Table 3.e. Timeline of GMV Activities Taking Place Under the CRS/Malawi DAP Safety Net and Health Activities (FY00-FY04)

| GMV Activities | FY00 | FY01 | FY02 | FY03 | FY04 |
|---|------|-------|------|------|------|
| Purchase and distribute scales* | | 41 CK | | | SO4 |
| Initial GMV training | | SO3 | | | |
| DAP trained HSAs for 6 weeks in Mwanza | | SO3 | | | |
| GMV and HSAs giving health education before food distribution | | SO3 | SO3 | SO3 | SO4 |
| GMV identifying malnourished, linked to safety net, ag/NRM | | SO3 | SO3 | SO3 | SO4 |
| GMV referring to health centres, but at a very informal level | | SO3 | SO3 | SO3 | SO4 |

Source: CRS/Malawi DAP Project Records.

* There were not enough scales for all villages from 2001-2003. As of 2004, each village has a weighing scale.

Activity a.⁵ Identification of new GMVs: From interviews, all villages are participating in this activity by selecting Growth Monitoring Volunteers (GMVs) in an open forum. When GM was taken over by SO3, it was recorded that 37 new GMVs needed to be recruited to fill in where others quit or died. Chikwawa reports that 90 percent of the original GMVs were retained. The community was sensitized on the qualities that a GMV should have, such as being able to read and write. An additional criterion was added under SO3 saying that the GMV should not also be the DRFV. Some villages do have the same person serving as GMV and DRFV without reporting problems.

Activity b. Review of training curricula: Reportedly, no changes were made from the curriculum that was developed under SO4 safety net GM trainings; the same training curriculum was used. During the final evaluation interviews, the GMVs had no technical suggestions for improving the training, and all the GMVs were able to respond correctly about identifying, treating, and taking appropriate action for the targeted disease states.

Activity c. Procurement of working materials: DAP provided the GMVs with the following materials to do their work: training handouts, forms for reporting, scales, one to two weighing bags, pens, pencil, ruler, MUAC (mid upper arm circumference) tapes, and a hardcover book for registration. During this distribution all villages that didn't have a scale received one. Some of the scales that were supplied under SO3 were damaged (three out of 41 scales in Chikwawa) and these were replaced.

Sustaining the GM system will depend upon the scales remaining functional. During the life of the project it was shown that when the GMVs do not have scales, the monthly weighing is frequently skipped. In each focus group discussion, replacement of the scales was reported as a difficult barrier to overcome. People had no idea where the scales were bought, they were just told that they were expensive and that they could last up to 30 years if handled with care.

Options for replacing scales need to be considered now, especially since some of the scales have already had to be replaced during the life of the project. CRS's Child Survival Project Officer (CSPO) can assist by researching other options that are available for locally-made scales. An internet search should be able to provide useful insight on options. Villages can move forward on their own by researching how local vendors that are currently using scales for sales (tobacco, meat, maize, etc.) are purchasing them. Villages can start a collection now in preparation for replacing the scales in the future. Another option that is not as sustainable is relying upon UNICEF, who reports that they have plenty of scales, but this option would require the MoH to collect and distribute the scales.

The other tools that were provided by DAP (registers, pens, weighing pants) can all be replaced with local materials. The project could have used more local resources, such as having a local tailor sew the weighing pants, and using exercise books instead of expensive registers, to support the use of local resources.

Activity d. Conduct GM and Community Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses (CIMCI) training of HSAs and GMVs: All the GMVs/HSAs were (re-)trained in the same five-day training that was given under SO3. The content of the training was based on the

⁸The lower case letters ("a") cross reference to the phased detailed implementation plan in Annex 3b: Actual Health and Nutrition Activities per IR.

Community Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses (C-IMCI) materials and included growth monitoring (weighing, recording, mid upper arm circumference); identification of malnutrition, malaria, diarrhoea, and dangers signs of serious illnesses; and management for each condition. The training report reviewed in Chikwawa showed that participants received theory and activities in a classroom setting along with practical application by going to the district hospital's Nutritional Rehabilitation Unit and Children's Ward. In village interviews, the volunteers responded correctly to all the technical questions posed and appear to be comfortable with the training they had received. The only request was for GMVs to receive a training manual instead of loose handouts.

Training participants received 450 Malawi Kwacha (mk) for supper and incidentals, plus bed and breakfast, lunch, and transport with DAP vehicles. These allowances seem to be high compared to the cost of meals in the district; a nutritious supper can be bought for less than 200mk. Most incidentals are provided with the hotel room or as part of the training package (soap, paper, pens, tea breaks, etc.). It appears that participants were receiving at least 200mk a day more than they really needed. To put this in perspective, most health surveillance workers make about 100mk a day, which makes the current level of CADECOM allowances an attractive income generating activity. A more appropriate allowance would be 250 mk.

One factor that will determine if the growth monitoring system continues is whether the project can help the MoH develop better systems for training new GMVs when the current GMVs quit/die. It appears that there has already been considerable turnover of GMVs, at least in Phalombe. Reportedly, these GMVs left because of moving to another location as a result of a job or marriage or due to death. It appears that the GMV positions were not refilled and retrained until DAP held another sensitization and training of GMVs. Village committees have the skills to recruit another person for the position, but what will be the system for training new GMVs? One idea would be to ensure that the outgoing GMV gives notice before they leave (unless they die) and be responsible for training the new GMV.

Activity e. Child weighing and referral: There are two GMVs in each village who work together. Every month the child is weighed in the village, children that need vaccines go to the nearest health centre for their weighing that month. The weighing process observed during the final evaluation was time consuming for the guardians and could easily be streamlined.

From interviews it appears that the villages all have a strong desire to continue the growth monitoring system. They reported that it is helpful in many ways.

- Parents don't have to get "ready" in nice clothes to go to the health centre.
- Weighing in the village is less stressful than the commotion at the health centre.
- Parents attend more frequently and children who are losing weight are identified sooner.
- Parents are referred for corn soy blend (CSB) if their children are losing weight.

One of the challenges raised in the 2004 final evaluation RRA was that some parents want their healthy children to be registered as "malnourished" children in order to receive corn soy blend (CSB) rations. This was not confirmed during the final evaluation, but has also been reported as a general issue in Malawi over the years.

- *Participation in child weighing:* Despite parental support for GM in the village, it is hard to determine the percentage of parents/guardians with CU5 who are participating each month. During the final evaluation RRA, Phalombe reported that 1,186 CU5 attended growth monitoring activities. There is no figure to compare this number to because the registers are not set up to include the total number of CU5 in the village that should be coming for weighing each month. Targets were set for monthly weights, which the final evaluation found in a draft agenda and notes for a meeting held in December 1999 sponsored by CADECOM and CRS as a workshop to orient participants to the DAP objectives.



Child participating in the Growth Monitoring Program under the CRS/Malawi DAP.

Comparing the 1999 targets to the data collected in the 2004 RRA provides very little insight into the impact of the project

(Table 3.f.). As can be seen by this table, it is impossible to compare the targets and achievements as the data is for two different age groups. It may be that the targets were not achieved or that the estimated targets were too high, depending on the number of the actual children in the age groups

Table 3.f. 1999 Estimated Targets for CU3 Compared with Final Evaluation RRA

| District | EPA | CU3 | Est. CU3 <80% | Est. Target | 2004 RRA report for CU5 |
|--------------|---------|---------------|---------------|--------------|-------------------------|
| Chikwawa | Kalombo | 9,405 | 2,822 | 2,256 | not reported |
| Phalombe | Mpinda | 5,383 | 1,615 | 1,292 | 1,186 CU5 |
| | Tamani | 6,601 | 1,980 | 1,584 | |
| Total | | 21,389 | 6,417 | 5,132 | ? |

Source: CRS/Malawi final evaluation RRA and 1999 targets

- *Referrals:* GMVs report that they are referring cases to the health centre (HC), DRF, safety net and agriculture/natural resource management (ag/NRM) activities depending on their assessment. During the final evaluation, it was unclear if people targeted for the referral to ag/NRM activities were actually improving their household food security. All the guardians in the final evaluation focus group discussions were able to list the foods that they learned a child should be eating, but everyone said access to these foods was a problem. They reported that the foods are too expensive and that they are not growing them (except for the staple foods and some legumes in the rainy season).

Access to food is a big issue. The 2004 RRA (CRS/Malawi 2004:35) reported a similar view:

“Even though respondents indicated that they will be able to sustain GM services, the evaluation team had the view that management of malnourished children would be a problem. From the responses during FGD, it was not clear how the communities would deal with children who were malnourished. Although the program emphasizes on utilization of locally available foods to children and referral to nearest health facility, the provision of free rations of CSB and corn seem to undermine these efforts.”

Activity f. Follow up on referred cases: During the final evaluation it was difficult to track referrals to the health centre as the forms are not being used, or if they are, the GMVs are not getting the bottom half of the form back stating that the person came to the HC. GMVs are not recording referrals in their registers.

Activity g. GMV monthly reporting to HSA and ADF reporting to CBHCS (Community Based Health Care Specialist): It was not clear during the final evaluation how consistently this activity was occurring. In one village the HSA had the GMV's register book, reportedly because he was reviewing the weights, so this could be their method of reporting. The HSA did not attend the final evaluation meeting. The ADFs appear to be reporting pretty regularly to the CADECOM CBHCS.

Strategies 3.1.2: Breastfeeding and 3.1.3: Nutritious Weaning Foods

These two strategies share the same activities, so they will be discussed together.

Activity a. Baseline survey on existing practices, focus group discussions (FGDs): The KPC collected baseline information related to breastfeeding, foods included in the diet, and frequency of meals. Breastfeeding was not included in the final evaluation interviews as very little has been done in the project on exclusive breastfeeding activities.

The KPC interviewed caregivers of 114 children under two years of age: 32 (28.1%) were less than six months, 25 (21.9%) were 7-11 months, and 57 (50%) were 12-23 months. In general the KPC concluded that there was diversified dietary intake by children over the 24-hour period. The final evaluation questions the conclusion made in the KPC that diets are truly diversified. Table 3.g. was adapted during the final evaluation from the KPC results to compare it to the Malawi Six Food Groups. It appears that the staple food group dominated the children's diets.

Table 3.g. KPC Dietary Intake Results Adapted to Reflect Malawi's Six Food Groups

| Malawi 6 Food Groups | Food / liquid in last 24 hours | N | % (95% CI) |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------|-------------------------|
| Breast milk | Breast milk | 107 | 93.9 (87.8-97.5) |
| Water | Plain water | 84 | 73.7 (64.6-81.5) |
| 1. Staple | Food from grains | 82 | 71.9 (62.7-79.9) |
| | Pumpkin, yam, carrot, red potatoes | 19 | 16.7 (10.3-24.8) |
| | Other root or tuber food | 21 | 18.4 (11.8-26.8) |
| 2. Vegetables 3. and Fruit* | Green leafy vegetables | 35 | 30.7 (22.4-40.0) |
| | Mango, papaya (vit A rich food) | 8 | 7.0 (3.1-13.4) |
| | Other fruits and vegetables | 23 | 20.2 (13.2-28.7) |
| | Fruit juice | 8 | 7.0 (3.1-13.4) |
| 4. Meat | Meat, poultry, fish, or eggs | 19 | 16.7 (10.3-24.8) |
| 5. Legumes (and Nuts) | Any legumes | 54 | 47.4 (37.9-56.9) |
| 6. Fats ** | Oil, fat or butter | 12 | 10.5 (5.6-17.7) |

*Evaluator notes: These should actually be 2 separate food groups

**Evaluator notes: Question about whether nuts were included in these figures.

Source: Final External Evaluator adapted from Malawi/CRS KPC 2003 p. 24

The 2003 KPC survey showed that 72 percent of the children took food from grain (this can be assumed to be primarily maize). This is the same percentage of children falling in the 7-23 month range, which may reflect an actual 100 percent of children 7-23 months of age consuming maize. Furthermore, fruits, vegetables, legumes and fats are at a disappointingly low level (only about half of all the children consumed them). It is unclear where groundnuts were included, or if oilseeds such as sunflower were included in the survey. These food groups are an important part of dietary diversification and can be introduced around six months of age; by one year it is recommended that these foods be included in the diet on a daily basis.

It appears that maize is still dominating the diet of the children that were interviewed. This is similar to the results found in the final evaluation interviews, especially in terms of lack of access to a variety of foods from all the food groups. The KPC should have been designed around the six food groups, answers should have been stratified by age group since different amounts of diversification are recommended at different ages, and, if feasible, amounts of food should have been estimated to get a picture of the balance in the diet.

Activity b. Develop/adopt behavioral change messages: This topic cuts across all the child health IRs and a separate staff member was hired at the CADECOM level just to focus on developing messages. The two CADECOM offices are to be working together along with CRS and staff from the DHOs to develop messages. (In Phalombe, the IEC Officer has been covering the duties of both the CBHCS and IEC for the past seven months.) The messages developed by CADECOM focus on four danger signs related to childhood illnesses that need immediate referral to the health centre. The messages were reportedly field tested, but no information on the process or impact of the messages was available for review.

An issue of concern is the time and money that has been devoted to developing messages related to feeding practices, diarrhoea, and malaria when the MoH's health education unit and other partners have already developed IEC materials for these topics. At the DIP meeting held in July 2003 (the final evaluation only has pages 13-16 of this meeting), the plan for IEC included a collection of IEC materials related to the proposed interventions. The CADECOM office (at least in Phalombe) had recently sourced posters on oral rehydration salts, but they were still being stored in the office. There were no posters seen in the communities during the final evaluation. It is not clear if a complete collection of IEC materials was ever done, but since no materials were seen in the village, the final evaluation assumes that it was not done to the level it should have been.

Another question is the choice of message delivery: posters and t-shirts. Specific questions about these delivery methods were raised regarding whether these methods were the most effective considering length of time to get messages to the community, the amount of money spent in per diems for meetings, and the impact at the community level? It was pointed out in interviews that t-shirts are a "moving message" and that they also serve as a reward for those who take up volunteer work. The plans for distributing the t-shirts include only about half the volunteers and extension workers, this may cause jealousy at the village level and should be reconsidered.

It took over a year for the t-shirts to get out into the community and the posters are still in draft stage. The first step should have been to collect all the materials that were already available and quickly get them out into the CBCCs and other areas frequently utilized in the village such as schools, maize mills, churches, and groceries.

Activity c. Design training modules/curricula for HSAs and GMVs: In addition to posters and t-shirts, the development of a manual is under way that focuses on improving message delivery. The manual needs to be adapted in some areas. For example improvements can be made by teaching six food groups instead of using the old three-food group model. The CRS CSPO will need to review and make recommendations to improve the manual.

Activity d. Conduct training of HSAs and GMVs: This has not taken place yet and is awaiting the finalization of the training manual.

Activity e. IEC on health and nutrition in children under five (CU5): In both districts, the ADFs, GMVs and HSAs organized their village-level health education programs based on training they received in growth monitoring and C-IMCI. T-shirts and posters are under development as described previously. It is not clear how often IEC activities are taking place, nor the quality of the IEC messages currently being used. The final evaluation probed into what the caregivers of CU5 are learning about health and nutrition. These caregivers were able to list care practices such as sanitation around the home, hygiene, and feeding patterns. When probing further into if these practices were followed, some said yes, although volunteers reported that not everyone followed the advice that they were giving. Parents reported that it was difficult to follow the advice on feeding patterns because the foods they were told to feed their children were not available in the village or were too expensive to purchase.

IEC messages need to be relevant to what the community can provide. Other activities, such as gardening or income generating activities, need to be strengthened to help people have access to foods that they are learning about in the messages.

Activity g.⁶ Conduct follow up training: Will take place under no-cost extension.

Activity h. Conduct evaluation: This is the mid-term evaluation. The M&E indicator spreadsheet highlights that some of the data should be collected during an annual evaluation, but these data were not collected during the RRA. There are plans, detailed in the activity matrix and the planned health indicators table (see Annex 3.b and 3.d respectively), to conduct more detailed evaluations every three years, but the project had not yet been running for three years at the time of this evaluation.

B.2. IR 3.2: Improved Recognition and Management of Sick Children Focusing on Danger Signs of Serious Illness, Diarrhoeal Disease and Malaria

The community is very supportive of maintaining the Drug Revolving Funds (DRFs) and seems motivated to do whatever they can do to make the system work. This activity is not ready to run on its own and will need to be monitored to provide technical assistance to the DRFVs, HSAs and VHC in order to keep the drug supply coming and to evaluate the disease-related data to improve the program over time. Under the no-cost extension, this support can be provided by CADECOM staff to the DHO staff; once the extension funding stops, the DHO will need to be prepared to provide technical assistance on their own.

⁶Activity f was apparently deleted since it was not in the phased DIP. See Annex 3.b.

B.2.1. Assessment of IR 3.2

This IR has two strategies (Annex 3.b), one is to establish DRFs and the other is to build the capacity of GMV and HSAs to recognize and take appropriate action for the target disease (these are the same activities previously discussed under IR 3.1).

Strategy 3.2.1: Establish DRF and Build Capacity of DRFVs and VHCs to Manage

Activity a. Procurement of DRF materials: pens, paper, etc: All individuals interviewed felt that these materials were appropriate and similar materials could be replaced locally.

Activity b. Procurement and provision of drugs and oral rehydration salts (ORS): It was decided that the drugs provided by the DAP would focus only on malaria (Fansidar, paracetamol) and ORS (oral rehydration salts). Drugs and storage boxes were purchased by CRS and given to CADECOM to give to the communities. Project planners anticipated the amount of drug that might be needed, attempting to give a large enough supply to meet estimated demand, without providing so much that doses expire before use. When the drugs arrived, the boxes that were made to hold them were too small; larger boxes are being built and will be distributed when completed.

A supply chain for the drugs is currently being developed in Chikwawa under which the DRFV will purchase drugs from the local Christian Association of Malawi Hospital (CHAM) at wholesale prices. In Phalombe, drugs can be purchased commercially through McConnell's, although these drugs are more expensive than through the CHAM system.

During the final evaluation, communities in Chikwawa didn't know how they were going to refill their supplies, but communities in Phalombe felt that they would be able to do so. A concern that was raised at the DHO was the presence of the Bakili Muluzi Health Initiative, which is providing free drugs in some of the same target areas through the same HSAs. This is making it difficult for DRFs to work in those areas.

Since no one had needed to refill their supplies at the time of the evaluation, it was too early to determine if the initial supply of drugs was appropriate, or if the DRFVs will be able to purchase their next supply of drugs, set the price at the correct level, and sustain the process in the long-run.

A concern of the DAP-supported DRFs is that the diseases that the volunteers are trained to diagnose and treat are not the same as those outlined in the MoH's training manual that was developed in 1998. This government manual covers malaria, diarrhoea, eye infections, acute respiratory infection and common skin conditions; in the final evaluation the villages reported all of these ailments as problems to which they would like solutions.⁷ From the final evaluation focus group discussions, there is evidence that communities want, and possibly need, the additional drugs for the conditions that are included in the MoH's DRF manual. Communities commonly listed eye infections, respiratory infections and skin conditions as problems. Further analysis should be conducted with the DHO to identify the common diseases in the DAP target areas. If CRS/CADECOM is unable or unwilling to expand their Drug Revolving Fund Program, it would be better to term their volunteers as something other

⁷ Several of the diseases may be related to opportunistic infections as a result of HIV infection (skin problems were especially frequently reported).

than DRFs, using a term such as community health volunteers.

Activity c. Train DRFVs on management of DRFs: The DRFs were selected by the villages using stronger criteria for selection than is used for other volunteer positions. It was reported that three potential candidates were selected from each village and then, after an examination, two DRFVs were chosen. The staff reported that ideally the DRFV should run under a committee, but it would be too expensive to train the Village Health Committee (VHC), so the VHCs were only sensitized for a day. Each village has made a constitution to guide the program. In March 2004 CADECOM and MoH visited the German Development Agency (GTZ) in Mulanje to learn about their DRF in order to learn lessons before beginning their own.

In April and May 2004 CADECOM and MoH provided a four-day training for 163 DRFVs based on the MoH's DRF training manual for health workers. Also included in training and sensitization were the HSAs, ADFs and VHCs.

It is unclear how a new DRFV will be trained if the current DRFV quits or dies. While this is similar to the problem of retraining the Growth Monitoring Volunteers (GMV) it is even more serious since the DRFV is responsible for a larger budget and treats medical issues that require correct training. The CBHCS felt that the DHO would be able to provide this training to DRFVs in the future.

Activity d. Establish and implement DRFs: Most of the DRFs started in mid-April 2004 (about three months prior to the final evaluation). A total of 62 DRF sites were established.

- In Chikwawa each village has a DRF (41 sites) and each DRF site is covered by two DRFVs (82 DRFVs total for 41 revolving fund sites).
- In Phalombe, several villages share a single DRF (21 sites) with each site covered by 2-4 DRFVs (81 DRFVs for 21 sites). Phalombe chose this set up because of the size of the villages and their proximity to a health centre. They felt that drugs would expire if every village had its own DRF.

During the final evaluation's RRA and external evaluation, villages reported that they are using the DRF when they are sick. There was a general feeling from all those interviewed that the drugs were of better quality than those that are (or were) available from the groceries. Communities were happy with the access, especially that drugs are available at any time day or night and that it is much more convenient than travelling to a health centre or grocery. Some interviews reported that the drugs are expensive, and one village said they need to do some more sensitization about how the price of the drugs are set. Despite these concerns, overall people seemed to be happy with the DRF prices as compared to other options.

The final evaluation team probed deeper into the DRF registers and into the DRFV's knowledge about each of the diseases than seemed to occur in the RRA. The level of knowledge was excellent for each of the eight DRFVs interviewed (granted this is a small sample out of 163 DRFVs, but interviews with extension workers and the community also provided evidence of good knowledge of the diseases begin targeted in the DRF).

Activity e. HSAs and ADFs follow up on DRF management: In all the villages interviewed, people seem to follow the protocol of drug management. For instance, they are not allowed to get drugs without paying and they ensure that there is periodic stock-taking of drugs.

Activity f. DRFVs identify cases and refer to health centres: DRFVs all reported making referrals to the health centre for diseases that they were unable to treat, and also receiving referrals from the health centre when drugs there were out of stock. None of these referrals were recorded.

B.3. IR 3.3: Improved Accessibility and Usage of Insecticide Treated Nets (ITNs) for Malaria Prevention in Children Under Five Years Old

The ITN component had just started at the time the final evaluation was being conducted.

B.3.1. Assessment of IR 3.3: ITNs

Strategy 3.3.1: Increase Number of ITN Distribution Points

Activity a. Establishment of ITN distribution points: A total of 40 ITN distribution sites were established; 20 in Phalombe and 20 in Chikwawa. Final evaluation interviews indicated no issues related to the distribution sites.

Activity b. Procurement and provision of ITNs in the distribution points. Procurement of the ITNs was originally planned through Population Services International (PSI), but PSI was having their own supply problems. CRS ended up having to purchase ITNs through Tanzania at a price higher than budgeted. A total of 2,150 and 2,000 ITNs were distributed in Phalombe and Chikwawa, respectively. Not all of the ITNs were delivered to the village distribution points; some of them remained in storage to be used to refill distribution points as needed.

Activity c. Develop a mechanism for distributing ITNs: This is still in progress.

Activity d. Train GMVs, VHCs and HSAs: This training was done at the same time as the DRF training (see Strategy 3.2.1, Activity c.).

Activity e. Monitor usage of ITNs: The KPC found that caregivers reported only four percent of CU5 were using an ITN the night preceding the survey. The RRA found that a major challenge affecting the promotion of ITNs in the community is that the selling price is 100mk, compared to the MoH ITNs priced at 50mk. It was pointed out that the nets being promoted in the DAP program are of better quality than those of the other brand and it was expected that more nets would be bought from the ITN Volunteers during rainy season, which coincides with the breeding season for mosquitoes.

The health evaluator wasn't sure that this logic would prove true, as financial resources are generally less available during the rainy season. Few people (of any age) reported buying and/or actually using mosquito nets during the final evaluation focus group interviews. Most villagers reported that if an ITN was in the house, that the woman and children would sleep under it.

Unfortunately, there wasn't enough data collected on the percentage of households who have the appropriate number of nets for the size of their household. One way to see if ITNs are actually being used is to monitor malaria cases in the DRFV registers to see if cases in the village are going up or down.

Activity f. Develop IEC messages on use of ITNs: According to the KPC, knowledge of causes of malaria was fair (53%) and although 17.5 percent reported having ITNs, very few (only 6%) knew that ITNs are used to prevent malaria. One of the IEC materials being developed is a poster showing a woman and child using an ITN. It will be interesting to see if the number of cases of malaria decreases in this demographic group compared to the number of cases in adult males.

C. Project Organization and Processes (Monitoring and Evaluation)⁸

The original indicators (Annex 3.d) that were proposed to measure the health and nutrition activities were no longer appropriate at the time the health component was implemented. In 2003 the indicators were reviewed and new indicators were proposed to match the new health IRs and activities (see Annex 3.e for the proposed indicators). Even the revised 2003 indicators have problems, especially the indicators for quarterly and monthly review, but also some of the proposed annual indicators.

At this juncture in the project (the start of the no-cost extension for health), CRS should facilitate a complete joint review of all the health indicators by the HSAs and CADECOM staff, with CRS guidance, to ensure that the data is based on the activities taking place, that they are identifying increases or decreases in malnutrition and diseases, and that they match the reporting formats being used by the extension workers.

It is out of the scope of this evaluation to go into each indicator in detail, but the following assessment will point out some of the main discrepancies with the proposed indicators and the actual information that is being collected.

C.1. Assessment of the IR 3.1 Indicators

Indicators were developed for each strategy under IR 3.1 (Malnutrition), but only quarterly indicators will be reviewed, which are the indicators for Strategy 3.1.1: Growth Monitoring. The following are the impact indicators that were created for growth monitoring.

- Percentage of mothers with CU2 who went to growth monitoring consistently in the last four months.
- Percentage of GMVs who recognize bilateral oedema and wasting as severe malnutrition.
- Percentage of mothers with CU2 who, when referred by GMV, go to health centre.

These indicators are supposed to be collected quarterly by the HSAs. In addition to these three indicators, there are ten activity indicators that were developed (see Annex 3.e). It isn't clear why, how, or whether some of these activity indicators are being collected or if they even *could* be collected.

The first indicator attempts to capture participation of the CU2. There are two main issues with this indicator. First, the GM activities are directed at CU5, not just CU2, and the GMV registration books lump all the children together. GMVs do have a monthly tally sheet to

⁸ One of the key activities of a mid-term is to critique the indicators being used to monitor progress toward the achievement of objectives and IRs and the prospects for attaining the original targets for specific indicators. For this reason the assessment of project processes and organization focuses on the project's indicators.

Table 3.h. Current GM Monthly Tally Sheet, CADECOM, Chikwawa

| Month / year: | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Name of village: | | | | | |
| Status: | Month of child | | | | |
| | 1-11 | 12-23 | 24-36 | 37-48 | 49-59 |
| Children growing well | | | | | |
| Children losing weight | | | | | |
| Children receiving vitamin A | | | | | |
| Children referred to the hospital | | | | | |
| Total | | | | | |

Source: CADECOM Chikwawa Project Records.

record the numbers of children losing and gaining, which is divided by age, but the final evaluation was not able to locate any completed tally sheets. At this point, to re-tally the existing data to reflect children under two versus five years of age would be a time consuming process.

Secondly, the GMVs' registration books are not set up with a target of the number of children that should be coming for monthly weights. Each of the GMV registers reviewed during the final evaluation showed a number of gaps where children missed the monthly weighing, but there was not time during the final evaluation to count all the gaps for each child.

To get an accurate picture of the percentage of CU5 attending GM sessions, a census of CU5 could be taken annually and this information could be updated monthly to subtract deaths and increases in age (children who are over five years) and to add births. This census would then serve as the basis for determining the percentage of CU5 attending GM sessions, the percentage of children in the village who are malnourished, and the number of deaths and births.

Table 3.i. Proposed Changes to CRS/Malawi DAP Growth Monitoring Monthly Tally Sheet

| Recommended Indicators: | Data needed from monthly GM tally sheets |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| % CU5 attending monthly weighing | # CU5 attending weighing # CU5 in the village |
| % CU5 going to the HC when referred | # CU5 going to HC when referred # CU5 referred to HC # CU5 receiving follow up from GMV |

Source: Final External Evaluator, 2004

Another issue with the current registers is that it is very difficult to see which children are gaining weight and which are losing weight and require follow up. The GMVs report that they know which children are gaining and which are losing, but if that GMV leaves the position, the next person would have a difficult time seeing who needs attention. It would be helpful to have the registers follow a simple system of symbols (arrow up for growing well, horizontal line for not gaining, and an arrow down for losing weight) to quickly flag those children that are not doing well.

C.2. Assessment of IR 3.2 Indicators

It was proposed that HSAs would do quarterly surveys to collect the following information related to caretakers responding to diseases.

- Percentage of caretakers who give more than usual fluids to a CU5 if they are ill.
- Percentage of caretakers who give more than usual food to a child over six months if they are ill.
- Percentage of caretakers who give more than usual breast milk to a child if they are ill.

None of this data is currently being collected, but since most of the DRF systems are only four months old, it may be too early in the implementation cycle. Doing a survey every quarter may be beyond the scope of the HSA job description. These requirements need to be reviewed carefully with HSAs to find a solution.

There are 17 activity indicators. Some of these indicators seem repetitive and it is not clear how the data is actually being used.

Data is missing related to the number and type of diseases that are being seen in the village. This data is important to show if diseases are increasing or decreasing in the villages and which demographic groups are experiencing the disease (children, women, men, elderly, etc.). This data would help guide the IEC messages and extension activities needed to reduce disease.

C.3. Assessment of IR 3.3 Indicators

Indicators for ITNs include:

- Percentage of caretakers with CU5 who are able to specify mosquito bites as the way malaria is transmitted to humans;
- Percentage of caretakers who have ITNs;
- Number of distribution points available in the section; and
- Percentage of CU5 who sleep under insecticide treated nets.

The first three indicators seem appropriate, although the percentage of caretakers who have ITNs is not yet being collected. The number sold is recorded, but this should be compared to the village population or household to check the percentage of the population or households that have nets. Every household should have enough for all members of the household to sleep under either together or individually.

The fourth indicator, the percentage of CU5 sleeping under ITNs, will be difficult to collect. A better indicator would be the number of CU5 contracting malaria. The DRFVs should specifically be looking for the ages and sex of those who are contracting malaria and then through follow ups with the ITN Volunteers, identify the issue (e.g., no ITN; owning an ITN but not using it; certain members of the family using an ITN and others not; use of an ITN but with holes; only using an ITN in the rainy season; and other factors like excessive standing water; etc.).

There are also 10 activity indicators that need to be reviewed for how the collected information is going to be used. Many of the activity indicators are related to ITN supply, training for extension workers, and information, education, and training (IEC). The ITN Volunteers are also recording how many nets they sell and to whom they are sold.

D. Lessons Learned

This section summarizes all the key recommendations for the health and nutrition component.

Strategy

The health component has made excellent progress in the short time that activities have been underway. The no-cost extension will allow staff to monitor and improve the systems to assist the Ministry of Health in creating sustainable programmes. The no-cost extension is a great opportunity to develop a health intervention strategy that will be more realistically linked to the Ministry of Health local structures, as the DAP-funded ADFs will no longer be doing the work of the MoH HSAs. Improvements to the strategy should include:

- (1) *Safe water access:* Under the no-cost extension, CRS/CADECOM should reassess the availability of water in the catchment areas and address shortfalls according to the approved DAP.
- (2) *Staffing - current and future:* (1) Turnover in staff should be treated with concern and hiring procedures and HRM issues should be reviewed regularly to assure that the organization is not at fault for turnover. (2) CRS and CADECOM need to meet with the MoH and DHO immediately to come up with a handover to HSAs since the HSAs will be solely responsible for supporting the GM, DRF and ITN activities under the no-cost extension. (3) It is strongly recommended not to provide the HSAs with additional allowances to do their work and that CRS/Malawi and CADECOM work with the resources available to the DHO and HSAs when designing the project so that the work can continue after the project phases out.
- (3) *Collaboration in planning:* Include government staff earlier in the planning stages for each activity. This builds the capacity of government staff in planning and helps to ensure that the planned activities can continue after DAP support is gone.
- (4) *Documentation at the CRS:* The filing system needs to be improved to easily trace the life of each project in readiness for orientation of new staff members and external evaluations.

IR 3.1: Improved Recognition of Management of Malnutrition in Children Under Five (CU5)

The growth monitoring activities are excellent and offer strong opportunities for having a major impact on improving the health of children when combined with the other components. Vulnerable children are quickly being identified and linked to appropriate interventions for improving their weight in the short and long-term. As currently configured however, it is unlikely that these activities can be sustained in the long run.

- (5) *Training:* (1) Participants should receive a bound manual of all handouts. (2) The level of allowances should not be so high that it is the motivating factor for participants to attend or to want additional training. Any allowance should be set at a level that covers the intended expense (i.e. supper currently costs less than 200mk at the district level).
- (6) *Refilling GMV vacancies:* A system needs to be created to train new GMVs to replace those who quit. This could be done by the VHC by requiring out-going GMVs to train the new GMV, with support from the HSA, the second GMV and the DRFVs. The relationship between the HSAs and GMVs needs to be strengthened so that this can happen.
- (7) *Replacing damaged scales:* (1) CADECOM/CRS should look for other low

technology scale options that are more appropriate and, ideally, something that the villages can make themselves. (2) Villages can start planning on their own by talking with vendors in the village who are accessing scales (for selling meat, tobacco, maize, etc.) in order to learn how to access scales and how much they cost. Communities can start contributing funds for replacing the scale in the future; one community is already doing this. (3) DHOs can follow channels to request scales through UNICEF, who report that they have plenty in stock at the moment.

- (8) *Local resource materials:* All projects should focus on utilizing local resources, instead of purchasing items from out of the area or providing them for free. For example, weighing pants can be made by local tailors; or exercise books can be used for recording weights, instead of expensive hard-cover registers; or locally made bags can be used to protect and carry the scales.
- (9) *GM weighing days:* A more efficient process of weighing, recording and counselling CU5 should be developed to allow guardians to move through the process quickly.
- (10) *Referrals:* These should be recorded by GMVs along with follow up notes on progress of the child in terms of health or food security.
- (11) *IEC:* If the no-cost extension is granted: (1) Collect and utilize IEC materials already developed on malaria, diarrhoea, breastfeeding and young child feeding and distribute to the communities; (2) Re-consider the plans for distributing t-shirts to include all the volunteers in the community; (3) Revise the message delivery training manual to reflect the 6 food groups; and (4) IEC messages related to diet need to be relevant to what the community can provide, and the other activities, such as gardening or income generating activities, need to be strengthened to help people have access to foods that they are learning about in the messages.

IR 3.2: Improved Recognition & Management of Sick Children Focusing on Danger Signs of Serious Illness, Diarrheal Disease and Malaria

DRF activities implemented in the last four months have laid the ground for a sustainable community based system for acquiring and managing basic drugs. This activity combined with other components (water) offers the opportunity to have a major impact on reducing diseases that are reducing children's growth and well being (as monitored by the growth monitoring program), and reducing productivity of adults. Sustainability will be increased if technical support is extended and the following measures are taken:

- (12) *Using the title DRF:* (1) Under the no-cost extension, the CADECOMs should work with the DHO to analyze the common illnesses seen in the target area. If the illnesses can be treated in the village, DAP should include treatments for the other diseases in the DRF manual and re-train all the DRFVs. If DAP does not include the drugs included in the MoH DRF manual, the current DRFs should be given a different title. (2) DRFs should keep a register of ailments that are occurring in the village that they are unable to treat; this information would help to support the case of including additional drugs.
- (13) *Restocking supplies:* Under the no-cost extensions, the CADECOMs should assist the MoH staff in monitoring the DRFs; problem-solving as issues arise, especially in terms of drug supplies; assuring that DRFVs are purchasing the right amount of drugs; and determining the appropriate prices to cover the costs of transport and any other hidden costs. Civic education about the DRF should be strengthened.
- (14) *Refilling DRFV vacancies:* A system needs to be created to train new DRFVs to replace those who quit. This could be done by the VHC requiring out-going DRFVs to train the new DRFV, along with support from the HSA and the second DRFV.

The relationship between the HSAs and DRFVs needs to be strengthened so that this can happen.

- (15) *Referrals*: These should be recorded and followed-up on by the GMVs and DRFVs.

IR 3.3: Improved Accessibility and Usage of Insecticide Treated Nets (ITNs) for Malaria Prevention in Children Under Five Years Old

ITN activities are promising and offer the opportunity to reduce malaria even though community understanding of this activity has just begun. The impact would be strengthened if more support were provided under the extension. The issue of supply (through government channels from UNICEF) would be addressed more quickly if there were greater evidence (quantitative) of the link between these activities and reduced incidence of malaria.

- (16) *ITN supplies*: Records show that supply has been a problem through Population Services International (PSI). An alternate plan needs to be developed or the program will not sustain itself. Finding a solution will be difficult, but with the no-cost extension there is more time to address this.
- (17) *ITN usage*: This needs to be linked to the number of malaria cases in the village to see if the intervention is successful.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The successful implementation of a community-based health M&E system is critical to the sustainability of all elements of the program. At present, the usefulness of the indicators is questionable. All of the indicators need a thorough review.

- (18) *Review and improve health indicators*: In the no-cost extension, the indicators should be reviewed by HSAs and CADECOM staff, with CRS guidance, to assure that data are based on the activities taking place, that they are identifying increases or decreases in malnutrition and diseases, and that they match the reporting formats being used by the extension workers.
- (19) *GMV data collection*: (1) The GM records should indicate the number of CU5 in the village in order to establish the target number of CU5 that should be coming monthly. Data collected at the beginning of each year on the number of CU5, could be updated quarterly for new births and deaths. (2) A system of using symbols to indicate children gaining and losing or maintaining weight should be considered (e.g., arrow up = gaining; arrow down = losing; horizontal line = not gaining).
- (20) *Recording GMV follow-ups*: Registration books should track follow-up provided and record if the family is following the advice and improving.
- (21) *DRF registers*: Data is missing related to the number and type of diseases that are being seen in the village. Data should be compiled to indicate which demographic groups are contracting diseases (children, women, men, elderly, etc.) and then used to guide the IEC messages and extension activities needed to reduce disease.
- (22) *ITN impact*: (1) The number of ITNs sold needs to be compared to the village population or household to calculate the percentage of the population or households that have nets. Every household should have enough for all members of the household to sleep under either shared or individually. (2) DRF information should track who is contracting malaria. The DRFVs should specifically be looking for the ages and sex of those who are contracting malaria and then, through follow ups with the ITN Volunteers, identify the issue (e.g., no ITN; owning an ITN but not using it;

certain members of the family using an ITN and others not; use of an ITN but with holes; only using an ITN in the rainy season; and other factors like excessive standing water).

Chapter Four
SUB-GOAL THREE: TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO FOOD
Strategic Objective Four: Improved Safety Net for Destitute Children

In the approved Development Assistance Program (DAP) all the safety net activities fall under a sub-goal title of “Improved access to food” with the implicit goal of helping the most impoverished food insecure households become food and nutrition secure in the long-term. Section A reviews the strategies and activities used to achieve results. This is followed in Section B by an assessment of the project’s achievements and based on an analysis of: (a) the project’s M&E quantitative data; and (b) other information from the final evaluation RRA, a critical review of project reports and special studies, the final evaluation focus group discussions and review of the village registration books. Section C summarizes the team’s evaluation of the project organization and processes that were used to execute the safety net activities. Section D describes key challenges for sustainability. Section E describes major lessons learned.

A. Strategy and Activities

The project strategy for this sub-objective focuses on helping vulnerable households (especially those affected by HIV/AIDS). These households are defined as those fostering orphans, caring for a chronically ill person(s), and/or having malnourished children under the age of five years. Vulnerable households are helped to “build the assets” that they need to reduce their dependency on food aid to satisfy basic needs.

The three IRs for Strategic Objective Four (SO4) are:

- IR 4.1: Increased adoption of childcare practices by orphan guardians/families;
- IR 4.2: Increased community participation in providing for destitute children and other vulnerable groups; and
- IR 4.3: Increased self-reliance of older orphans (16 - 18 years).

An overview and timeline of all the IRs, strategies, and activities is in Annex 4.b.

The two strategies for achieving IR 4.1 focused on

- Distributing food supplements to qualifying households; and
- Responding to food needs of severely malnourished, surviving single parents, and other incapacitated HIV/AIDS patients.

To achieve this IR, project staff facilitated villages’ organizing Orphan Care Committees (OCCs) to select beneficiary households and to monitor the program.

The three strategies under IR 4.2 were designed to build the long-term care of children and to improve food security by:

- Establishing and supporting Community Based Childcare Centres (CBCCs) for children under five years of age with the aim of allowing parents and guardians to take care of household chores and take part in agriculture and natural resource management (ag/NRM) activities introduced by the project;
- Linking safety net households to health (SO3) activities by encouraging safety net participants to attend growth monitoring activities to learn about child care practices

and to utilize the Drug Revolving Funds (DRFs) and Insecticide Treated Nets (ITNs) to prevent and to quickly treat diseases; and

- Linking safety net households to agriculture and natural resource (SO1 and SO2) management in order to improve food security. Throughout the life of the programme, the programme-hired Agricultural Development Facilitators (ADFs) and provided trainings in all the agriculture activities and the Department of Fisheries conducted training in fish farming. Safety net beneficiaries were encouraged to take part, and messages related to improving agricultural production were disseminated during food distributions. In addition to education, ADFs arranged demonstration gardens during the first two years of the programme. They aimed to have at least 50 percent of the demonstrations implemented by safety net beneficiaries.

The three activities under IR 4.3 focused on providing youth with education and technical skills to increase their chances of having improved livelihoods as they become independent adults by:

- Promotion of school attendance through campaigns that focused on encouraging school-age orphans and vulnerable children (OVCs) to attend school;
- Promotion of peer education among youths through establishment of youth clubs to advocate for skills/income generating activities, school attendance, health, and agriculture activities; and
- Provision of support to community-based apprenticeship programs to instil skills in older orphans so that they have opportunities in a trade and broad-based skills to enhance their livelihoods.

B. Achievement of Project Goals and Objectives

B.1. IR 4.1: Increased Adoption of Childcare Practices by Orphan guardians and Families

All the activities under IR 4.1 began with the project's establishment of Orphan Care Committees (OCCs) in the targeted villages (see Box 4.a). CRS and CADECOM first sensitized the villages on the food aid activities. Criteria were then developed with the villages and used by the OCCs for selecting food insecure households and graduating the households when their situation improved (see Boxes 4.b. and 4.c.). In addition to the OCCs, during the first year of food distributions, the villages organized Centre Distribution Committees. The role of the Centre Distribution Committees was to provide independent oversight of the food distribution process in order to ensure that the correct households received the appropriate rations (see Annex 4.e for an overview of the food distribution process). By the second year of food distribution, the food delivery system was working well and the Centre Distribution Committees were no longer needed.

Box 4.a. Roles of the OCCs

- Identification of eligible food beneficiaries in conjunction with Growth Monitoring Volunteers;
- Follow up on safety net participants to ensure proper use of the food rations;
- Initiate activities to support OVCs, such as communal gardens, community based childcare centres, and skills development;
- Plan, monitor, and evaluate safety net activities in conjunction with their respective communities;
- Prepare monitoring documents, such as registration books, distribution ledgers;
- Networking with other stakeholders of OVCs.

The final evaluation found that the first two selection criteria (e.g., 1 and 2 in Box 4.b) related to providing corn soy blend (CSB) for malnutrition in CU5 and chronically ill adults is clear at the village level (Box 4.b). Qualifying for food rations based on the food

Box 4.b. Final Selection Criteria & Ration* Amounts

- (1) Households with malnourished children under five years of age (15 kg Corn Soy Blend)
- (2) Households with unproductive chronically ill adults (9 kg Corn Soy Blend)
- (3) If a household does not meet criteria 1 & 2 they can still qualify by two of the following (for 50kg maize):
 - Household is caring for orphans
 - Does piece work all year round, including when food is available
 - Food harvested lasts only two or four months
 - Has food to eat two meals a day for a period of four months per year
 - And (for Chikwawa only) does not keep/own livestock (e.g. goats, pigs and cattle)

* **ONE** ration per household per criteria category

insecurity criteria (criteria [3], Box 4.b) is not clear and is dependent upon how the OCC defines “food” and a “meal.” In Malawi “staple food” and “meal” refers to *nsima* made from maize flour. The OCC registers did not record the amounts of food stocks in the beneficiary households, but from interviews it seems that maize was the primary reference for determining if a household was “food secure” and eligible for the DAP safety net programme. In the future, the Malawi Food Guide should be the basis for determining food insecurity, specifically legumes/nuts, fruits, animal food, oils/fats, and staples (vegetables provide little energy and are omitted here).

Although the eligibility criteria were published, the community and staff often confused food security criteria (i.e. whether or not a household had sufficient food) with safety net criteria (Box 4.b), which are broader so that they embraced both food insecurity as well as responsibility for rearing orphans. Although rearing orphans was only one criterion, many villagers and staff and even the CRS and CADECOM project¹ documents continued to focus on this as the main target.

During the focus group discussions, the respondents stated that the food provided for each criteria category is not enough to meet the needs of all the members of the household especially in households with elderly guardians, guardians caring for orphans, and those with chronically ill family members. In one of the focus group discussions, the respondents felt that they needed 20kg of maize flour/person/month and 25kg of CSB /child/month. The interviewers probed into the reasons for the proposed increase in rations and found that the local perception of maize being the only “staple food” and the only true “meal” was causing households to eat maize and CSB three times a day. To address this, the evaluation team feels that the ration should be changed to another appropriate energy food such as sorghum, millet, dried roots and fruits, groundnuts, pigeon pea, cowpea, or sunflower seeds. In addition, more civic education about dietary diversification should have been encouraged. Finally, it is necessary for future

Box 4.c. Graduation Criteria

- (1) *CSB for households with malnourished CU5* – graduate after 6 months. Assessments are conducted quarterly based on growth monitoring progress.
- (2) *CSB for households with chronically ill* – voluntary graduation when illness reduced.
- (3) *Maize for food insecurity* – graduation takes place at harvest time (May) along with quarterly assessments for household food security. Reconsideration into the program is done only on condition that a natural calamity affecting a wider section of the community occurred that year. OCC also reconsiders beneficiaries that had unavoidable circumstances occur that made participation in their own food production impossible.

¹ The following documents state that “orphans” are the target for maize:

* 2004 Safety Net Progress Review, page 2: target for maize is ‘orphan headed households, orphan guardians, and single parent households.

* 2003 CSR4, page 9: “primary purpose is for... households fostering orphans..”

* 2002 CSR4, page 10: “Orphans guardians/families of all registered orphans of age 0-18 years are eligible to receive a bag of 50kg of maize per month...”

* 2002 Midterm Review, page 37 and 40

projects to consider altering the amounts of food provided to each criteria category, although transparency in these decisions would be needed.

B.1.1. Indicator 4.1: Number of Children Under Five Years (CU5) Provided with Corn Soy Blend (CSB) Rations through Guardian Families

M&E Quantitative Data

In the official M&E data, every malnourished CU5 in the household is counted, but only one CSB ration was provided per household. As a result, some of the malnourished children were sharing with other malnourished and healthy children in the household. To address this, the food ration was increased from 9kg to 15 kg after the first year of DAP implementation. According to the Table 4.a, the Life of Activity (LOA) target for FY04 was 4,500 CU5 and the achievement was 5,415 CU5, representing a 120% of the target. The degree of sharing with other children, however, raises a number of issues about the final “impact” of this activity.

Table 4.a. Number of Malnourished CU5 in the Safety Net Households Over the Life of the CRS/Malawi DAP

| Impact area | Household receiving maize and/or CSB | | | Number of malnourished CU5 | | | | | | |
|---------------|--------------------------------------|------|-------------|----------------------------|-----|-------------|--------------------------|------|-------------|---------------|
| | MHH | FHH | Total h/h | 1-5yrs orphan | | | 1-5 yrs other vulnerable | | | All CU5 Total |
| | | | | M | F | Total | M | F | Total | |
| Phalombe | 2385 | 1450 | 3835 | 339 | 292 | 629 | 938 | 905 | 1843 | 2474 |
| Chikwawa | 1695 | 1641 | 3336 | 472 | 602 | 1074 | 907 | 960 | 1867 | 2941 |
| Totals | 4080 | 3091 | 7171 | 811 | 894 | 1703 | 1845 | 1865 | 3710 | 5415 |

Source: adapted from CRS/CADECOM final RRA, draft August 2004. p. 40

Information from Other Sources

The beneficiaries encountered during the final evaluation and RRA interviews reported that CSB rations contributed to reduced malnutrition and improved health status of their children, and that as a result their children were not as prone to diseases. They also stated that it enabled households to concentrate on household food production and development activities other than looking for “piece work” to buy food for their children. Unfortunately, the linkage between the food safety net and these wider impacts was not always easy to show quantitatively. There are two reasons for this.

The first is that very little documentation of growth monitoring could be found under the years the project was running under safety net. During the final evaluation, staff and villages reported that growth monitoring had a positive impact on CSB distribution in that malnourished children could be identified quickly and addressed by the communities. In the future growth monitoring should be established before (or at the same time as) food distribution begins.

The second was that the existing mechanism for data collection was not set up in a way that facilitated the project’s understanding of who graduated and for what reasons (Table 4.b). This information shows that almost 45 percent of the 5,415 children who were in households that received CSB were able to graduate during the life of the project. It does not show how many households graduated and no longer required CSB assistance, therefore it cannot be determined if some households continue to receive CSB because of second or third

malnourished CU5.

The data also fails to explain why the 2,424 children graduated from the CSB program. Did the household learn better child feeding or care practices? Did the household learn better agricultural practices to improve their food and nutrition security? Was the child still malnourished but simply no longer within the under-five age group? Staff report that almost all the children graduate from improvement, not exceeding the age range; unfortunately this major impact cannot be deduced from the quantitative data that was collected. The same data show 3,009 children have not graduated² but there is no indication why. Have they been on CSB assistance long-term? If so, why?

Table 4.b. Number of CU5 Graduating from CSB Over the Life of the CRS/Malawi DAP

| District | 1-5 yrs orphans | | | 1-5 yrs other vulnerable | | | All CU5 Total |
|-------------------|-----------------|-----|-------|--------------------------|-----|-------|------------------|
| | M | F | Total | M | F | Total | |
| Phalombe | 217 | 196 | 413 | 516 | 483 | 999 | 1412 |
| Chikwawa | 180 | 183 | 363 | 321 | 328 | 649 | 1012 |
| Total | 397 | 379 | 776 | 837 | 811 | 1648 | 2424 |
| Percentage | 49% | 44% | 46% | 45% | 43% | 44% | 45% |

Source: adapted from CRS/CADECOM final RRA, draft August 2004. p. 40

A third piece of information that is important to show impact of the project is a figure showing the number of identified beneficiaries according to the established selection criteria. Did the project meet the needs of all the selected beneficiaries? There were times when the amount of CSB in stock did not match the number of beneficiaries (Annex 4.e), which caused OCCs, village leaders and project staff to determine who was in most critical need in order to reduce rations.

B.1.2. Indicator 4.2: Number of Guardians Families Provided with Title II Maize through Community Based Organizations

M&E Quantitative Data

The OCCs determined which households were eligible to receive maize rations based on their level of food insecurity. The IPTT targeted 6,000 households for maize distribution and reports a FY04 achievement of 6,228 households (104% of target). The data provided from the project combines the number of households that received maize with those that received CSB and does not distinguish from the three selection criteria categories. The IPTT data conflicts with the RRA, which reported a total of 7,171 households. (120% of target) in the draft report; RRA raw data sets (Annex 4.c) provide yet another figure of 7,324 households.

Although there are discrepancies in the total beneficiary number, the difference is not significant enough to change the percentage of households graduated when rounded to two figures. **The figure 7,171 households will be used throughout this chapter**, as this is the figure that is used most consistently by CRS staff.

² Page: 59

Some of these children may be improving and not have reached the timeframe for graduation. Children are automatically enrolled in the CSB program for 6 months before they are reviewed.

Table 4.c. Total Number of Households Receiving and Graduating from CSB and/or Maize Over the LOA of the CRS/Malawi DAP

| Impact area | Total h/h beneficiaries | | | Total h/h graduation | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|----------------------|-------------|-------------|
| | M | F | Total | M | F | Total |
| Phalombe | 2385 | 1450 | 3835 | 1037 | 749 | 1786 |
| Chikwawa - per RRA draft report | 1695 | 1641 | 3336 | 643 | 470 | 1113 |
| Total from RRA draft report | 4080 | 3091 | 7171 | 1680 | 1219 | 2899 |
| Percent graduated | | | | 41% | 39% | 40% |
| Chikwawa - per RRA raw data sets | 1728 | 1671 | 3399 | 643 | 470 | 1113 |
| Total using raw data sets | 4113 | 3121 | 7324 | 41% | 39% | 40% |

Source: adapted from CRS/CADECOM draft RRA 2004 p. 42-43 and raw data sets (see Annex 4.d)

The data are cumulative for the LOA and each household is only counted once. Each household has a participation number to assist the project in counting each household only once. If the household moves from one criterion to another (e.g., CSB for a child to CSB for a chronically ill adult), it is still counted as only one household beneficiary. If the household graduates from safety net and then re-enters the program, they are removed from the graduation list and put back onto the recipient list with the same participation number.

Information from Other Sources

Regional impact: Before looking at the impact of the safety net food on the beneficiary households, it is useful to compare the number of households identified as vulnerable in the community with the total number of households in the target areas to get a picture of the extent of the problem in both dioceses. The following table (Table 4.d) uses the figures from CRS's 2001 Financial Year Output Report to estimate the percentage of the households that have been identified as vulnerable in the life of the project.³ According to the data from this table it appears that approximately 11,373 households are in the impact area (Table 4.d.), that **7,171 (63%)** have received safety nets in the life of the project, and that 4,202 have not needed the safety net project.

Table 4.d. Household Beneficiaries Compared to Total Households in the Impact Areas of the CRS/Malawi DAP

| Impact area | Households (h/h) receiving maize and/or CSB LOA | | | Total h/h in the impact areas (2001 estimates) | | | Percent of total h/h in the impact areas on safety net during LOA | | |
|---------------|---|-------------|-------------|--|-------------|--------------|---|--------------|-------------|
| | MHH | FHH | Total | MHH | FHH | Total | MHH | FHH | Total |
| Phalombe | 2385 | 1450 | 3835 | 4635 | 2101 | 6736 | 51 % | 69 % | 60 % |
| Chikwawa | 1695 | 1641 | 3336 | 3168 | 1469 | 4637 | 54 % | 112 % | 72 % |
| Totals | 4080* | 3091 | 7171 | 7803 | 3570 | 11373 | 52 % | 87 % | 63 % |

Source: CRS/CADECOM Final RRA report, draft 2004 and CRS 2001 Financial year Output Report.

N.B. This table shows that there is an error in either the estimated number of h/h in the target areas or in those who received safety net food as 112% of FHH in Chikwawa are reported to have received foodstuffs

Household level impact: In the RRA and final evaluations villages reported that the rations assisted households in concentrating on their fields so that they would be able to produce their own food at the end of the season; those who were able to graduate had started

³ Some of the figures, highlighted in yellow (and with an asterisk*) for Chikwawa, seem to have been miscalculated.

producing enough food to last throughout the whole year. Some people said that the maize provisions have strengthened the social fabric of marriage since their husbands do not go to Mozambique for “piece work”. They also said that the assistance has enabled households to participate in development activities, such as community initiatives to respond to HIV/AIDS, skills development for older orphans, sending children to school, and community based childcare centres. It was reported that some of the households bought assets like cattle, oxcarts, treadle pumps, bicycles, and radios and were able to construct homes with moulded

burnt bricks and corrugated iron sheets as a result of following “best practices” in agriculture learned from DAP activities.

Despite this recorded “feelings” that the food aid has had a positive household level impact, the critical impact data to back this up is missing. From which criteria were these households graduating? If they are graduating as a result of improving child care practices or reduced illness, these “feelings” of improved food security would not be true as some of these households might not have been part of the food insecurity criteria. If the assumption that graduates learned new agricultural techniques from DAP were true, then data would be needed to answer which of the graduates and non-graduates participate in agricultural activities and which do not.

According to records from Phalombe and reports from the villages, supply of CSB and maize was an issue at least seven times over the life of the project and no food aid was distributed (once in 2000, 2002 and 2003; and twice in 2001 and 2004). All but one missed food distributions occurred in the lean months (September to February).⁴

In other cases, there was too much food. One case highlighted in the monthly reports stated that in Phalombe there was enough CSB to last for 16 months according to the actual beneficiaries identified. They feared that the CSB would spoil since shelf life is only three months and requested that more beneficiaries be identified to use it. This should not be the way beneficiaries are identified as it reduces the weight of the criteria. It was not clear from the reports how this was resolved.

Logistical issues surrounding call forwarding and receipt of the food stuffs seemed to be an issue as food was not always received when it is needed. According to the reports and interviews, it seems like staff are taking all the measures they can to estimate what is needed, some of the issues related to delay in food were out of CRS control. The final evaluator was unable to determine the actual root causes for these delays in getting the food.

B.1.3. Indicator 4.3: Number of Vulnerable Children 6-18 Years Old Receiving Rations

M&E Quantitative Data

This indicator looks at the number of children 6-18 years of age who are residing within the beneficiary families. The IPPT has a target of reaching 10,500 orphans and vulnerable children (OVCs) 6-18 years of age (Annex 1.a) and reports an LOA achievement by FY04 of 8,890 (85% of target), although the RRA draft report and raw data sets use the figure 10,758 OVCs 6-18 years of age (103% of target). The figure 10,758 will be used in this evaluation. In either case, this data is misleading, as each of these children did not receive their own

⁴ See Annex 4.e. for a complete table of distributions in Phalombe

ration (section B.1.1). There was no data showing the total number of households with children 6-18 years of age, or the total number of people in each household. This data would have provided an idea of how far the food was being stretched within the household.

Table 4.e. Number of Children 6-18 Years of Age in Households Benefiting from Food Assistance in the CRS/Malawi DAP

| Dist. | 6 - 14 Orphans | | | 6 - 14 Other | | | 15 - 18 Orphans | | | 15 - 18 Other | | | All |
|--------------|----------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| | M | F | Total | M | F | Total | M | F | Total | M | F | Total | |
| PE | 736 | 739 | 1475 | 1521 | 1360 | 2881 | 250 | 274 | 524 | 612 | 623 | 1235 | |
| CK | 571 | 516 | 1087 | 836 | 693 | 1529 | 424 | 404 | 828 | 656 | 543 | 1199 | |
| Total | 1307 | 1255 | 2562 | 2357 | 2053 | 4410 | 674 | 678 | 1352 | 1268 | 1166 | 2434 | 10,758 |

Source: CRS/CADECOM RRA 2004 Raw data sets, see Annex 4.d.

If one merges the raw data figure of 10,758 children age 6-18 years living in the 7,171 households (Table 4.e) receiving safety net food during the life of the project. Of this number, an estimated 3,528 (or 33 %) were part of households who graduated during the life of the project (Table 4.f).

Table 4.f. Children 6-18 in Households Graduating from Safety Net Food Assistance in the CRS/Malawi DAP

| Dist. | 6 - 14 Orphans | | | 6 - 14 Other | | | 15 - 18 Orphans | | | 15 - 18 Other | | |
|-------------|----------------|------------|-------------|--------------|------------|-------------|-----------------|------------|------------|---------------|------------|------------|
| | M | F | Total | M | F | Total | M | F | Total | M | F | Total |
| PE | 301 | 327 | 628 | 310 | 298 | 608 | 111 | 101 | 212 | 177 | 164 | 341 |
| CK | 219 | 218 | 437 | 277 | 263 | 540 | 166 | 148 | 314 | 240 | 208 | 448 |
| Tot. | 520 | 545 | 1065 | 587 | 561 | 1148 | 277 | 249 | 526 | 417 | 372 | 789 |
| % | 40 | 44 | 42 | 25 | 27 | 26 | 41 | 37 | 39 | 33 | 32 | 32 |

Source: CRS/CADECOM RRA 2004 Raw data sets, see Annex 4.d.

Up to this point in this chapter, available data shows that a total of 40 percent of households graduated from safety net, and within those households 45 percent of CU5 graduated and only 33 percent of children 6-18 years graduated (Table 4.g.). This also means that 67 percent of the 6-18 year old children are part of households that have not graduated from safety nets. This may mean that the project is having the highest impact with households with malnourished CU5 and that households with children 6-18 years of age need more support.

Table 4.g. Percentage of Households Graduated from the Safety Net Program Compared with the Percentage of Children that Graduated from the Safety Net Program

| Households LOA | Households graduated | CU5 LOA | CU5 graduated | 6-18 years LOA | 6-18 years graduated |
|----------------|----------------------|---------|---------------|----------------|----------------------|
| 7,171 | 2,899 (40%) | 5,415 | 2,424 (45%) | 10,758 | 3,528 (33%) |

Source: Compilation of data from CRS/CADECOM project final RRA draft 2004, p. 40, 42.

B.2. IR 4.2: Increased Community Participation in Caring for Destitute Children and Other Vulnerable Groups

- B.2.1. Indicator 4.4: Number of Guardians' Families Linked to SO1 and SO2 (Agriculture and Natural Resources Management); AND
Indicator 4.9: Number of Guardian Families Receiving Title II Food Who Adopt Special Technologies from SO1 and SO2

M&E Quantitative Data

There are two similar IPPT targets related to this IR, one for how many safety net beneficiaries are linked to SO1 and SO2 (ag/NRM) activities (with a LOA target of 4,388 households), and one for how many safety net beneficiaries adopt ag/NRM technologies (with a LOA target of 4,123 households). The total number of households was not recorded, so neither of these targets have results, although the IPPT corrected in the final evaluation did report a figure of 6,542 households linked to ag/NRM. Some of the Cooperating Sponsor Results Report and Resource Requests (CSR4s) refer to a total number of households linked to ag/NRM, but the Final RRA Survey in 2004 did not provide data.⁵

Information from Other Sources

The project did, however, measure how many safety net households participated in each of the individual ag/NRM technologies that were analyzed in the final RRA (Table 4.h.).

Table 4.h. Number of Households Adopting Specific Ag/NRM Technologies

| | Soil Fertility improvement | Soil and water conservation | Seed multiplication | Crop diversification | Forestation | Small irrigation | Livestock (goats) | Fish farming |
|---------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|-------------|------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| PE | 1498 | 1498 | 2941 | 3683 | 2974 | 301 | 168 | 17 |
| CK | 2991 | 2964 | 945 | 3003 | 3034 | 244 | 201 | 32 |
| Totals | 4489 | 4462 | 3886 | 6686 | 6008 | 545 | 369 | 49 |

Source: CRS/CADECOM final RRA draft 2004, p. 46.

It can be assumed from these numbers that the highest number of safety net households participating under one category (**6,686** for crop diversification) is at least the minimum number of households participating in ag/NRM technologies (Table 4.h). Since there were a total of 7,171 safety net households during the life of the project, this would mean that at least 93 percent of the households participated in at least one ag/NRM technology. The total number of participating households could be higher, but there are no figures to show that.

The high rates of adoption for crop diversification were attributed to the project providing improved seed varieties to program participants and the low adoption of livestock technologies due to problems with sourcing improved goats (Table 4.h). It isn't surprising that fish farming showed the lowest adoption rate considering the labour involved in digging a fishpond and availability of marshes ("dambo") or perennial streams. Families who are already vulnerable probably have a difficult time finding additional energy to invest in this type of work. One village was able to establish a communal fishpond for consumption and income generation to support OVCs. CADECOM sourced the financial, material and technical support from the Malawi Government Department of Fisheries.

All those interviewed during the final evaluation and RRA focus group discussions expressed gratitude for the agricultural technologies that the project provided, and stated that they have the skills to continue the technologies that they were taught. Composting and crop diversification were the two most commonly mentioned technologies. Some of the crops introduced reportedly did not do well, especially soybeans. A common barrier to irrigated farming was cited as lack of access to irrigable land.

⁵ CRS/Malawi staff reported that "It was felt that it was the same as in SO1 and SO2 and therefore repetitive."

B.2.2. Indicator 4.5: Number of Guardians' Families Linked to SO3 (Health); AND
Indicator 4.10: Number of Guardians' Families Receiving Title II Food Who Adopt
Special Technologies from SO3 (Health)

Households benefiting from food rations were encouraged to take part in activities to improve the long-term health of their families by monitoring the growth of their children, learning improved childcare practices, and preventing and treating disease. The health component did not begin until 2003 and many of the activities, except for growth monitoring, were not implemented until early 2004, so the impact of these activities are limited at this point.

M&E Quantitative Data

The FYO4 target was 3,000 guardians' families with improved linkages to the project's SO3 activities. By May 2004 the actual achievement was 4,584 households (153% of the target). This figure represents 64 percent of the total 7,171 households that participated in the DAP's safety net component over the life of the project.

Information for Other Sources

The table below (Table 4.i.), compiled in the RRA 2004, shows the breakdown of activities in which the safety net participants took part. The total number of activities does not match the total number of safety net families because some families took part in more than one activity.

Table 4.i. Malnourished CU5 Linked to SO3 Child Health Activities (Compiled During 2004 RRA) in the CRS/Malawi DAP Project Zone

| District | Growth Monitoring | Drug Revolving Fund | Insecticide Treated Nets | Total |
|---------------|-------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|--------------|
| Phalombe | 2,532 | 157 | 157 | 2,846 |
| Chikwawa | 1,186 | 731 | ? | 1,917 |
| Totals | 3,718 | 888 | 157 | 5,692 |

Source: CRS/CADECOM final RRA raw data sets (see Annex 4.d).

It is encouraging that this many beneficiaries are linking to the health components, but there isn't data to show the impact. Are these households graduating faster than the other households? Are the children in these households better nourished? Is there less malaria and diarrhoea in these households? Are the chronically ill healthier and more productive? Data collection needs to be improved to determine if these households are being positively impacted from the link to health activities.

B.2.3. Indicator 4.6: Number of Guardians' Families Benefiting from Micro-Finance Activities

Initially, the safety net program envisioned focusing on food availability through distributions and links to agriculture, natural resource management, and health activities, with a gradual move towards improving food access through income generating activities. DAP staff explored opportunities to collaborate with other organizations to achieve this goal, but the activities did not materialize. The DAP staff have been working with communities to develop loan guidelines and to form loan committees and loan groups. No loans have been

given out to date and it is unsure if this will take place before the closure of the DAP project.

Despite this, communities in Chikwawa mobilized themselves in solidarity income generating groups and the Ministry of Gender, with DAP assistance, provided training in group dynamics and income generating activities skills to these groups. The monthly reports show that there are about 381 households participating in income generating activities through self-selecting solidarity groups (Table 4.j)

Table 4.j. Number of IGAs Established as a Result of DAP-Supported Training in the CRS/Malawi Project Villages

| | Pottery | Bakery | Buying/ selling | Carpentry | Vegetable garden | Fish farming | Total |
|---------------|----------|-----------|--------------------|-----------|---------------------|-----------------|------------|
| Phalombe | | | | | | 17 | 17 |
| Chikwawa | 6 | 37 | 232 | 34 | 23 | 32 | 364 |
| Totals | 6 | 37 | 232 | 34 | 23 | 49 | 381 |

Source: CRS/CADECOM final RRA 2004 draft, p. 49.

In the final evaluation and RRA interviews, villages said that their capital is very small which often is affected by economic instability and fluctuations of the cost of raw materials. The communities said that if they could have additional capital, the risk of being affected by price increases would decrease, as they would be buying raw materials in bulk.

For increased sustainability, the communities should learn to use their own natural resources to create an income instead of relying on outside capital and purchased materials.

If this aspect of the project were allowed time to implement by including it as a strategy under the health component to improve food and nutrition security, it could have a strong impact on the small businesses that communities have already started on their own.

B.2.4. Indicator 4.7: Number of Chronically Sick Adults Receiving Title II Rations Through Community Based Organizations

M&E Quantitative Data

This indicator seems displaced as food rations were already discussed under section B.1 earlier in this chapter. These households were provided with CSB and, reportedly, most of these households also qualified as food insecure to receive maize rations. These households have family members who are possibly suffering from HIV/AIDS related diseases. It is difficult to know who is living with HIV/AIDS due to lack of voluntary testing, so the term 'chronically ill' is used instead. The IPPT LOA target was 1,500 households; a total of 624 households were reached by the LOA in FY04. It is unclear why the achieved is lower than the target and graduation data is not available.

Information from Other Sources

Communities felt that the health situation of the sick has improved and that guardians have more time to care for the sick, work in their gardens, and adopt the various agriculture and natural resources management technologies in order to raise levels of food and income at household levels. Some communities also assist these families in their gardens, provide

emotional support, and assist with household chores, such as maintaining the structure of the house and general cleaning.

CSB is a better choice than maize for people who are chronically ill, but this should be accompanied by education and low-input gardening, using all the six food groups in order to provide all the nutrients needed by the body. The gardening component of this education should focus on activities that can take place right around the home to reduce the time and energy put into producing and harvesting nutritious foods. The health component of this should focus on meal planning and food utilization. If true support is going to be given to the chronically ill, communities can be taken to the next level of reducing stigma surrounding the disease, receiving education about how HIV is and is not transmitted, increasing access to HIV testing, training in providing holistic support for living positively with HIV, and linking to support systems such as the National Association for People living with HIV/AIDS in Malawi (NAPHAM).

B.2.5. Indicator 4.8: Number of Community Based Organizations Active in Caring for Vulnerable Children and Groups

As previously described in section B.1, DAP staff assisted communities in organizing OCCs



Child participating in the Growth Monitoring Program under the CRS/Malawi DAP.

to identify vulnerable households and coordinate activities to support these households. In addition to OCCs, Community Based Childcare Centres (CBCC's) were initiated in some villages. A total of 24 CBCCs are running in Phalombe and 19 CBCCs in Chikwawa.

M&E Quantitative Data

The IPPT target for Community Based Organizations caring for orphans (i.e. OCCs) was 82; the project achieved 83 (101%) in total because one village split into two villages and both re-established OCCs for each village.

This gender pattern of participation within OCCs is different in each district; in Phalombe there are twice as many women in the OCCs as there are men, whereas in Chikwawa the number of men in the OCCs exceeds the women (Table 4.k.). This is probably due in part to the difference in the local culture. Phalombe has a stronger influence from the matrilineal society where women are seen as the primary caretakers of the children; in Chikwawa there is a mix of matrilineal and patrilineal influence.

Table 4.k. Composition of OCCs Established Over the LOA of the CRS/Malawi DAP

| District | Number of OCCs | Male | Female |
|--------------|----------------|------------|------------|
| Phalombe | 42 | 140 | 280 |
| Chikwawa | 41 | 241 | 169 |
| Total | 83 | 381 | 449 |

Source: CRS/CADECOM Final RRA Draft p. 52

B.3. IR 4.3: Increased Self-Reliance of Older Orphans (6 - 18 years)

This IR focuses on the potential of the next generation of adults to have improved livelihoods. Activities were geared toward increasing skills in a trade and improving food security and health through improved knowledge and practices.

B.3.1. Indicator 4.11: Number of Orphans Receiving Apprenticeship Training

M&E Quantitative Data

During fiscal year 2001 the DAP and MoG staff sensitized the communities to the skills training available. All youth were invited to participate; those who came forward were provided with training. Training was provided to the youth by 75 community-based artisans (47 male and 28 female) who were specially training in imparting skills to youth. The skills training for youth is being conducted in 56 out of 83 villages. The IPTT LOA target was 750 orphans; the LOA achievement at the time of the evaluation was 583 (167%) total orphans and vulnerable children. Data is not available on the disaggregated totals for orphans and vulnerable children. Although the RRA collected data for orphans separate from vulnerable children, it did not total the two separately. The actual number of orphans receiving training is much lower than reported in the IPTT.

Table 4.I. Total Youth (Orphan and Vulnerable) Trained in Skills Under the CRS/Malawi DAP

| Skill | Phalombe | | Chikwawa | | Total |
|-----------------------------|------------|----------|------------|------------|------------|
| | Male | Female | Male | Female | |
| Carpentry | 42 | 0 | 89 | 6 | 137 |
| Tailoring | 47 | 6 | 43 | 30 | 126 |
| Bakery | 0 | 0 | 21 | 90 | 111 |
| Pottery | 0 | 0 | 0 | 106 | 106 |
| Tinsmith | 23 | 1 | 28 | 2 | 54 |
| Radio repair | 0 | 0 | 10 | 0 | 10 |
| Bicycles repair | 2 | 0 | 8 | 0 | 10 |
| Mat making | 4 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 8 |
| Cane furniture and basketry | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| Knitting | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| Shoe repair | 0 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 5 |
| Brick laying | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 4 |
| Hoe handle making | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Total | 130 | 7 | 212 | 234 | 583 |

Source: adapted from CRS/CADECOM final RRA draft 2004, p. 54;

This table shows that in Phalombe participation by females is much lower than in Chikwawa where there are more women than men participating.

Information from Focus Group Discussions and Field Observations

No data were available for how many of the youth have improved livelihoods as a result of this training. During the final evaluation and RRA the youth reported that access to start-up

capital to use their new skills was a barrier to starting a business. Some, but not all, of the youth received materials from DAP when they graduated, but youth felt that it was insufficient. Malawi Social Action Fund (MASAF) is providing raw materials and equipment for one of the villages. Some of the youth said that their skills (such as carpentry) needed certification in order to be recognized by companies.

At this point, the youth have skills, but they are reporting that they are not able to use those skills, so this activity does not appear to be sustainable. Youth need to either be creative or re-apply those skills to resources that are available locally.

Alternatively, perhaps outside assistance could be given to provide start up capital. Whether or not additional capital is provided, it should be accompanied by business management and marketing skills. In addition to the skills training being offered, communities should consider building on local skills and resources that are already available such as, but not limited to, crocheting and fishing, both of which were brought up in the final evaluation as current skills that need improvement.



External evaluation team members Stacia Nordin and Fidelis Mgowa interviewing youth (orphan and vulnerable) trained as tailors under the CRS/Malawi

B.3.2. Indicator 4.12: Number of Older Orphans Linked to a Poverty Lending Program

The revolving loan program is still under development.

B.3.3. Indicator 4.13: Percentage of Orphans Going to School

M&E Quantitative Data

Part of the purpose of providing food rations to vulnerable households is to allow the children to attend school instead of helping the family find food to eat. The strategies used by the project to improve attendance at school included encouragement from the OCCs to go to school through role modelling, community meetings, youth clubs, and school visits by OCCs. The IPTT states the baseline for percentage of orphans going to school was 50 percent. The IPTT shows a steady increase in the percentage of orphans attending school in the first three years: FY01 55 percent, FY02 62.3 percent, FY03 67.9 percent, but then it dropped back to 65 percent in FY04. Attendance for non-orphans has been about 5-10 percent higher than for orphans. The tables below compare the current 2004 percentages of orphans (Table 4.m.) and non-orphans (Table 4.n.) attending school.

Table 4.m. Number of Orphans Going to School in the CRS/Malawi DAP Project Villages

| | PHALOMBE | | CHIKWAWA | | TOTAL |
|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|--------------|
| | M | F | M | F | |
| Total number of orphans of school going age | 703 | 752 | 1,021 | 889 | 3,365 |
| Total number of orphans going to school | 439 | 462 | 731 | 549 | 2,181 |
| Percentage | 62 | 61 | 72 | 62 | 65 |

Source: CRS/CADECOM final RRA 2004 draft, p. 58

Table 4.n. Number of Non-Orphans Going to School in the CRS/Malawi DAP Project Villages

| | PHALOMBE | | CHIKWAWA | | TOTAL |
|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------------|--------------|
| | M | F | M | F | |
| Total number of non-orphans of school going age | 1923 | 2,245 | 2,956 | 1,489* | 8,613 |
| Total number of non-orphans going to school | 1,445 | 1,750 | 2,442 | 1,747* | 7,384 |
| Percentage | 75 | 78 | 83 | 117* | ERROR |

Source: CRS/CADECOM final RRA 2004 draft, p. 59

NB: Chikwawa's data has an error showing 117% of females attending school.

* **data or calculations in question.**

In Chikwawa there are currently 18 youth clubs with about 192 youth (records show that 108 are orphans and 184 non-orphans); in Phalombe there are 12 youth clubs with 93 members (records do not show orphan versus non-orphan but instead report 43 male and 50 female members). This shows a decrease in both the number and participation in the youth clubs compared with FY02 and FY03 data. It isn't clear from the reports what the OCC's do to promote these youth clubs; it seems that it is primarily a program of the MoG, similar to what takes place across the rest of Malawi. There isn't enough data to suggest an impact.

These strategies do appear to have a positive impact on all the youth in area, not just the orphaned youth, although some of the figures may not be accurate. Data collection during the final RRA, for example, indicated that there are a total of 11,978 children of school going age out of approximately 11,400 households in the catchment area. Comparing this figure to the total number of children 6-18 years who have been a part of the safety net beneficiary households (10,758 children in 7,171 households) makes one wonder if these figures are correct or if the extent of need in these two districts are really that high.

During the final evaluation, participation from youth was very low⁶ except in one village that had a strong skills training program.

C. Project Organization and Processes

CRS Malawi received a frontloading budget to lay the groundwork prior to the start of the project. During this time they hired some of the safety net staff to fine tune and implement the Detailed Implementation Plan (DIP) as outlined in the approved DAP (Annex 4.a).

⁶ Youth participation was less than 10% of the final evaluation interviews compared to the 20% that was planned in the final evaluation methodology.

C.1. Staffing

At the CRS level a Safety Net Project Officer (SNPO) was hired to oversee the project and was located at the DAP Support Unit (DSU) in Blantyre. At each of the CADECOMs a Safety Net Coordinator (SNC) and Logistics Officer (LO) were hired. At the field level, Agricultural Development Facilitators (ADFs) oversaw all aspects of the DAP.

During the project there were a minimum of three different staff in each of the positions related to safety net. The most turnover took place at the CRS level in the SNPO position, with a total of six different people in the position. Two of the staff changes came from people who were already involved in the project in other capacities (Fidelis Mgowa and Nota Moyo, who had both already working with the partner CADECOMs since 2000).

Table 4.o. Reported Safety Net Staffing During the Life of the CRS/Malawi DAP

| Location | Position | Name | Dates |
|---------------------|----------|---------------------|----------------------|
| CRS | SNPO | Kalembe | 2000 Jan |
| | | Kathy Latek | |
| | | Munyanga | |
| | | Chitsulo | |
| | | Happy Mphirira | 2003 March |
| | | Fidelis Mgowa | 2003 |
| Chikwawa CADECOM | SNC | Fidelis Mgowa | 2000 Jan – 2003 |
| | | Charles Changalala | 2003 July – 2003 Nov |
| | | Nota Moyo | 2004 March |
| | LO | Mr. Banda | 2000 |
| | | Mr. Chikopa | 2001 |
| | | Sam Sitolo | 2001 Sep – present |
| Phalombe CADECOM | SNC | Mr. Dzinyemba | 2000 |
| | | Stirveria Ndala | Present |
| | LO | Mr. Patrick Chiwala | 2000 |
| | | Mr. Justin Mkasauka | Present |

Source: Reported from CRS/CADECOM staff, External Final Evaluation, July-August 2004.

Turnover of staff at CRS and CADECOM is probably one of the factors leading to the issues within the safety net component that are discussed in this report.⁷ Turnover can have a negative impacts on planning, implementation, coordination, and documentation of programs. It was not clear in the final evaluation why this turnover was taking place, but it

needs to be addressed in both CRS and CADECOM to ensure that appropriate hiring and human resource management practices are in place.

In addition to turnover in staff, in 2002 the DSU that was established by CRS was closed and staff were moved to the Lilongwe CRS office. This meant that the SNPO moved from Blantyre, which is about an hour away from the two CADECOMs, to Lilongwe, which is five hours away, making communication and oversight more difficult.

⁷ This contrasts with staffing in M&E and Agriculture components, which had more stability in staffing.

C.2. Coordination

Coordination of the DAP safety net program involved collaboration among CRS, CADECOM, and the Ministry of Gender (MoG) staff. The CRS level staff collaborate with National CADECOM and MoG senior officials. The SNC primarily collaborates with the District Social Welfare Officer (DSWO) and at times, the district level staff from the MoH and MoA; and the ADFs collaborate with the Community Development Assistants (CDAs) and extension workers from MoH and MoA when needed.

The MoG was involved in several meetings regarding the DAP and the overall DAP project was launched by the principle secretary of the Ministry of Gender. The MoG has very few field staff compared to the agriculture and health ministries; in the DAP target area there were only three CDA positions during the life of the project. At least one of the CDA positions was vacant for part of the project.

One of the issues that was raised repeatedly in the final evaluation at all government levels was the desire to be involved in the earlier planning stages, versus being given a plan and asked to review it. Despite this, all interviews during the final evaluation showed that staff and counterparts were conversant about the status of the safety net component and that the information they supplied was consistent with each other and the project's documentation.

C.3. Monthly and Quarterly Meetings and Reports

The ADFs meet monthly with representatives from the villages to review all aspects of the DAP and quarterly, all stakeholders discuss progress. A review of the monthly reports shows that the safety net components were consistently overshadowed by a large agricultural focus in this reporting. The reports do not discuss implementation in detail, but instead focus primarily on monitoring related to the IPPT. This was also repeatedly pointed out in the midterm report (2002)⁸. Problems that were raised in the monthly reports often took several months to resolve, probably due in part to the turnover in staff and some other organizational issues that arose during the project.

D. **Sustainability**

D.1. Improved Child Care Practices and Support for Vulnerable Populations

The issue of CSB sustainability is a deep concern in the communities. The project attempted to promote community gardens to produce CSB locally, but the communities blamed rainfall patterns and pests for negatively affecting production (soy was doing especially poorly in a high percentage of the DAP areas). The communities felt that they would not be able to produce enough CSB on their own, even though they were trained in CSB processing. The final evaluation agrees with the villages and feels that they are not ready to support these children on their own. More education about feeding children with foods that grow well in the area should have been emphasized.

Long-term support of vulnerable households is a second key issue for sustainability. Granted, 2,899 vulnerable households graduated during the life of the project, but will they, along with the 4,202 households that have not needed safety nets in the life of the project, be

⁸ See Midterm Review Final Report, Gil Enterprise Consultants, 22 October 2002, p. 39, 40, 45, 51, 52 and 53.

able to support those who have not yet graduated (4,272 households)? Community support of vulnerable households will be a great strain on the rest of the community. From final evaluation observations and interviews, the average/non-safety net households have not yet increased their crop production and non-farm activities to the point that they can satisfy the food and nutrition needs of the vulnerable households who are still in need.

D.2. Rebuilding Assets of Vulnerable Households (e.g. Graduation from Safety Nets)

To assess the short-term impact of the project's agriculture and natural resource management activities on the vulnerable households that benefited from the project safety nets, it would be important to know how long the households remain "graduated". In other words, how many households graduate and then end up right back on the beneficiary list? If all the 2,899 households who have graduated to date graduated during the second year of the project and are still food and nutrition secure, that would make a good case for sustainability.

Data on graduation times and any re-entry into the program would help show if safety net assistance is helping families become food and nutrition secure in the long run, or if households are only food secure when they are on the safety net program. A table such as the one described below (Table 4.p.) could provide more information on how many new households in each criteria category (Box 4.d) are becoming food and nutrition insecure. This is an important lesson learned for future beneficiary tracking, monitoring and evaluation systems.

Table 4.p. Suggested Draft Table for Tracking New Households and Graduated Households Over the Life of the Project

| Yr 1 | Yr 2 | | | | Yr 3 | | | | | |
|---------|------------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------|------------------|-----------------|----------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------|
| h/h new | h/h grad this yr | h/h new this yr | h/h re-entered | Total h/h | h/h grad this yr | h/h new this yr | h/h re-entered | h/h still grad yr 1 | h/h still grad yr 2 | Total h/h |
| | | | | | | | | | | |

Source: Final Evaluator suggestion, 2004.

Despite the widespread feeling that was found in the final evaluation that there is a high degree of knowledge, practice, and coverage of adoption of agricultural technologies by safety net participants, all those interviewed stated that they are not ready for CADECOM to phase out. When probed for the reasons the communities explained that their food security needs are still not being met because of drought. Those interviewed reported that maize and soy were the crops most affected by drought. When asked what they would plant this year, the reply was almost always maize. There was only one woman who stated that she had learned that maize does not do well and that she would plant more of the other foods, especially fruit trees.

Whereas the community, government, and DAP staff at all levels repeatedly blame drought as the major culprit for food insecurity, the final evaluation felt that the following were bigger culprits.

- Crop choice and location.
- Agricultural practices.
- Environmental degradation.

Food budgeting and planning for the year may also play a role. There were reports in the final evaluation that households were selling their food crops, but it was unclear which households were selling their food and if this was negatively affecting food security or if these were crops that were truly produced in excess of what the family could consume.

Until the emphasis on maize is reduced at all levels of Malawian society, food security will not improve. The impact of ag/NRM activities on improving food security for vulnerable households has *not yet* been achieved. Households have *begun* to take steps at diversifying their crops and thinking of “food” as foods other than maize, but this will need more reinforcement over the next few years to achieve long-term food security.

One step in the right direction within the DAP impact areas was the implementation of open days, held by staff and government workers, which displayed meals to highlight local foods that people can use instead of maize. This would have been more effective if smaller demonstrations took place at village or unit levels so that participants could prepare the foods themselves and also taste the different meals.

Box 4.d. Recommendations for Improved Monitoring of Short-Term Impacts of Safety Nets on Different Categories of Beneficiaries

Better data collection would help to show the impact of ag/NRM technologies on beneficiary households. Data should include number of households participating in ag/NRM for each category of the selection criteria, as each category is significantly different in their ability to participate and the reasons for being safety net beneficiaries.

- (1) *Malnourished CU5* – The households that qualify for this category have unique needs as they are already having trouble caring for the children in their household. The cause may be food insecurity, feeding practices, or disease. This category may benefit most from CBCC and health and nutrition education, along with food security activities.
- (2) *Chronically ill* – These households have an additional burden of caring for a sick person. The chronically ill person will probably not be able to assist in food production and the remaining people in the house already have to do additional work to make up for the loss of productivity from the person who is ill. This category may be best addressed through communal gardens, as the households are already overburdened.
- (3) *Food security* – This category may have a number of factors impacting food and nutrition security, but it would be expected that this category would have the most adoption of agricultural activities, unless they are also qualifying for assistance under criteria categories one and two. If the household qualifies because of food insecurity and caring for orphans, communal garden support may be a solution. If the reasons are related to income generation, strengthening business and small loan access may be a solution.

Table 4.q. Suggested Draft Format for Tracking Beneficiaries

| Beneficiary Number | Name | Criteria | | | Date entered | Ag/NRM & date started | Health activities | Date graduated | Reason for graduation | Re-admit & why |
|--------------------|-------|----------|---|---|--------------|--|-------------------|------------------------------|---|----------------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | | | | | | |
| PE.SN.1. | Banda | 1 | | 3 | 2002 July | 2002 August, composting, crop diversification | Growth monitoring | (1) 2003 Jan (3) 2003 Jun | (1) no mal CU5, imp. feeding practices (3) food security improved agric. | |
| PE.SN.2. | Phiri | | 2 | 3 | 2002 July | 2002 August, composting, crop divers, treadle pump | DRF | (2) 2003 Jun (3) 2003 Jun | (2) (3) food security improved agric. and winter cropping | |

Source: Suggestion by Final Evaluator - The draft form would need to have adequate space for recording information and, therefore, should be printing in landscape format.

D.3. Community Organizations Caring for Chronically Sick Children and Adults

During the life of the project some of the volunteers expressed the feeling that they should receive food rations for volunteering their services. Two OCCs disbanded over of this issue and new OCCs were formed and trained on the logistics of safety nets. Staff continually reminded volunteers that they are part of village-selected committee and they are working for the village, not the project. In the final evaluation only one volunteer out of the 31 volunteers interviewed asked about getting food from the safety net component of the project as an incentive. In response, the other members of the committee immediately answered without the final evaluators needing to probe. This reaction seems to support the health evaluator's conclusion that the communities are aware that the OCCs are their own structures and the OCC is able to address most issues that arise.

Some of the roles that the OCCs are currently filling will not continue when the project closes in September 2004. Activities related to food rations to support the identified beneficiaries will be difficult. CBCCs have communal gardens to support CU5 and a similar situation could be set up for supporting all vulnerable households, although many of the CBCCs are still struggling with these gardens. OCCs need more technical skills to initiate successful communal or individual gardens. Another idea that has not yet been explored is community food banks for supporting vulnerable households. If the OCC is unable to have roles and responsibilities to justify members meeting and working towards a goal, the OCC may phase out.

E. **Lessons Learned**

- (1) *More emphasis on reducing maize dependency:* Although the agricultural and NRM activities under the DAP have helped the target communities diversify their crops, maize is still the dominant crop and dominant portion of the diet, which is a serious constraint to becoming food and nutrition secure in the long run. To improve food and nutrition security:
 - The food insecurity criteria should emphasize and record foods from all Malawi's six food groups;
 - The project's agriculture and natural resource management technologies should be based on Malawi's six food groups;
 - There should be more focus on producing foods close to the homes utilizing the resources that were identified in the final evaluation;
 - There should be a strong educational component for food budgeting, meal planning, and food utilization; and
 - Food rations should be something other than maize.
- (2) *Sustainability of OCC roles:* The OCCs are unlikely to continue some of the roles they currently perform when the project closes in September 2004. The OCCs can identify vulnerable households, but do not have the skills to support those households without external food rations.
- (3) *Registration books:* It is impossible to determine the impact of the project from the current registration system. The forms should be organized according to the vulnerability criteria to provide appropriate long-term interventions and help households to graduate from all of the categories of vulnerability.
- (4) *Distribution sites:* The distance to the distribution sites had a negative impact on some of the households as they either had to walk several hours or spend resources to hire

transportation. Projects should either set a maximum distance to all beneficiaries, or if this is not feasible because of project logistics, the project should assist communities in finding local transport solutions, such as the construction of a community animal-powered cart.

- (5) *Food utilization trainings and open days:* These campaigns seemed to do little to change food and nutrition behaviours, yet they are time consuming and expensive. These would be more effective if smaller demonstrations took place at the village or unit level so that participants could prepare the foods themselves and also taste the different meals.
- (6) *Support to the “chronically ill”:* CSB seemed to have a positive effect, but data was not collected to support this. CSB is not the only need of this target group. A focus on Malawi’s six food groups is critical to meet the increased nutritional needs of the chronically ill. If true support is going to be given to people living with HIV/AIDS (the ‘chronically ill’), communities must be taken to the next level of reducing the stigma surrounding the disease, receiving education about how HIV is and is not transmitted, increasing access to HIV testing, training in holistic support for living positively with HIV, and linking to support such as the National Association for People Living with HIV/AIDS in Malawi (NAPHAM).
- (7) *Food distribution:* Projects should consider providing safety nets only in the critical ‘lean periods’ when food is scarce, instead of providing food throughout the entire year. In addition, the data does not show if the project met the safety net food needs of the identified beneficiaries. Records should indicate the actual number of identified beneficiaries and what number/percentage of identified beneficiaries received food.
- (8) *Gardens:* Gardens are too far from the homes, resulting in the use of extra time and energy in order to take care of and harvest foods. Villages should be encouraged to establish gardens within the community to capture the natural resources that were seen in the final evaluation (near boreholes, kitchens, bathing areas, sweeping piles, etc.). Communities should be encouraged to use the land at the CBCCs to establish fruit trees and other permanent food sources, along with small gardens that can be watered with leftover water from washing dishes. These gardens could be a source of nutrients and a learning experience for the children. The gardens should follow low-input practices to limit the amount of care they need and to focus on local, and especially, indigenous foods.
- (9) *Utilizing local resources:* In addition to the skills training being offered, the communities should build on the local skills and resources that are already available such as, but not limited to, crocheting and fishing, both of which were brought up in the final evaluation.
- (10) *Staffing:* High staff turnover had a negative impact on the project. CRS and CADECOM need to review their HRM practices to assure this is not the cause.
- (11) *Collaboration:* Government staff need to be included in the early stages of planning for increased sustainability of the new systems and introduced technologies.
- (12) *Reports:* It is difficult to assess impact of the project and activities from these reports. The reports need to be adapted so it is easy to see the implementation progress, issues, and solutions (this was also recommended in the Midterm Review 2002). Action items should have a date of onset and clearly list who is responsible for the action. These issues should not be dropped from the report until they are resolved. The layout of the reports should follow both the implementation activities and impact.

Chapter Five

Project Organization and Processes: Management of Implementation and Partnership Processes

One unique feature of the CRS Title II project organization and management structure is its commitment to working through the local Catholic Church's system of development NGOs. CRS's principal development partner in Malawi has been CADECOM, which is the development arm of the Catholic Episcopal Church of Malawi (ECM). The DAP design envisioned that:

“National [e.g. Malawi] CRS and CADECOM Malawi [National CADECOM] will be facilitators of the DAP, while the dioceses of Blantyre and Chikwawa will be responsible for the implementation of the DAP.” (CRS 1999 DAP Proposal, Appendix A)

While this type of national execution is the norm for CRS, CRS was new to Malawi when this project started. The DAP was the very first attempt to pilot test this new implementation model in the country. The DAP was also the first non-emergency USAID Title II food security program in Malawi. For all these reasons there is a great deal of interest in extrapolating lessons learned from the experience for future Title II programs and future CRS programs in Malawi (Box 5.a.).

Box 5.a. Pilot Nature of the CRS DAP in Malawi (Quote)

“The CRS/DAP was a learning process for all concerned...The I-LIFE will have the [DAP] fish bowl to look at...the DAP has provided the springboard.”

Lawrence Rubey, USAID/Malawi.

This chapter assesses the effectiveness of this project's management and organizational structure in carrying out the project, which began in March 2000.¹ Section A describes the evolution of these structures over the lifetime of the project based on the external evaluation team's literature review and interviews.

This historic analysis is followed in section B by an assessment of various factors that contributed to or detracted from the effectiveness of these project structures and processes including:

- B.1. The four-pronged village intervention model;
- B.2. Project management through the CADECOMs with oversight from the dioceses;
- B.3. CRS Technical Support through the DAP Support Unit (DSU);
- B.4. CRS/CADECOM partnership coordination mechanisms; and
- B.5. CRS technical backstopping and supervision of the project and partnership processes.

¹ Objective 4, Evaluation Scope of work: Has the project management and organizational structure been effective in carrying out the project?

Section C summarizes major lessons learned from the DAP for future Title II programming and CRS programming in Malawi.

A. Evolution of the Project Implementation and Partnership Structures and Processes

A.1. Preparation of the Initial DAP Design (1998-1999)

Preplanning for the design of the DAP started in June 1998 when CRS commissioned four technical assessments (education, health, agriculture, micro-enterprise development) in selected Catholic dioceses and an assessment of CADECOM staff capacity in the different dioceses being considered (Chizimbi and Banda 1998). Two CRS/HQ employees spent one month each in the two dioceses (Chikwawa and Phalombe) to prepare the technical proposal.

The first proposal was revised and submitted for review to CRS/HQ December 4, 1998. Based on recommendations from the internal CRS DAP review, held in Baltimore on January 5, 1999, CRS decided to delay the submission of the final proposal to USAID in order to (CRS 1999: 1-2): “strengthen partnerships and counterpart capacity, especially in agriculture.” To facilitate follow-up, CRS/HQ secured private donor funding for a “front-loading” phase of the DAP² that was designed to:

“Focus on building and enhancing the capacity of CADECOM Blantyre and Chikwawa and the community partners, pilot testing of key agricultural interventions, concretization of our partnership structures, and agreements and finally, the development of critical management decisions.”³

CRS’s private funds were “front-loaded” to support:

- A series of diocesan “needs assessment” PRAs and baseline irrigation studies;
- The development of a small skeleton “DAP Support Unit” at CRS and in the two CADECOMs⁴ that produced the revised DAP proposal that was formally submitted to USAID on October 13, 1999; and

² Financial assistance was sought for: (1) Hiring a limited core technical and management staff (as a DAP Support Unit or DSU); (2) Training in commodity and monetization management, key DAP technical and logistical skills; (3) Employing training for transformation as a methodology for community-based management; and (4) Support for consultancies and fieldwork related to project site selection, M&E systems design, baseline data collection, and focused PRAs. Given the critical focus of monetization process as the “lynchpin for funding all DAP activities” (DAP/CRS Appendix A: 5), the front-loading proposal emphasized setting up the basic training for commodity tracking and management. During the same planning process, CADECOM and CRS decided to create an “Executive Board” to provide policy direction to the support unit, but did not clarify the “configuration of the board” (DAP Appendix A: 3).²

³ Key activities scheduled to start under the front end proposal included: establishing a support unit comprised of key technical staff; training in essential management skills including commodities, project financial and relevant expertise; identification of DAP target communities; focused PRAs and field work using training for transformation to further develop project designs and community participation and management mechanisms; baseline surveys; design of monitoring and evaluation systems; coordination of organizational structures and long-term strategies between CRS and our partners; procurement of basic equipment; and establishing a project office. (CRS/Malawi DAP, Appendix A: 1-3.)

⁴ The funds the Blantyre CADECOM received were used for salaries and supplies for its office. There was also support for some salaries of existing and new staff that the CADECOM felt that some salaries of existing and new staff were necessary.

- A parallel process of intensified partnership consultations⁵ and negotiations that produced a final draft of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that was provisionally approved by the Malawian bishops in January 2000 (Box 5.b).

Box 5.b. Operating Principles of the Memorandum of Understanding Between CRS and CADECOM (May 17, 2000) (Excerpted from the official text)

Subsidiary: The responsibility for decisions and their implementation should be as close as possible to the affected people.

Structure: The organizations shall utilize and strengthen already existing local structures or jointly establish any necessary new structures at the national, diocesan and parish level.

Implementation: Local structures shall be the primary implementers in undertaking programmatic activities. CADECOM structures shall facilitate the process of implementation with the assistance of CRS.

Resources: The organizations shall pool together private and public resources, as well as resources from sister Catholic organizations for the purpose of empowering local structures in the implementation of activities.

Programs: Any shared program interventions shall be undertaken in a joint manner between CADECOM and CRS while respecting the principles of subsidiary.

Fundraising: The organizations shall be transparent in approaching funding agencies. For joint ventures between CADECOM and CRS, the National Director of CADECOM and the CR of CRS shall decide through monthly meetings who shall be approached for funding, based on the nature of the project.

Communication: The organizations shall advocate for open communication between each other and amongst other institutions at all levels, and shall be committed to the ownership of the relationship. Some modes of communication the partners shall use shall be the following:

- Quarterly technical meetings
- Monthly meetings between the CADECOM National Director and the CR of CRS
- Joint communiqué

Consultative Committee: A consultative Committee shall be established in the spirit of the MOU and shall consist of: (1) the National Director of CADECOM, (2) the Country Representative of CRS, and (3) others appointed by the aforementioned members.

Source: CADECOM/CRS MOU 2000.

A.2. March 2000-September 30, 2001

Quick Start-Up: The project agreement was officially signed March 2, 2000.

- Within two months of signing, both Phalombe and Chikwawa had:
 - Established separate Blantyre offices for the DAP Support Unit (DSU)
 - Established project sub-offices (in Phalombe-part of the Blantyre Diocese)
 - Established a separate project office for CADECOM/Chikwawa
 - Mostly recruited a full team of technical supervisors (for agriculture, forestry, safety nets), accountants, and ADFs for the three Strategic Objectives that were started in this year (CRS/Malawi CSR4 FY00).

⁵ The new CRS Country Representative Makasa, alongside his CADECOM counterpart, Silverio Chidumu, CADECOM National Director, spoke with ECM Secretary General Father Peter Mulomole, about collaborating. At the end of July 1999, Steven J. Baines, Program Assistant, joined CRS. Baines was charged with the main responsibility of working on the partnership agreement between CADECOM and CRS. In September 1999 a meeting was held between CADECOM and CRS to discuss the way forward. What followed were a series of intensive interviews, meetings and workshops, during which CRS and CADECOM discussed the various mechanisms for managing their proposed partnership.

- Within three months, the original 82 target villages⁶ had been selected through a participatory process that involved the traditional authorities, as well as District Commissioners.
- Within four months (mid-May to Mid-June) the project had organized the baseline PRA studies that were needed to establish baseline measures on the key indicators and adjust targets and project strategies.
- On May 17, 2000 the MOU was officially signed.



The rapid speed with which the project was able to transition from signature to execution is clearly linked to CRS and CADECOM capacity building and planning during the CRS privately funded “front-loaded phase.”⁷ This type of frontloading was especially important in terms of establishing a clearer basis for the MOU and collaboration between the CADECOMs and CRS (Box 5.b).

One major impact of the CRS/Malawi DAP was to build CADECOM capacity for commodity management and accounting.

Institutional Impact on the CADECOMs

The pace of development during the first two years was dramatic as the Blantyre CADECOM scaled its employment from 16 employees in FY99 to 43 in FY00 and 49 in FY01; the Chikwawa CADECOM went from six employees (including guards) in FY99 to 35 in FY00 and 30 in FY01 (Annexes 5.c.1 and 5.c.2). Many of the stakeholders who were interviewed during the final evaluation emphasized the critical role of close proximity to the DSU base in Blantyre (one hour from Chikwawa; 1.5 hours from Phalombe) in facilitating this rapid expansion of the staff and DAP activities. These same interviews underscored the importance of focused technical backstopping from the CRS regional office in Harare and main office in Baltimore.

By and large, the major source of partnership frictions during the first year concerned the rough road toward harmonizing the CADECOM financial management systems with USAID requirements. Misunderstandings about “liquidation” (i.e., documentation required for accounting for funds disbursed) were a major source of friction between the DSU Director and

⁶ These later became 84 when some villages split.

⁷ It is common to find a long (8-12 month) delay between signature and the actual start-up of staff training and field activities in Title II programs, due to time lags in hiring, procurement, and developing a project office.

the CADECOM field offices.⁸ This tension was exacerbated by the slow rate of monetization during the first year, which delayed financial transfers to the CADECOMs.

The persistent centralization of financial management (and clearance) in the CRS/Lilongwe office (that had to clear on all financial questions raised to the DSU) became another bone of contention. These start-up tensions exacerbated the earlier sensitivity about CRS's need to respect the autonomy and increased capacity of the CADECOMs. What had once been heralded as a strength (the focused commitment of certain DSU Advisors to field supervision) became a deficit when it occurred without adequate notification through the CADECOM Directors.

Despite these "growing pains," most of the official targets identified in the IPTT (Indicator Performance Tracking Table) were:

"Met if not exceeded. This in the face of numerous problems encountered, including both drought and flooding in the project areas, not to mention infestations of elegant grasshoppers and termites which damaged crops and tree seedlings" (CSR4 FY01 2001: 8).

A.3. October 1, 2001-March 2004

In an effort to solve the growing conflicts between CRS and the CADECOM partners, the DAP Advisory Board asked CRS to conduct a detailed review of the role of the DAP Support Unit (Millennium Consulting Group 2001:2).⁹

Four options were put forward to resolve the issues between the CRS's DSU and the CADECOMs:

- Option one: Retain the DAP structure as it is (i.e., the DSU based in Blantyre) with modifications in problem sections.
- Option two: Close the DSU office in Blantyre and transfer DSU responsibilities and personnel to the CRS office in Lilongwe.
- Option three: Reduce the establishment at DSU (retain only technical positions related to M&E, safety net, agriculture and logistics) and enable the CADECOMs to get all administrative and financial support directly from CRS in Lilongwe.
- Option four: Move the CRS Office to Blantyre and merge it with DSU.

⁸ Although the CRS/DSU Director and the CRS Head of Programming attended a two week workshop on USAID financial guidelines and returned to offer a four day workshop to CADECOM staff, most staff and indeed many of the CRS staff felt they didn't know enough to avoid making mistakes.

⁹ The principal complaint was that: (a) Agriculture and M&E are so far the only sections that provide some effective technical support; (b) Logistics has not been very effective, although there is an appreciation in the limited advisory role being rendered; (c) The administrative and finance sections of the DSU did not appear to produce any technical support that was useful to them and indeed appeared to sometimes actively "suppress the implementation of the DAP activities" (ibid); (d) DSU was not (except for agriculture and M&E) adequately playing the role envisioned for it as a liaison between the two CADECOMS; (e) Certain non-DSU personnel (especially those based in Lilongwe who were responsible for reporting and planning the new generation of emergency operations implemented in FY02 to respond to the maize crisis first reported in FY01) tended to intervene directly, without following the required protocol, which made it "difficult for the [CADECOM] program directors to be fully knowledgeable of operations on the ground"; (f) Although the DSU was CRS (in terms of the policies it applied, its contractual obligations, its reporting requirements, and its conditions of service), it was not fully delegated the "authority to make [the] decisions" that it needed to represent CRS to the CADECOMs (Millennium Consulting Group 2001:2).

Although the lack of strong financial delegation to the DSU was the major complaint, the CADECOMs lobbied for option two and the unit was shut down and all the positions except logistics, monetization and M&E¹⁰ moved to Lilongwe in April 2002.

This move had a host of “downstream” consequences for program management and effectiveness that negatively affected the project during FY02 and FY03.

- *Reduced technical backstopping and supervision:* While the move gave them a more direct link to CRS /Lilongwe, it reduced the ability of the DSU to provide the types of technical backstopping that the CADECOMs both needed and appreciated (see Millennium Consulting Group 2001: 4-5). The chief exception was M&E, which continued to be serviced by the M&E Officer based in Blantyre until she relocated to Lilongwe in July 2003.
- *Contributed to DSU staff turnover and the loss of institutional goodwill at a critical point in the project cycle:* The way in which the move was conducted discouraged staff and led many to resign. By October 1, 2003, only one of the original Technical Advisors (the M&E Advisor) was still on the project and she subsequently left the project in January 2004. This high turnover leached out much of the institutional goodwill of the CADECOMs toward the DSU for helping with programming, and further reduced supervision and preparations for an eventual project phase-out.
- *Deflected new/remaining staff attention from the DAP to the 2002-2003 emergency programming operations:* The same move to Lilongwe reduced the amount of time that the DSU staff could devote to the project by exposing them to other CRS demands for their expertise in the design and execution of the various emergency programs (including C-SAFE and preparations for the I-LIFE) that flooded into CRS after 2002 (Table 5.a).
- *Contributed to staff turnover and the difficulty of training new CADECOM staff for Phalombe:* This combination of the DSU move with the stress associated with the rapid increase in emergency programming put additional stress on national CADECOM staff—especially at the isolated Phalombe office, which experienced a turnover in all its original technical supervisor positions except one in FY02 (Annex 5.c.1).

The DAP administrations’ ability to adjust to the move (at both CADECOM and CRS/Malawi levels) was complicated by several factors.

- The rapid increase in emergency programming that flooded CRS in FY02 and FY03 (12 new projects came on during this two-year time period and 20 new projects came on line in 2003, which meant they were designed during this time period.) (Table 5.a) This mirrored a parallel increase in funding for the CADECOMs and non-CRS “emergency” programming that was subcontracted through the two target CADECOMs in 2002 and 2003, including CSAFE (Table 5.b).

These emergency programs also coincided with high rates of turnover in almost all of the key administrative positions at CRS (those with the most direct experience), who left the project either permanently or temporarily in July 2002. This administrative vacuum continued until the current Country Representative was appointed in August 2003, which coincided with the senior

¹⁰ The M&E Officer was allowed to remain based in Blantyre due to family constraints.

Table 5.a. Evolution of Projects and Support for CRS/Malawi Since Its Founding in 1998

| Donor Source | Project Title | Start Date | 1998 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 |
|-------------------|--|--------------------------|--------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 1550-658U003 | Lilongwe Justice & Peace Commission (Phase II) | 1-Nov-2003 | | | | | | |
| 1050-6580000 | General Operating Fund | 1998 | | | | | | |
| 2280/2080-6580001 | Mzuzu AIDS Education & HBC Project (Phase II) | 1-Dec-1999 | | | | X | | |
| 1550/6773-6580002 | Nguludi Community Health Care Project | 1-Oct-1999 | | | | | X | |
| 6773- | Nguludi Community Health Care Project | 1-Oct-1999 | | | | | X | |
| 1550-6580003 | Staff Development Fund | 1-Oct-2002 | | | | | X | |
| 1550-6580004 | Regional Small Projects Fund (Gen) | 1-Oct-2002 | | | | | X | |
| 2280- | Regional Small Projects Fund (AIDS) | 1-Oct-2002 | | | | | X | |
| 2280-6580006 | CADECOM Dedza Integrated Food HIV/AIDS | 1-Oct-2001 | | | | | | X |
| 2280-6580008 | Diocese of Mzuzu Integrated Food Security | 1-Oct-2001 | | | | | | X |
| 1550-6580009 | National Justice & Peace Commission II | 1-Aug-01 | | | | | X | |
| 1412-6580010 | Chikwawa/Phalombe Food Project (2001) | 2001 | | | | | | |
| 5330-6580012 | DAP for FY02 | 1-Oct-2001 (Inactive) | | | | X | | |
| 2280-6580014 | Administration costs for HIV/AIDS Projects | 1-Oct-2003 | | | | | | X |
| 2280-6580015 | National CADECOM HIV/AIDS Position | 2002 | | | | | | |
| 1550-6580016 | Dedza Diocese for Justice & PeaceII | 1-Oct-2002 | | | | | | |
| 1550-6580017 | Mzuzu Diocese Justice & Peace | 1-Oct-2002 | | | | | X | |
| 5253-6580018 | Farm Bill 202(e) for FY02 | 1-Oct-2001 | | | | | | X |
| 2172/1550-6580019 | Economic Literacy Project | 1-Oct-2002 | | | | | | X |
| 1550-6580020 | Capacity Building/Partnership | 1-Oct-2003 | | | | | | X |
| 1412-6580021 | Emergency Preparedness | 30-Oct-2003 | | | | | | X |
| 1412-6580024 | Emergency Management Support | 2002 | | | | | X | |
| 5330-6580025 | DAP for FY03 | 1-Oct-2002 (Inactive) | | | | | X | |
| 5253-6580026 | Farm Bill | 2003 | | | | | | X |
| 1550-6580027 | DAP Extension Planning | 1-Oct-2003 | | | | | | X |
| 1550-6580028 | Project Overseas Allowance | 1-Oct-2003 | | | | | | X |
| 6770-6580029 | Joint Emergency Food Aid Programme | 1-Oct-2003 | | | | | | X |
| 5304-6580030 | OFDA Seed Distribution Project | 1-Oct-2003 | | | | | | X |
| 5322-6580031 | C-Safe ITSH | 1-Oct-2003 | | | | | | |
| 5297-6580032 | USAID/Malawi Emergency Food Aid | 2003 | | | | | | |
| 2280-6580033 | Zomba Diocese Integrated HIV/AIDS | 1-Nov-2002 | | | | | | |
| 6770-6580034 | JEFAP Phase II for FY03 | 1-Oct-2003 | | | | | X | |
| 5338-6580035 | CoGuard (Supplementary Feeding) | 2003 | | | | | | X |
| 6773-6580036 | Nutrition Surveys FY03 | 2003 | | | | | | X |
| 1550-6580037 | Lilongwe Justice and Peace | 2003 | | | | | | X |
| 1550-6580038 | Chikwawa Justice and Peace | 2003 | | | | | | X |
| 5330-6580039 | DAP FY2004 | 1-Oct-2003 | | | | | | X |
| 5253-6580040 | Farm Bill – FY2004 | 2004 | | | | | | |
| 1550-6580041 | Adm. costs for Justice & Peace | 2004 | | | | | | |
| 5322-6580042 | C-Safe 202(e) | 2003 | | | | | | X |
| 5322-6580043 | C-Safe ITSH – FY2004 | 2004 | | | | | | |
| 5322-6580044 | C-Safe (E) – FY2004 | 2004 | | | | | | |
| 1555-6580045 | St. Gabriel's HIV/AIDS | 2003 | | | | | | X |
| 6770-6580046 | JEFAP II – FY2004 | 2004 | | | | | | X |
| 2580-6580047 | LISTEN FY2004 | 2004 | | | | | | |
| 1550-6580051 | Cap. Building for Chikwawa CCJP | 2004 | | | | | | |
| 2280-6580052 | Integrated HIV/AIDS Program for Mzuzu Diocese | 2004 | | | | | | |

Table 5.b. Evolution of CRS and Non-CRS Facilitated Grant Support for the Blantyre CADECOM, FY97-Present

| Dates (beginning-end) | Blantyre | Phalombe | Projects /donor | Activities | Amount ¹¹ |
|-----------------------|----------|----------|-----------------------|--|----------------------|
| | X | | CARITAS Germany | Relief | |
| | X | | CARITAS Netherlands | Pilot-Food Sec-Mwanza | |
| 2000-2003 | X | | CRS (private funding) | Environmental Health Program. Chiladzulu District | |
| 2000-2004 | X | X | DAP USAID CRS | Integrated Food Security – Phalombe | |
| 2000-2004 | X | | CORDAID | Integrated Food Security and Nutrition-Program, Mwanza | |
| 2002-2005 | X | | MISEREOR | Administration support (Blantyre): 25% director salary, gardener, guard for warehouse, 1 driver, phone line + 1 cell phone, computer (2) | |
| 2002-2003 | X | X | CRS/OFDA | Emergency operation: Seed & food Processing- Phalombe | |
| Nov 2002-April 2003 | X | | TROCAIRE | Emergency operation: Mwanza (300 km from project site) | |
| Nov 2002-April 2003 | X | | CARITAS Austria | Emergency operation: Thyolo District (100 km from DAP sites) | |
| June 2003-present | X | | CARITAS Austria | Agricultural Rehabilitation of Thyolo District (100 km from DAP sites) | |
| 2003 | X | | UNICEF | Malaria Project | |
| 2003-2004 | X | X | C-SAFE (USAID) | Emergency (food aid, FFW, Chronically Ill) | |

Source: CADECOM/CRS, Phalombe, July 27, 2004.

CRS/Malawi staff member Martin Mtika (who became Project Coordinator) returning from foreign studies. (Annex 5.c.3).

Unfortunately this emergency response and staff turnover coincided with the fieldwork portion of the mid-term evaluation (8 July –August 15, 2002), which affected CRS’s supervision of the mission Scope of Work. Especially important was the fact that there was no comprehensive review of the Indicator Performance Tracking Table (IPTT) for targets as mandated in the Title II guidance.

During this difficult transition, CRS/Malawi had to host the acting Country Representatives and one temporary Country Representatives who only stayed six months. The problems were further complicated by breakdowns in food delivery (due to spoiled food) in October-November 2002.

¹¹ Amounts not relevant to the evaluation and are not represented here unless deemed relevant by CADECOM/Phalombe. They were useful to the external review team, however, in understanding the CADECOM’s wider portfolio.

The turnover put pressure on partnership relationships that boiled over in a special partnership meeting in January 2003 that Driss Mamoune, from the CRS/Regional Team in Zimbabwe, came to facilitate (Annex 5.b). The same conflicts, combined with the amount of energy being consumed by the emergency initiatives, further delayed the start-up of some of the key health activities, which the DAP envisioned would start from FY03 until FY04 (Chapter Three).¹² The same turnover made it difficult to convene the DAP Advisory Board, since its statutes require that the CRS Country Representative be present.

The nomination of a new Country Representative in August 2003, combined with Mitka's return (July 2003) and subsequent appointment as Program Coordinator, helped stabilize the situation and move planning forward on the long delayed health component (Annex 5.b). A new round of conflicts (these related to the internal conflicts within the Chikwawa Diocese itself) erupted in November 2003 and delayed the execution of the health subcomponent another three months. This conflict, in combination with I-LIFE funding limitations, which only allowed consortium partners to choose one district, forced CRS to choose Mchinji over Chikwawa for the follow-on Title II project.¹³ The same conflicts disrupted the regular scheduling of the DAP Advisory Board¹⁴ meetings, as well as the quarterly technical review meetings.

A.4. March 2004-August 2004

One unintended consequence of the November 2003-March 2004 Chikwawa crisis was to "shock" all CRS, CADECOM, traditional, and government partners into a renewed appreciation of the critical importance of the CRS-CADECOM partnership

To symbolize their recommitment to the partnership, a symbolic review and recommitment to a revised Memorandum of Understanding was held on June 1, 2004 as part of the "7th Partnership Reflection." The revised MOU is still under consideration and is reportedly soon to be signed.

In April 2004, the first technical quarterly meeting in over a year was rescheduled. During the same month, the CRS DSU staff from Lilongwe attended both CADECOM's quarterly review staff meetings to discuss the final evaluation and final evaluation PRAs and to discuss phase-out.

¹² In FY03, CRS embarked on 10 months of a DA supported Emergency Supplementary Feeding program (SFP) in DAP sites and adjacent sites, whose goal was (1) to treat moderate malnutrition in the health centers of the targets sites, and 2) to increase the capacity of CRS, partners staff .. CRS planned to phase in the CBHC system (on top of these activities in FY04, with help from the CRS Baltimore based Senior Technical Health Advisor and CRS Regional Head Advisor based in Harare (CSR4 FY2002: 9).

¹³ CRS had originally intended to intervene in two dioceses (Chikwawa and Mchinji) before the funding limitations forced CRS to choose one. Poverty indicators (documented) plus management concerns led CRS to finally choose Mchinji (personal communication, M. Mtika, September 2004).

¹⁴ The current by-laws require that the CRS Country Representative be present for a DAP Advisory Board meeting.

B. Factors that affected Project Implementation and Partnership Processes

B.1. Four-Pronged Village Intervention Model

The village implementation structure, through the CADECOMs to the ADFs and FDF to the village structures of the village based committees and volunteers, was highly appreciated by all partners (Box 5.c). In general there has been very little staff turnover at this level. From the start, there was the expectation that the ADFs would only be temporary positions and that their positions would not last beyond the duration of the project. Major factors that contributed to the success of the specific sector models are discussed in greater detail in Chapters Two through Four.

The chief factors that decreased the effectiveness of the model were:

- The partial and late implementation of the health intervention structures (Chapter Four), which affected other activities that were influenced by them; and
- The fact that villagers did not always understand the relationship between the project and the Catholic Church—especially in times of famine, when Catholic villagers were often tempted to exclude others.

Box 5.c. Effectiveness of Village-level Intervention Model (Quote)

“CADECOM will leave but the knowledge will stay with us.”
Maligezi Mathibwi, Group Village Headman, Mulambo, Phalombe District.

B.2. Project Management through the CADECOMs with Oversight from the Dioceses

One major strength of this project, which dramatically increases its chances for sustainability, is its establishment of long-term linkages with the development wing of the Catholic Church. The villagers’ familiarity with CADECOM’s past program helped legitimize the project’s intervention model from the start. Financial oversight from the Catholic Church, which required the Bishop or his designated appointee, to sign all project’s financial documents guaranteed a high level of fiscal accountability.

Uneven knowledge about each partner’s expectations in terms of accountability was a major source of conflict in two important groups of partners: (a) CADECOM and CRS, and (b) the dioceses and CADECOM/CRS. For the partnership to work most effectively all of the key partners need to have the same basic knowledge.

All partners involved in the direct execution (CRS, CADECOM) or oversight (Diocesan Vicars) of the project should have the same working knowledge of the USAID funding agency, as well as Title II program and budget regulations.

Although the CADECOMs institutional capacity was assessed during the design phase, neither CRS nor the CADECOMs made any effort to monitor the shifts in this capacity that occurred during the project. As a result, it is difficult to “track” the major gains in capacity that did occur.

It was also difficult for the CRS administration to identify some of the important gaps in CADECOM capacity—such as their knowledge of CRS financial rules.

B.3. CRS Technical Support through the DAP Support Unit (DSU)

There is unilateral agreement that the original DAP model for the DAP Support Unit was an effective model for building CADECOM capacity and ensuring regular supervision and backstopping. Major factors that contributed to the success of that model were:

- The high quality staff that were capable of dealing with outside governmental and nongovernmental partners;
- Technical backstopping from the CRS/regional and headquarters office—especially for monetization, agriculture, and commodity management (health has been very recent); and
- Proximity to the project sites—i.e. the DSU was more effective when it was based in Blantyre than after it moved to Lilongwe.

Major factors that detracted from the success of the model were:

- High levels of turnover (over 100%) in the DSU technical positions once the unit was moved back to Lilongwe;
- The Project Coordinator’s inadequate knowledge of CRS and Title II/USAID financial procedures; and
- Inadequate understanding by all parties of the role of the CRS Technical Advisors in building CADECOM capacity, which created jealousies about their respective power domains.

B.4. CRS/CADECOM Partnership Coordination Mechanisms

One major achievement of the DAP was the major achievement of the CRS/CADECOM was to create a series of national and DAP-specific coordination mechanisms. That included:

- *Quarterly Technical Meetings*: quarterly technical meetings that bring together, at the DSU office in Blantyre, the CADECOM Directors and Technical Supervisors for a one-day reporting and planning session;
- *DAP Advisory Board*: The terms of reference for the DAP Advisory Board were formally approved July 3, 2001;¹⁵ and
- *CADECOM/CRS Partnership Reflections*: that grew out of the partnership reflections during the preceding year under the pilot front-loaded project.

¹⁵ The Board includes: one representative of the Bishop from each of the implementing dioceses of Chikwawa and Blantyre; Chairpersons of CADECOM; the CRS Country Representative; the CADECOM National Director; the ECM Secretary General; the CRS/DAP Liaison; the CRS Senior Project Officer; National CADECOMs Board Chair; and the Program Coordinator (Terms of Reference, Advisory Board 2001: 2). The Board chairmanship was to be “held interchangeably between the CRS Country Representative and CADECOM National Director.” The TOR also specified that, “No member of the board shall attend meetings of the board by representative except in exceptional circumstances. This provision does not apply to the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson who can delegate others to attend. However, such delegates may not preside over the meeting.”

During the same time period (FY00) the two CADECOMs working with CRS developed a parallel model for intra-diocesan coordination and reporting with their village and district government partners.

- *Monthly Review Staff Meetings:* The first level coordination was the organization of regular monthly review meetings in each village. The meetings were typically organized by the ADF (or in his/her absence by one of the committee heads) between the 20th and 23rd of the month (Table 5.c). The same meetings provided the mechanism for reporting on activities and setting targets for the next month using standard forms developed by the CRS DSU that were then analyzed and published in a monthly report by the M&E Advisor.
- *Quarterly Village and CADECOM-Wide DAP Review Meetings:* Each quarter, the villages in a section (1-5 villages in a watershed being supervised by a single ADF) would regroup for a quarterly section/watershed review meeting. These meetings would provide a forum for the community organizations to report on their DAP activities during the quarter and targets for the next quarter (Box 5.d). These syntheses were then reviewed in a staff quarterly review meeting at a central location or in the project office; although attendance records were not kept, some government officials (such as Field Assistants [FAs]) appear to have attended these debriefings. When the DAP Support Unit was based at Blantyre, these meetings were often attended by the CRS/DSU M&E and Agricultural Advisors. The M&E Officer would then synthesize the results from the quarterly review meetings at each site into a quarterly report.

Table 5.c. Quarterly Staff Review Meetings and DAP M&E Training Exercises for the Chikwawa DAP, FY00-FY04

| Date | Type of meeting | Attendance | | Total |
|---|---|------------|---|-------|
| | | M | F | |
| 21 st – 27 th May 2000 | PRA at Lunzu | 16 | 8 | 24 |
| 5 th – 10 th June 2000 | PRA practicals field | 16 | 8 | 24 |
| 11 th – 13 th July 2000 | PRA review at Chikwawa Boma | 16 | 8 | 24 |
| 6 th October 2000 | Staff quarterly review meeting | 15 | 4 | 19 |
| 20 th April 2001 | Staff quarterly review meeting | 20 | 6 | 26 |
| 17 th October 2001 | Staff quarterly review meeting | 16 | 8 | 24 |
| 4 th – 5 th February 2002 | Staff quarterly review meeting | 21 | 6 | 27 |
| 18 th April 2002 | Staff quarterly review meeting | 23 | 6 | 29 |
| 22 nd July 2002 | Staff quarterly review meeting | 16 | 6 | 22 |
| 7 th – 14 th August 2003 | Community based monitoring and evaluation | 12 | 4 | 16 |
| 18 th November 2003 | Staff quarterly review meeting | 16 | 8 | 24 |
| 15 th March 2004 | Staff quarterly review meeting | 19 | 6 | 25 |

Source: CADECOM Records, July 2004.

Although records do not indicate how many government partners attended, the CADECOM staff reported that these quarterly review meetings were a major forum for coordinating with the senior technical people from the district level government offices.

The current DAP and CADECOM/CRS MOU emphasizes the creation of national and regional level coordination structures to facilitate communication between the partners. The structures

rated most useful by the CADECOM partners were those “closest to the ground”, such as the quarterly review staff meetings.¹⁶ The same stakeholder analysis (with different CADECOM, diocesan, and CRS employees) identified ways that specific structures could be strengthened or improved (Annex 5.a).

B.5. CRS Technical Backstopping and Supervision of the Project and Partnership Processes

CRS’s decision to accept the invitation to open an office in Malawi signaled the dawn of a new day for Catholic Church related charities. Specifically, it opened the doors to enable them to connect for the first time with large-scale international non-Catholic donors. CRS’s extensive experience with the design, execution and implementation of USAID and other UN agency programs helped protect the CADEDOMS and the diocese by ensuring compliance with these

Box 5.d. DAP Quarterly Review Meetings Held in Phalombe and Chikwawa (excerpts from October-December 2000 and October-December 2001 Quarterly Reports)

“The DAP had review meetings to find out progress made against plans, find out reasons for the state of affairs and to solicit suggestions for a way forward. These meetings were done at two levels, first with farmers through their local leaders and then with the field staff. In Phalombe the meetings with the local leaders took place on 8th and 9th January 01, while with staff the meeting took place on 10th January 01 at Naminjiwa Residential Training Centre in Chikwawa. Meetings with farmers took place from 8th to 10th January 01 while that with field staff took place on 12th January 01. *Source: Quarterly Report. October-December 2000.*

“In Chikwawa, the Agricultural Development Facilitators (ADFs) conducted the meetings with the farmers first with full supervision from the Agricultural Development Specialists (ADS) and Monitoring & Evaluation Officer (M&E) and this was followed by staff review meetings where ADFs, government field assistants, ADS, Safety Net Coordinator (SNC), Forestry Development Facilitator (AFD) and the M&E were in participation. During this meeting, each ADF made summary presentations of his/her sectional progress against plans. After each presentation, discussions were held to underline the farmers’ views and get real issues originating from the farmers. In Phalombe, due to logistical problems, quarterly review meetings with farmers failed. However, using the monthly planning and review meetings, the achievements have been assessed. Only staff review meetings were held.”

Source: Quarterly Report for October to December 2001.

agencies’ regulations. For this reason, there was a great deal of excitement on the part of the national CADECOMs about developing the DAP as a pilot initiative to “pilot test” this type of relationship.

Technical backstopping from the CRS/Regional and CRS/HQ offices was consistent and focused for the early start up of the agriculture program (years 1-3, Annex 5.b) and consistent throughout the project on financial management, monetization and commodity management. In both cases,

¹⁶ Sample attendance 26 February 2003 Advisory Board. Members present: National Director CADECOM (Chair), CRS Director of Programs, ECMSG, Acting Country Rep/Malawi (John McCuen), Vicar General Chikwawa, Vicar General, Blantyre, Chairperson Blantyre Archdiocese, Deputy Director of Programs/CRS. In attendance: Management Consultant/ SARO, Head of CRS Blantyre Office, CRS Safety Net Advisor, CRS Agricultural Advisor, CRS M&E Advisor.

this technical backstopping was seen as having dramatically increased the quality of the project's design and effectiveness (Box 5.e). The most intensive period of technical backstopping for the village level activities coincided with the time that the DSU was located at Blantyre. Since the DSU was the major organ for the orchestration of CRS technical backstopping and supervision, it is hard to disaggregate the impact of one from the other. The smooth operation of the project was further helped by consistent staff patterns during the early years.

Box 5.e. Effectiveness of Technical Backstopping from the CRS Regional Office (Quote)

“CRS Regional backstopping played a role in trying to cement the partnership between us and in identifying areas where we could collaborate... Out of over 70 partners, I would rank them in the top 5% in terms of program impact and the quality of their reporting on the technologies that we gave them.” Zwide D. Jere, Malawi Director, Total Land Care.

Once the DSU moved to Lilongwe in April 2002, technical backstopping from CRS regional agriculture office was perceived by CADECOM partners as less consistent. In contrast to the first 2.5 years, technical backstopping in the second half of the project focused on:

- Designing and implementing a slew of “disaster emergency projects” that intervened during the years; and then
- Developing the new follow-up Title II I-LIFE Consortium’s monitoring and evaluation plan and technical proposal.

CRS field supervision was further complicated by staff turnover at two levels: in the national program office (column “CRS Staff,” Annex 5.b) and in the CRS DAP Support Unit’s Technical and Project Coordinator positions (Annex 5.c.3). Although none of the national program office positions (Deputy Director Head of Programming, Country Representative) were paid through the DAP, the rigorous CRS internal management systems required the persons occupying these positions to play a direct role in project administration. High levels of staff turnover and interim replacements or “acting” representatives was singled out by CADECOM staff, local government and even traditional chiefs as having a very negative effect on project implementation during the second phase of the project. The problem was not one of negligence. The problem was one of “institutional memory” about the partnerships, as well as building “trust” in a particular person, not a post. In the view of the CADECOM and diocesan staff, each new international staff member had their own idea about how the CADECOM-CRS partnership should be managed and how the rules should be interpreted.

C. Lessons Learned

This final section summarizes major lessons learned from the DAP for future Title II programming and CRS programming in Malawi. Many of these “lessons learned” have already been incorporated into the design of the I-LIFE Consortium and participation in that consortium.

The DAP Four-Pronged Village Intervention Model

- (1) *Endeavor to start all activities together in order to capitalize on “synergies”*: In retrospect, USAID should help facilitate all activities starting during the same year even if some activities (like health) are phased in later than those for other technical.
- (2) *Improve training records*: Despite millions of dollars the project spent to train villagers, the project records for recording this are inadequate. Future projects need to develop a framework for collecting gender-disaggregated data on training. Greater care must be given to monitoring government participation in these training and how this links to “phase out” plans to sustain the DAP’s achievements over time.
- (3) *Monitor local community capacity (M&E) and consider putting a local capacity indicator in the official Indicator Performance Tracking Table (IPTT)*:
 - *Monitor capacity*: While there is ample qualitative and quantitative evidence that the DAP built local capacity to identify and respond to—and avert—food crises, this capacity was not measured. This is a “missed opportunity” since the process of developing such a tool could have provided a framework for helping the CADECOMs and villages better prepare for a time when the DAP would not longer be there. Future projects need to adopt simple self-assessment tools for measuring village level capacity and monitoring it over time. Some of the sample frameworks that might be used to do this are described in Chapter Six.
 - *Create an indicator for community capacity*: Given the importance of local capacity building as the major impact of the village-level intervention model, future projects should include at least one indicator that measures this capacity and sets targets for it in the official IPTTs.
 - *Conduct more fine tuned analysis of the impact of specific training models like “Training for Transformation” (TfT) on community cohesion and Capacity*: The lack of cohesion between different ethnic and religious groups had a clear impact on project effectiveness in many villages, especially in Chikwawa. TfT training has been, and will continue to be, an established methodology for building cohesiveness in the Malawi CADECOMs and Catholic charities. Although TfT training was conducted under the DAP, it was not a major focus. Future programs need to: (a) monitor village cohesion and empowerment “indicators” as part of the development of more broad-based cross-cutting community indices (see above) and (b) examine the linkage between these indicators and TfT training. If there is a clear link, then CRS should provide more structured support to this in their future programming.

Execution through the CADECOMs

- (4) *Continue to clarify partnership relationships (as was done under the DAP) in signed memoranda of understanding and partnership agreements*: Future DAP MOUs and Project Agreements need to continue to spell out and clarify the relationship between the USAID, CRS, the diocese, and diocesan level CADECOMs, as CRS is already doing. While an MOU is a good start, this probably needs to be supplemented with a detailed “orientation packet” on the project. Unlike an MOU, which is a highly specific legal agreement, the orientation package could be updated without the same sort of detailed

- review. It could still, however, serve as a historic point of reference in clarifying the partners' expectations
- (5) *Continue to strengthen communication with and capacity of the diocesan officials in districts where CRS collaborates with its CADECOM partners:* There is a strong need for regular consistent communication between diocesan officials who oversee the CADECOMs so that they understand the project's objectives, the official indicators and targets by which they will be assessed, and the mechanisms for the development of and management of the diocese-level budgets. Parish priests should also be briefed on a regular consistent basis about the project's activities, structure, monitoring and the evaluation system.
 - (9) *Complement baseline capacity assessments of the CADECOMs (as was done under the DAP) with annual capacity reassessments and consider including at least one program capacity indicator in the official IPTT:* Future programs need to convert baseline capacity assessments (like the one CRS conducted of the CADECOMs in 1998) into capacity indices that are monitored regularly as part of the M&E and administrative system. This type of skills assessment would assist both CRS and CADECOM in understanding the long-term capacity issues that need to be addressed even once the project ends.
 - (10) *Train and retrain CADECOM partners in USAID rules and regulations (training):* Key diocesan personnel, as well as all CADECOM staff need basic training and regular retraining on USAID rules and regulations. Periodic updates of the program index described above should verify that staff are familiar with basic knowledge and guidance. Specific recommendations include:
 - *DAP design:* Build basic training on USAID guidance reporting and procedures into the orientation activities that should precede any DAP design activity for the CADECOMs and at least one other diocesan official who is responsible for CADECOM oversight. Partners should be provided with a standard one-page guide that describes key concepts as a means of cross checking.
 - *Backup:* Ensure that any grant development activity or training exercise is accompanied by appropriate training materials that can serve as "user friendly" reference guides at later dates. CRS should monitor (annually) access to basic project guidance and reports in three each of the CADECOM and Vicar's offices as part of the capacity index described below.
 - *Basic training in guidance and procedures:* Provide basic on-site (near the project location) training that will: (a) familiarize CADECOM, CRS and any key diocesan staff with the Title II Food Security Strategy paper, (b) introduce the concept of results-based monitoring and evaluation and its role in project management, and (c) "walk staff through" a financial reporting training exercise.
 - *Continuous training:* Basic training should be given thorough follow-up through on-site monitoring to ensure basic understandings of procedures and guidance. Ideally this monitoring should be structured into some sort of "self-assessment" tool so that CADECOM Directors and CRS staff are more aware of which skills are lacking and which are strong.¹⁷

¹⁷ A simple tool might rank individuals (Directors, Technical Advisors) 1-5 on five or six variables such as: a) knowledge of the USAID/FFP strategy document, b) knowledge about general monitoring and evaluation tools like indicators and IPTTs, c) knowledge about financial regulations and rules for liquidation of project funds, d)

- (8) *Hire on-site Project Coordinators:* It is better to openly recruit and hire a skilled Project Coordinator whose function is separate from that of the CADECOM Director, with rare exceptions (such as the case of the Diocese of Chikwawa, in which the CADECOM had almost no other grant support when the project started). Having a DAP Project Coordinator keeps the management of the DAP separate from the other activities and duties that occupy the CADECOM Director¹⁸ and allows for the type of intensive supervision and technical follow-up that is needed to achieve results within the short project time period. This lesson learned (from Phalombe) does not disallow covering a portion of the CADECOM Director's salary from grant funds, given the important role that this person plays in communication with the diocese, with CRS/Lilongwe, and the field.

Creation of a Decentralized Project Support Unit (like the DSU)

- (9) *Post qualified technical staff to the units as was done under the DAP:* CRS Technical Advisors need to have: (a) the necessary technical background to link to key technical partner (such as agricultural research organizations for ag/NRM, UNICEF, or the Ministry of Health for Child Survival); (b) a commitment to and background in field supervision and training; and (c) the means (i.e. project vehicle) to conduct their work. The original DSU team of Technical Advisors was an example of "best practice" that showed major project impact. Unlike the Coordinator, it is absolutely critical that these specialists be posted at or near the project site.
- (10) *Develop better CRS systems for recognizing, rewarding and retaining competent technical staff in decentralized units like the DSU when it was at Blantyre:* For CRS to retain qualified personnel in these decentralized positions, it needs to develop better systems for recognizing (and rewarding) technical excellence in backstopping and service to the CADECOMs in their annual evaluations and staff newsletters and recognition ceremonies. All too often the CRS system seems to emphasize "bureaucratic" over "technical" excellence when it is that very technical expertise (along with their stellar financial management systems) that sets them apart. One way to better systematize this type of feedback on Technical Advisors is to link it to routine technical backstopping missions from the CRS/Regional office (see recommendations for agriculture/NRM Chapter Two).
- (11) *Review the technical training and skills needed by a DSU Coordinator based on lessons learned under the DAP:* A DAP Support Unit Manager or Coordinator needs more than training if she/he is to be effective. He/she needs extensive experience in CRS and USAID rules and regulations and processes for resolving problems within the CRS/Lilongwe and USAID/Title II management systems. Given the critical importance of this person's connection to CRS, they could also reside in Lilongwe and make frequent field visits (one of four options posed by the consultant team that reviewed the DSU in 2001). The DSU Coordinator also needs to be empowered by CRS/Lilongwe to manage her/his staff in a way that ensures that they work collaboratively and provide written feedback (simple trip reports) on their field activities with the CADECOMs.

awareness of reporting writing formats, and d) ability to calculate the major indicators with the project M&E data from project data collection forms.

¹⁸ The original DAP anticipated that the Phalombe project would be operated out of the Blantyre office.

- (12) *Strengthen in-house training and basic documentation and orientation materials:* For DSU staff to provide this type of leadership they need to be adequately trained and “mentored” in USAID financial, monitoring, and evaluation guidelines. Staff records (Annex 5.c.3) show that a high percentage of the staff who attended international training workshops were international staff; others were national staff who are no longer with the project. Better systemization of this training with backup manuals and orientation packages needs to be developed to ensure that training stays in the program. The same systemization would increase program effectiveness by reducing the huge labor costs associated with losing and retraining new staff.
- (13) *Build risk and vulnerability into future designs and monitor preparedness as part of the program capacity index described under recommendations for “execution through the CADECOMs”:* DAP programming was negatively affected by the tremendous “blast” of ill coordinated diocesan and national level relief efforts in 2002 and 2003. Yet periodic floods and droughts are a fact of life in Malawi. Future CRS Title II DAPs and DAP Support Units need to anticipate the possible occurrence of drought-related emergencies like 2002-2003 and try to find ways to minimize the impact that these programs have on the implementation of core strategies that are needed to sustain food security in post-emergency situations by:
- *Emergency Preparedness:* Building emergency preparedness into the capacity building of the local community organizations (see CRS/CARITAS/Niger for excellent models of how to do this);
 - *Staff:* Protecting DAP-funded CADECOM staff from the lure of CRS (and non-CRS) “emergency operations” and new programs (that often pay *per diems* to entice staff when they are not able to find suitable candidates or cannot afford to hire their own staff), especially when they are not directly related to the DAP-affected communities; and
 - *Emergencies:* Grafting emergency activities onto core activities within existing subcomponents, rather than stopping them.

CRS/CADECOM Partnership Coordination Mechanisms

- (14) *DAP Advisory Board model:* While most stakeholders (CADECOM, diocesan, CRS staff) consider the DAP Advisory Board a useful “construct,” the board’s current statutes about attendance and membership decrease its effectiveness. Staff recommend that future programs consider:
- *Statutes:* Reworking the statutes, periodicity (every six months instead of quarterly), membership (include Diocese CADECOM Directors) and importance of this board in order to facilitate communication;¹⁹ and
 - *Field Visits:* Reworking board meetings to include field visits to increase understanding of field level impact of projects and issues.
- (15) *Stakeholder reflection meetings:* Hold these at regularly scheduled intervals and plan well in advance.
- (16) *CRS-CADECOM quarterly technical review meetings:* Traditionally, only the CADECOM Technical Supervisors and Directors and CRS staff attended the quarterly

¹⁹ This recommendation was made at mid-term (Gil Enterprise Consultants 2002: 50).

DAP technical review meetings, which were outlined in the CADECOM-CRS MOU. Although the meetings were considered useful, the recent expansion of the meetings to include ADFs, as well as the CADECOM Technical Advisors and Directors and CRS staff was considered to have greatly strengthened their utility and relevance. CRS attendance at these meetings was considered very useful. Unfortunately, CRS attendance dropped once the last two of the original group of Technical Advisors left the project.

Follow-up: Follow-up on action items from all meetings is crucial: Action items need to have clear documentation regarding who will resolve the issue, how it will be done and the deadline for resolution. Subsequent meetings should review previous action items and assure that they are resolved prior to raising additional issues.

CRS Technical Backstopping

Staff turnover is a fact of life in international agencies like CRS. One cannot eliminate turnover, but one can reduce the negative the impact of staff turnover on future large-scale projects like the DAP by taking actions to:

- (17) *Train and empower national staff to manage critical national partnerships:* CRS continues to rely heavily on international and regional CRS employees for knowledge of program and financial regulations. The inevitable turnover in these positions (every 1-2 years) creates a vacuum that another international staff member or regional expert must field. The same turnover caused serious partnership problems since each new staff member wanted to introduce his or her special style with regard to the partnership and leadership arrangement. At the same time, many CRS national staff members are known and recognized as capable leaders by the CADECOM partners, but under-utilized in areas where they have capability and potential, such as in Title II regulations for programs and finance.
- (18) *Help the CADECOMs adopt the CRS system of “handover” notes and orientation modules:* Other tools for reducing the impact of turnover include anticipating the need for better management of turnover when it occurs, such as developing handover notes and in-house training modules on guidance, rules, and regulations both in the CADECOM offices and CRS (training).²⁰
- (19) *Make greater and more consistent use of CRS’s excellent system of regional technical experts to backstop project positions (not just individuals):* More consistent linking of key national staff to technical positions—not individuals—in the CRS/Regional office is another tool for monitoring staff capacity and training and minimizing the effects of turnover.

²⁰ The CRS system of having Technical Advisors prepare detailed “handover notes” when they left the project is an example of “best practice” that should be shared with their CADECOM partners.

Chapter Six

Project Organization and Processes: Effectiveness of the Project Strategy and Monitoring and Evaluation Systems

This chapter examines the five other cross-cutting questions about the effectiveness of project organization and processes that were not addressed in Chapter Five based on the analysis of the technical teams (agriculture/NRM, health/nutrition) and the management sub-team as described in Chapter One. Specifically:

Section A: Have the activities and methodology been effective in attaining project strategic objectives both in quantitative and qualitative terms?

Section B: Have the community organization efforts been appropriate?

Section C: Is the resource input reasonable in relation to results (cost-benefit)? Are the interventions and activities appropriate in terms of cost and given the local conditions (socio-economic and environmental)? Are they effective and sustainable?

Section D: Has CRS adequately networked with other institutions and organizations in order to ensure meeting project objectives?

Section E: Has the project's M&E system collected appropriate, timely, and accurate information? Has that information been used for project decision-making?

The final section (F) summarizes global lessons learned and recommendations for future programming.

A. Effectiveness of the Global Strategy

A.1. Achieving DAP Strategic Objectives and Intermediate Results

Despite two major droughts, the basic CADECOM/CRS methodologies for agriculture, NRM and Safety Nets outlined in the DAP have been maintained and adapted to field conditions in ways that help resolve specific constraints (Chapters Two and Four).

In contrast, the DAP's health strategy has been only partially executed due: (a) to the US government's request to delay the health component to year three of the project, and (b) a series of other delays caused by the emergency drought, internal conflicts within some of the CADECOM partners, and CRS delays in supervision.¹

The health evaluation sub-team feels that given appropriate support and direction for at least one, or if possible two, additional years, there is a strong possibility that the methodology can achieve its original impacts and objectives (Chapter Three). The same health/safety net evaluation sub-team that identified several sub-components might need to supplement the proposed health extension if it is to achieve its desired goals (Chapters Three and Four).

¹ The delays in supervision were due to conflicting demands from emergency programs as well as staff turnover.

Box 6.a. CRS/Malawi DAP Financial Systems**At CRS:**

CRS uses Sun system in producing accounts.

CRS has an accountant who is responsible for the DAP project.

The accountant is responsible for visiting the partners and providing them with training.

This accountant does not handle all DAP transactions alone, but is assisted by other accountants in finance. The work of this accountant is reviewed by a senior accountant.

If there is a request for an advance, a payment request is submitted to finance.

A finance clerk will then raise a cash disbursement voucher and draft a letter to the bank requesting the bank to transfer the funds to the partner.

The partner will only be given an advance if liquidation of over 70% of their outstanding advance has been submitted to CRS.

Counterparts:

Budgets are prepared by the counterpart and reviewed by CRS.

Counterparts maintain cashbooks and produce monthly statements for review.

Duties are segregated by having an accountant prepare the voucher. The project coordinator authorizes the vouchers. The Bishop or board member will sign the check.

Where goods or services of over MK 2,000 are being bought, the counterpart is required to provide three quotes.

A separate bank account is operated for DAP funds.

The partner is required to submit financial reports to CRS by the 5th of the following month.

The counterpart will only spend as per approved budget.

The counterpart is responsible for obtaining all supporting documents for all expenditures incurred by the project.

All expenditure documents must have the project number and the general ledger account number.

All our counterparts use manual systems of accounting.

Source: CRS/Malawi Programming Office.

A.2. Achieving DAP Objectives for Capacity-Building of the CADECOMs

Although capacity building was a major goal of the DAP, the DAP was deliberately vague on the specificities of this beyond identifying six key areas where capacity needed to be built (based on the 1998 CADECOM capacity needs assessment that CRS commissioned during the preplanning phase). These six key areas are spelled out in the DAP Proposal's Annex A.² One major impact of the CADECOMs was to introduce (through the DAP) a more rigorous system of budget preparation and liquidation of project funds. The impact of this system can be seen in the steady improvements in the CADECOM's capacity to develop and manage budgets. The rigorous financial and administrative systems (Box 6.a) and technical trainings that CRS introduced under the DAP have helped the CADECOMs attract other project funds and to increase the number of non-DAP positions associated with their organizations (Annexes 5.c.1 and 5.c.2). Although the diocesan CADECOMs' capacity has been built up, this was not the result of a deliberate, focused strategy that was monitored by the project M&E system for either general administrative or technical issues. Part of the problem seems to be that the original DAP saw this as a function for

² The DAP (Annex A 1999: 4) proposal stated that: "The following are considered the key frontloading training modules: monitoring and evaluation techniques; human resource management, financial management with special emphasis on Title II resource management, Training for Transformation (TfT) with special emphasis on "training of trainers" activities, DAP program orientation for CRS and CADECOM staff, and technical training for FACS, (Food Assisted Child Survival) ag/NRM, and AIDs orphan care activities.

the National CADECOM office, which could not really perform, given its mandate and internal financial systems. This is not a failure, but a “missed opportunity” that could perhaps be capitalized upon under the proposed extension and in future CRS/CADECOM initiatives.

B. Local Community Organization Building

Community capacity building was another crosscutting goal and achievement of the DAP. This is another important impact that was not adequately measured by the project in any of the official indicators. In contrast to the strategy for building CADECOM capacity, however, the strategy for building community capacity was carefully spelled out in each of the DAP proposal’s sector strategies. These strategies focused on: (1) reinforcing committees that would “self-form” around specific activities, through (2) village level trainings and exchange visits, and (3) targeted assistance to realize community based initiatives through these groups.

Each of the sector sub-teams examined the appropriateness, effectiveness, and sustainability of the community organization efforts as part of their sector reviews (Chapters Two through Four). In general, the village level institutions that have developed around specific activities were assessed as both relevant and effective (Table 6.a). This was equally true for the health committees even though they started late. Only the livestock and catchments committees were considered to have limited prospects for sustainability beyond the project.

One of the best indicators of capacity building “success” in the Chikwawa region was the presence of conflicts over “ownership” of committees that arose as the project moved toward phase-out (Box 6.b). These types of conflicts are the predictable outcome of successful village-level capacity building.

Table 6.a. Qualitative Assessments by ADFs of the Appropriateness, Effectiveness and Sustainability of the Community Organization Efforts Supported by the DAP (Phalombe, July 2004)

| Community Organization Effort | Appropriateness | Effectiveness | Sustainability (at lower level of activity) |
|--|---|--------------------------------|---|
| Village Development Committee | Unclear mandate until full decentralization | Mixed depending on the village | Yes, once full decentralization occurs |
| Agricultural Committee | *** | *** | *** |
| Village N. Res. Committee | *** | *** | *** |
| OCC | *** | *** | *** |
| Livestock | *** | * (started late) | * (started late) |
| Catchment Development Committees (CDC) | *** | *** | 0 (promising structure) |
| DRF (Drug Revolving Fund Committees) | *** | ** (price of drugs) | *** |
| ITN Committees | *** | *** | *** |
| Day Care Center Committees | *** | *** | *** |

*** Strong; ** Average, * Weak; 0=None

Source: Final evaluation interviews, management sub-team, group interviews, Phalombe. July 2004.

Box 6.b. Case Study in Local Capacity Building: Evolution of the Capacity and Responsibilities of the Orphan Care Committees (Chikwawa)

The Orphan Care Committees (OCCS) were identified from within communities through an open one-man, one-vote election system (usually competing candidates are blindfolded and voters line up at the back of the candidate of their choice). Ten people are elected and fill the positions of Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary and Vice, Treasurer, and committee members. Although the local population was asked to be gender sensitive, there was no mention of religion in the original elections in 2000.

After elections, the committees were trained in local leadership, identification of orphans, and other vulnerable households with people suffering from long-term illness. They were also trained in the selection criteria used to determine who qualifies for free food. The OCCS were trained alongside Village Headmen. This training was conducted by the Social Welfare, Community Development, and Youth Departments, as well as the Chikwawa CADECOM and CRS.

Most villages have staged additional elections since 2000 to replace committee members who either died or migrated to other areas. Sometimes the elections were conducted because of a specific problem. In January 2004 there was an outcry from the Catholic faithful that they should lead the Orphan Care Committee in order to better consolidate and monitor the activities. New elections were conducted in March 2004 that resulted in at least one key position on most committees being accorded to a member of the Catholic faith. On the positive side, the elections provided a tool for consolidating the work of the OCCs for sustainability, even in the absence of DAP funding. On the negative side, non-Catholics were discouraged. One major lesson learned for future programming is the need for project administrators to emphasize the long-term relationship between the OCCs and the diocese from the start, and to better clarify the diocese's oversight role.

Source: Fidelis Fidelis Mgowa, CRS DSU Safety Net Project Officer from interviews, Final External Evaluation. July 2004.

C. Cost Effectiveness

CRS has facilitated the CADECOMs' setting up a budget and accounting system that makes it easy to track project costs by cost center for the four main Strategic Objectives (SOs) of the project. Labor costs can also be broken down by Strategic Objective. This makes it relatively easy to see the breakdown of actual costs per SO for the project sites (see Annex 5.c.2.c. cost tables for Chikwawa).³ In contrast, the wider CRS budget was broken down by major cost centers and did not distinguish between the CADECOM and CRS-level cost.

In the absence of this type of breakdown between costs and activities, the CRS project budget is very difficult to understand. The evaluators, for example, were unable to link resources with activities, or even headquarters costs with field costs based on the main budget figures they were given. It was not possible for the team to make any sort of broad consensus on resource input in relation to results for specific activity sets. The same CRS project system of grouping only by cross center (for the total budget) made it difficult for CADECOM staff to understand the wider framework (and budget package) that they had to work with when planning annual budgets.

The DAP's agricultural/NRM activities were an example of "best practice" in identifying low cost technologies that were "appropriate in terms of cost and given the local conditions (socio-

³ Cost figures for the CADECOM-Blantyre component were delayed by the accountant having a family emergency.

economic and environmental).” Although the health innovations are just starting, they appear to be promising; in keeping with the evaluation’s mandate, various recommendations are made to better adapt them to other sector activities and local socio-economic conditions.

D. Networking

CRS/CADECOM’s commitment to co-training and collaboration with the government had a major positive impact on the effectiveness and efficiency of the DAP’s execution. Unfortunately, however, this outstanding part of the project that was inadequately documented and monitored. Given its importance to sustaining the CADECOMs’ long-term capacity and activities in the area, it is important to better document (through standard tables in monthly and quarterly reports) government participation in key trainings and to sign formal MOUs with technical partners.

The active participation of the Chikwawa CADECOM Director in the District Executive Committee’s (DEC’s) and CADECOMs’ willingness to help organize/facilitate the meetings (by transportation for traditional authorities and occasionally providing refreshments) was much appreciated by the District Commissioner. CRS was less actively involved in the Phalombe DEC due to the Project Coordinator serving both a technical and administrative function and the Director being based in Blantyre. This use of pre-existing networks, rather than creating new ones for the project, is an example of “best practice”.

The successful collaboration between MAFEP and the DAP agriculture and NRM activities had a major impact on project effectiveness and results (Chapter Two). However, the fact that many of these networks were informal, without signed MOUs or clearly established guidelines for the institutional relationship between the technical partners (for example MAFEP), the CADECOMs, and CRS, made it difficult to maintain the relationship when staff members changed (Table 6.b).

E. Monitoring and Evaluation⁴

The global observation is that CADECOM working with CRS has implemented a highly successful community-based monitoring system for agriculture based on the MAFEP system. This M&E information was consolidated through the project’s system of monthly and quarterly meetings, which beget the project’s monthly and quarterly reports. This same system enabled the project to report back on new technologies being promoted by MAFEP and other agricultural research partners working with the project. This information helped strengthen the project’s technical partnerships and, in doing so, helped the project gain access to “cutting edge” technologies.

⁴ Annex 1.a. includes the most recent version of the IPTT, which was revised by the time of the final evaluation. Annex 1.b. includes the revised indicators and targets that have been set up for health and the proposed health extension. Annex 1.c. is a table that describes the different indicators and their background. Annex 1.d. provides a detailed analysis of the M&E system based on interviews and archival research that was conducted during the external evaluation, which fed into the crosscutting “lessons learned” that are presented in this chapter.

Table 6.b. Lessons Learned from an Analysis of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Risks to the Technical Networking that Evolved Between MAFE and the CRS/CADECOM DAP (FY00-FY04)

| Strengths | Weaknesses | Opportunities | Threats |
|---|---|---|---|
| <p>Impact on Technology Adoption: Good extension model facilitated technology adoption; Successful adoption of many of the techniques in the DAP project area that were developed during MAFEP's first phase because CRS/CADECOM had a good technology approach (grassroots) that facilitated adoption</p> | <p>-Formal MOU was never signed -Unclear partnership with CADECOMs that was not spelled out in a formal MOU made it difficult to work with project once first Agricultural Advisor was not there. -Some CRS staff think that inorganic fertilizer cannot be part of proposed technology package. This subcomponent (fertilizer) is especially important in realizing returns to treadle pump irrigation. CRS staff turnover disrupted the flow of information on the technologies back to MAFEP, even though it was still being collected in the target villages</p> | <p>-Successful record of collaboration with MAFEP opens the door to expanding the approach into other adjacent areas in the dioceses -MAFEP would like to continue to work through CRS, but would like partnership to be formalized in an MOU and to spell out CRS relationship with CADECOM</p> | <p>Chief risk to partnership is competition that might ensue from one partner trying to handle all of the roles</p> |
| <p>Monitoring and Evaluation: Feedback to centers of excellent on technology impacts: MAFEP training of DAP staff in the MAFEP M&E system enabled the DAP staff to provide MAFEP with good information on diffusion rates, as well as household level impacts of the adoption for which they needed to show "impact"</p> | <p>CRS staff turnover disrupted the flow of information on the technologies back to MAFEP, even though it was still being collected in the target villages</p> | <p>Signed MOU and clarification of institutional relationships should assure institution to institution communication, even if staff changes</p> | |
| <p>CRS Technical Backstopping of Partnership between CADECOMs and MAFEP: Strong CRS/HQ technical backstopping strengthened MAFEP-CRS/CADECOM impact and partnership by helping identify MAFEP, as well as other centers of excellence in agricultural technology (ICRISAT, CIMMYT, IMMI, SARNET) and helped "empower" the CRS/DSU Agricultural Advisor to manage the partnership</p> | <p>Technical backstopping from HQ and Regional CRS Team was weak for agriculture after 2003</p> | <p>Recommend formal MOU that will spell out the CRS relationship to CADECOM (deal with an institution not a person)</p> | |
| <p>CRS Technical Advisor: Professional CRS manager partnership was managed by Agricultural Advisor -At least monthly phone contact -Correspondence/written inquiries/reports -Annual MAFEP meeting attended by all partners until 2002 -Advisor had MS in technical agriculture that facilitated communication -Advisor was motivated</p> | <p>Eight month lag between 1st Ag. Advisor leaving CRS and replacement being hired made it difficult to manage partnership since it had not been formalized and was based on the personal relationship.</p> | <p>Partnership is facilitated by having a qualified technical agricultural specialists managing it</p> | |

Box 6.c. Problems Associated with the DAP Indicators for Agriculture and NRM

- (a) Some have little meaning and are not measurable, as a consequence the methodologies used to calculate the indicators were based on questionable assumptions that have little or no basis in fact:
- Indicator 1.2: Area (ha) under specific soil improvement techniques
 - Indicator 2.1: Area conserved
- (b) Some indicators did not include all activities being undertaken to achieve the intermediate result:
- Indicator 1.1: Number of farmers adopting specific soil improvement practices
 - Indicator 1.4: Total smallholder area planted to all crops other than maize and tobacco
 - Indicator 1.2: Area (ha) under specific soil improvement techniques
 - Indicator 2.1: Area conserved
- (c) The description of some indicators is not clear:
- Indicator 1.1: Number of farmers adopting specific soil improvement practices
 - Indicator 1.4: Total smallholder area planted to all crops other than maize and tobacco
 - Indicator 1.5: Number of farmers planting improved crop varieties
 - Indicator 2.1: Area conserved
- (d) Some indicators could have been improved and more meaningful information obtained from the data collected:
- Indicator 1.1: Number of farmers adopting specific soil improvement practices
 - Indicator 1.2: Area (ha) under specific soil improvement techniques
 - Indicator 1.4: Total smallholder area planted to all crops other than maize and tobacco
 - Indicator 1.5: Number of farmers planting improved crop varieties
 - Indicator 1.6: Area planted to improved crop varieties
 - Indicator 2.1: Area conserved
 - Indicator 2.2: Number of farmers conserving their land

Source: Chapter Four, DAP Final Evaluation.

The project's M&E system was less useful in determining project impacts. Seven of the 13 official indicators for agriculture/NRM were considered (Box 6.c): (a) to be unclear; (b) to have flaws in the way they were measured or calculated, (c) to not include all the activities being undertaken to achieve an intermediate result; (d) to not adequately measure the "impact" of the activities under an IR; or (e) could have been improved with additional information.

The evaluators also found major problems with a high percentage of the proposed indicators for safety nets (Tables 4.i and 4.j; Box 6.d) and health (section C, Chapter Three). Unfortunately the mid-term evaluation team did not conduct the type of detailed review of M&E indicators and targets that was mandated by the Title II guidance.

One major flaw in the DAP design was not anticipating the need for the CADECOMs to have an M&E Specialist on their staff. By the time this was identified at mid-term, it was difficult to hire

Box 6.d. Problems Associated with the DAP Indicators for Safety Net

(a) Baseline data against which to measure project achievements was not collected for some indicators:

- Indicator 4.2: Number of guardian families provided with Title II maize through community based organizations
- Indicator 4.4: Number of guardian' families linked to SO1 and SO2 (agriculture and natural resources management)
- Indicator 4.5: Number of guardian families linked to SO3 (health)
- Indicator 4.11: Number of orphans receiving apprenticeship training
- Indicator 4.9: Number of guardian families receiving Title II food who adopt special technologies from SO1 and SO2
- Indicator 4.10: Number of guardians families receiving Title II food who adopt special technologies from SO3 (health)

(b) Some indicators could be improved to show the impact of being linked to an activity/technology:

- Indicator 4.6: Number of guardian families benefiting from micro-finance activities
- Indicator 4.7: Number of chronically sick adults receiving Title II rations through community based organizations
- Indicator 4.8: Number of community based organizations active in caring for vulnerable children and groups
- Indicator 4.12: Number of older orphans linked to a poverty lending program
- Indicator 4.13: Percentage of orphans going to school

Source: Chapter Four, DAP Final Evaluation

for the positions. This resulted in the CADECOMs continuing to rely on the CRS M&E Specialist to write, analyze, and report on all their M&E data. This centralized system:

- Meant that neither the CRS Advisors nor the CADECOM staff (including the Director) had a solid understanding of how the M&E information was being used to develop the annual reports to USAID;⁵
- Reduced the Dioceses' understanding of the wider project and its desired and actual impact, since the main reports they saw were the small, product-oriented monthly reports that reported on activities, issues, and the targets for the next month; and
- Made it virtually impossible for the project to calculate an accurate IPTT after the M&E Advisor resigned in early 2004.

Rapid Rural Appraisals (RRAs)

There was general agreement among almost all stakeholders that the project's use of Rapid Rural Appraisals (PRA) for annual updates of the village action plans was a useful exercise. The RRAs were seen as an important tool for empowering the project beneficiaries by helping them to identify their local needs, providing new information and, more importantly, validating information that they already had. One unintended consequence of the RRAs for baseline and final surveys was that they did not provide quantitative targets against which DAP progress could be measured. As a result, it was difficult to assess the wider impact of the DAP on livelihoods and income.

⁵ Not one of the CADECOM senior staff we interviewed during the Final Evaluation was familiar with either the IPTT or the USAID Title II CSR4 format or had ever seen a CSR4 report.

Reports

In general, the DAP system of producing monthly and quarterly reports was perceived as useful. The chief weakness was lack of follow-up on the many issues raised in the report. Limited ADF “feedback” and in a few notable cases let small problems slide until they became more generalized. Constant supervision by CRS M&E Officers and other specialists is key to the successful training of ADFs in the design of forms and collection of quality data at all levels. Over reliance on only one M&E Officer based at CRS in terms of report writing and data analysis contributed to untimely submission of reports resulting into limited impact of the reports produced for timely decision making.

Staff Knowledge of Title II M&E Rules and Regulations

USAID’s Title II guidance emphasizes the critical role of the IPTT (Indicator Performance Tracking Table) in:

- Summarizing the major impact and monitoring indicators that the DAP selects to monitor its progress;
- Providing the central “skeleton” on which to hang reports that describe the project’s activities, results, and impact in the annual Cooperating Sponsor Results Report and Resource Request (CSR4) report to USAID; and
- Providing the targets against which project achievements are measured in mid-term and final evaluations.

Unfortunately, a series of short-falls in staff training and understanding of the tracking table led them to accept recommendations for changes that made it difficult for DAP staff to track some of the agricultural indicators with simple methodologies that could be understood by field staff. The more complex methodologies created dependence on the CRS DAP M&E Specialist and reduced the CADECOM’s knowledge of and ability to use the indicators as a management tool.

Government Participation in, Knowledge of and Benefits from the M&E System

Although the government technical ministries were involved in the initial introduction of the MAFEP community-based monitoring and CRS system for crop estimates, they were not involved in either the analysis or write-up of this data. Given the critical role of the community-based monitoring and evaluation system in connecting local community organizations with government stakeholders (Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Natural Resource Management, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Gender and Social Affairs), future programs need to emphasize joint training and report writing sessions with government stakeholders.

Follow-up on the DAP Mid-term Evaluation, CRS Regional Supervision Missions, and Special Studies

The mid-term evaluation of the DAP included a large number of recommendations. Some of these were very useful. Unfortunately, there was very little in terms of structured follow-up on these recommendations until right before the final evaluation. This has limited the programmatic

impact of this evaluation exercise. Although the lack of structured follow-up on the mid-term evaluation is striking, it mirrors a more general problem with inconsistent follow-up on monthly reports as well as CRS/Regional office supervision missions. The issue of anticipating the need for structured (e.g. written) follow-up is especially important during “crisis times”, like 2002 and 2003, when emergency operations multiply the number of missions that compete with DAP activities for staff and administrative attention.

Link between Weak M&E Training and Preparation for Project Phase-Out

Many CADECOM staff lack experience in developing high quality project proposals and reports and rely on CSR staff to perform these functions also. This creates a problem when projects start to phase-out and that support is not longer available. Conversely, on-site training in report writing and needs assessment can help CADECOMs identify other resources that might help them retain staff and sub-components of the DAP programs as part of their phase-out plans

Capitalizing on DAP Investment in Technical and M&E Training

High quality technical assistance under the DAP has strengthened the capacity of many CADECOM staff to monitor and design Title II Food Security Programs. These trained individuals represent an important capital to CRS, the CADECOMs, and I-Life Consortium.

Bibliographies and Documentation Systems

For CRS to have informed collaboration with the CADECOMs on the design, implementation and analysis of effective monitoring and evaluation systems, both sets of partners need access to basic documentation on USAID regulations for M&E, as well as examples of “best practices” on IPTT development, CSR4 reporting, mid-term and final evaluation and pre-evaluation exercises. To minimize the negative impact of turnover, the same partners need to have up-to-date bibliographies of all official project documents and reports, as well as “minutes” of regional meetings and attendance.

CRS/Malawi M&E Capacity

The successful implementation of all the preceding lessons learned and recommendations for monitoring and evaluation depends on the capacity of the CRS M&E Learning Unit to help design and oversee these M&E systems. Staff need familiarity with both general principles of M&E as well as the more specific needs of a Title II food security program.

F. Lessons Learned

Financial Management

- (1) *Budgets*: Strengthen the current system for developing annual budgets, so that the CADECOMs are aware of the amount of money and types of activities (under specific Strategic Objectives) for which they can plan.

- (2) *Presentation*: Explore ways that the current CRS accounting and budget system (with cost centers) could incorporate a “code” that would cross reference expenses to specific Strategic Objectives to which they were directed.

Networking

- (3) *M&E Training*: Keep better records of how many government works in particular Ministries and positions have been trained under a project.
- (4) *MOUs*: Develop formal signed memoranda of understanding that outline the institutional relationship and communication channels between CRS, CADECOM and the major **agricultural technology partners** (like MAFEP, ICRISAT) that are understood by all the parties in order to sustain the relationships when staff positions turn over.
- (5) *District-level Coordination (cross reference to Chapter Five)*: The DAP model for encouraging all government workers to participate in project-sponsored trainings is an example of “best practice”. Future planning needs to keep better records on attendance at DAP-sponsored workshops and training sessions to ensure that an adequate number of government partners in key positions have been trained. Although the evaluators had feedback from individual government staff that they attended and benefited from the training, there was no quantitative information on how many government workers, in what positions, had been trained.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- (6) *Complement PRAs with Quantitative Surveys and Continuous Training*:
- *Quantitative data*: Any baseline or final PRAs—and even annual updates-- should be complemented by quantitative data that can be used to assess project impacts.
 - *Training*: The continued provision of PRA training by CRS M&E Officer (in collaboration with the CADECOM M&E Officer once/if M&E positions are created) is necessary at least once a year to enhance participatory joint planning and also improve quality of data through verification with frontline staff and beneficiaries.
- (7) *Provide structured feedback to field and CADECOM level staff on issues raised in monthly and quarterly M&E report*:
- *Written feedback*: Future projects (and the no-cost extension) should ensure that CADECOM Directors and CRS DAP Managers provide written feed back on issues raised in monthly reports and that critical issues emerging from the reports receive attention
 - *Supervision missions*: CRS supervision missions should ensure that this sort of feedback is occurring and resolve administrative “glitches”.
- (8) *Build CADECOM and CRS staff capacity on basic M&E concepts and the analysis and write-up of M&E results*:
- *CADECOM M&E Officer*: Future collaborations with the CADECOMs (including the no-cost extension) should anticipate the need to recruit and train an M&E Officer at that level. This CADECOM Officer should be recruited before the project takes off during the first year and should have broad knowledge of M&E related skills and activities

- *Train CADECOM technical staff:* The job description of these specialists should clearly specify that they are not to conduct all the data analyses and reporting, but rather should facilitate the CADECOM Technical Advisors in learning to manage their own data sets and reporting.
 - *Basic M&E training:* The Technical Specialist, and also frontline staff, both from CADECOM, CRS and the government, should be trained in basic principles of M&E (i.e. monitoring and impact indicators, IPTTs, writing to results, etc.) as well as basic tools (e.g., excel) needed to analyze the indicators.
 - *Break down IPTT figures:* To facilitate a better understanding of each site's specificities, the project IPTT should indicate the district/diocese level averages, as well as calculate an "average" figure for all the sites. In the case of the no-cost extension, this would involve calculating one "line" for each indicator on Chikwawa, one for Phalombe, and an average for both sites. The additional lines don't take up much space and they dramatically increase the utility of the IPTT as an administrative tool. If the USAID/Malawi office finds this confusing, the official IPTT can be simplified with the details on each site put in an annex.
 - *Standard report writing format:* Future projects (and the no-cost DAP extension) should adopt a report writing format that "writes to indicator" following CSR4 guidance, and should train the senior technical staff in the CADECOMs to write reports using this format. This will reduce the burden of report writing for the DSU by providing information that can be more easily synthesized into the text and/or short annexes (by site) that accompany the main CSR4 report.
 - *Report writing training:* Short-courses in report writing have to be taught in order for CADECOM and CRS staff to see the link between M&E activities and reporting.
 - *Supervision missions:* The CADECOM and CRS M&E Officers and specialists should intensify supervision of activities and the M&E information being used to monitor these activities by conducting quarterly, joint CADECOM/CRS supervision missions in the villages. The plan for conducting (and documenting the output of) joint supervision of CADECOM/CRS missions should be anticipated and built into future diocesan level MOUs between CADECOM and CRS and/or DAPs.
- (9) *Facilitate local government partners' participation in data analysis and write-up as well as setting up the M&E system:*
- *Collaborative review:* A critical part of the plan for the no-cost extension should include a collaborative review of the community based M&E system with government stakeholders. This review should work with government partners to identify ways to simplify the forms and reporting processes.
 - *M&E training:* Future CADECOM and CRS programs need to include government partners in any CADECOM training sessions on the analysis and write up of M&E data.
- (10) *Monitor follow-up on recommendations made during evaluations and basic studies:*
- *CSR4 (annual report to USAID):* CRS/Malawi and the CADECOMs should ensure that: (a) project staff monitor the actions being taken to address specific recommendations made during mid-term evaluations, special studies and

supervision missions, and that (b) this information is reported annually in section B.2 of the CSR4.

- *Standard table:* The evaluators recommend that CRS consider using a modified version of Table 6.c to monitor follow-up on the mid-term evaluation, special studies, and supervision missions. A shortened version of the table could be inserted directly into section B.2 of the annual CSR4 report. The same form (below) could be used to monitor recommendations coming from surveys or supervisory periods (such as the CSR4 supervision missions that were organized by the CRS Regional Agricultural Office of CRS in 2000).

(11) *Link government and CADECOM M&E capacity efforts to the development of Phase out plans to sustain activities beyond the project:*

- *Phase-out planning:* Future projects should commence development of a phase-out/sustainability plan immediately after mid-term evaluation. This plan should be developed in close collaboration with government and CADECOM frontline staff.
- *Link M&E and phase-out training:* The preparation of a good phase-out plan might be incorporated into on-site training in report writing, project proposal writing, simple computer-based analysis tools (excel), as well as insights into how to prepare for evaluation missions. To have the broadest impact, this training should start in year three.

Table 6.c. Proposed Table for Providing Structured Feedback on Evaluations and Supervision Missions

| Date of evaluation or mission | Recommendation | Institution (CRS/CADECOM) and person responsible for follow-up to address the issue | Follow-up to date and Follow-up needed |
|--|--|---|--|
| Mid-term evaluation (October 2002) | Train staff in calculation of agricultural indicators | A. CADECOM: Identify staff and administrators who would benefit from the training and communicate with CRS about suitable dates and venue | |
| | | B. CRS: M&E Advisor to organize 1 day workshop for ag/NRM CRS and CADECOM staff on calculation of agricultural indicators | |
| CRS/HQ supervision mission. F. Brockman May 2000 | Disaggregate indicators by technology to complement the USAID-recommending "lumping" for Indicator 1.1 | A. CADECOM: incorporate concept into training | |
| | | B. CRS: Consider inserting extra lines under Indicator 1.1 as a way of doing this on the IPTT | |

(12) *Give priority to hiring staff trained under current projects on new CRS and CADECOM projects:*

- *Hiring:* CRS should encourage the high caliber DAP staff who will not be absorbed by the CADECOMs to apply for employment on the I-Life DAP.

- *Information:* The national CADECOM office should facilitate information about jobs in other CADECOMs for which trained staff in projects that are phasing out might apply.
- (13) *Establish simple user-friendly bibliographies and documentation systems as soon as a project starts:*
- *Standard format:* All partners (CADECOM and CRS) need to agree on a standard format and classification system for DAP documents immediately after signature of any new large project proposal like the DAP.
 - *Standard documentation system:* During the same planning phase, all partners need to agree on systems for classifying documents to ensure that key documents and minutes are not lost.
 - *CD back-ups:* CD copies that cross reference to standard bibliographies should also be made.
- (15) *Build CRS M&E Capacity for Title II Programming through special in house training and mentoring on Title II and FANTA guidelines, recommendations and examples of best practice for food security programming:*
- *Training:* The CRS/Malawi M&E staff need to be mentored in Title II guidance, rules and regulations for reporting, as well CRS's internal M&E models. The capacity of these individuals and their knowledge about critical guidance should be evaluated annually as part of the program capacity index described in Chapter Five.

G. Conclusion

To conclude, despite various oscillations in partnership relations, the basic CRS/CADECOM DAP methodology for agriculture, NRM, and safety nets outlined in the DAP has been maintained and achieved or over achieved the majority of its original targets (Annex 1.a). There is also ample qualitative evidence (that is not adequately analyzed in the M&E system) that the associated increases in production have improved village living standards and food security against considerable odds that include two successive years of drought. A major and inadequately documented result of the project has been to dramatically increase the institutional capacity of the two diocesan-level CADECOMs—Phalombe and Chikwawa.

In contrast, the health strategy that was outlined in the DAP has been only partially executed due to various delays. The health evaluation sub-team feels that given appropriate support and direction for at least one (or if possible two) additional year, there is a strong possibility that the program can achieve its anticipated results.

While these achievements are significant they must be viewed in a national context that situates the pilot nature of the DAP for both of the two principal partners. The DAP was a learning process from which a wide variety of lessons can be learned for future programming.