



NOVOC BOARD UPDATE REPORT

Submitted to

The NOVOC Board

JUNE 2011

1.0 Background

NOVOC with financial support from Development partners (Raising Malawi Trust, Cordaid, STOP AIDS NOW!, VSO and Chello Foundation, is implementing a number of projects with an aim to improve the welfare of Orphans and other Vulnerable children in Malawi. Supporting interventions currently in 10 districts of Chitipa, Mzimba, Kasungu, Salima, Mchinji, Zomba, Phalombe, Mulanje, Chikwawa and Nsanje, NOVOC has continued to register successes although with varying challenges from district to district.

This report provides the details of the activities implemented mainly with funds from the development partners as mentioned above between March and June 2011:

The table below summarizes the Projects being reported on and respective donor.

Project.	Donor.
Strengthening CBO capacities in meeting OVC needs	Raising Malawi Trust.
Strengthening women Capacities for OVC care and support.	Cordaid.
Strengthening Social Cash transfer through linking and learning.	Stop AIDS Now!
OVC Education Support.	Chello Foundation UK.
Scaling up Advocacy initiatives for OVC access to education.	Voluntary services Overseas.

2.0 PROGRAMME

2.1 Strengthening CBO capacities in meeting OVC needs. (funded by Raising Malawi Trust).

2.1.1 CBO mapping exercise in Mzimba district.

A CBO mapping exercise was conducted in Mzimba district aimed at identifying potential members for 'Project strengthening CBO Capacities in meeting OVC needs'. 8 Community based Organizations of have since been identified and will be supported in the same way, the CBOs in Chitipa and Salima have been supported. These members include Tikoleraneko, Mabiri, Tilindimwayi, Vuvumbwe, Uchizi, Fiskani, Ekwaiweni, Tafika, FOVADM. A total of 3. 130 OVC will be targeted through these 8 member organizations. Mzimba becomes the second district to be targeted by NOVOC after Chitipa

2.1.2 CBO Capacity for Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLA) in Mzimba District

A total of 17 CBO members have been trained as VSLA agents. These will be responsible for scaling up VSLA in Mzimba amongst NOVOC members catchment areas. They will be responsible for group formation, training and monitoring to ensure that VSLAs are achieving their purpose i.e. increased access to savings and loans by most vulnerable households especially those with children and women.



2.1.3 Scaling up VSLA in Chitipa

Chitipa district network has facilitated the formation of 33 more VSLA groups in T.A. Nthalire. This has a total of 825 members with savings amounting to MWK 17, 447, 000 (USD 116, 235)

2.1.4 Development of a documentary and video clip

In an effort to document existing knowledge of economic strengthening interventions and best practices NOVOC supported the development of a documentary and a video clip with focus on the outcome of VSLAs in Chitipa. The product will be disseminated through the website and CD distribution to donor partners, NOVOC members and other stakeholders.

2.1.5 Organizational Capacity Assessment for Consol Homes

In an effort to strengthen the capacity of Consol Homes, an organisational capacity assessment was carried out with a view to identify the capacity gaps in the areas of financial management systems, programme management capacity, monitoring and evaluation and procurement management systems. This further led to the development of a '**6 months Capacity Development Plan**' to be implemented by Console Homes with support from Raising Malawi Trust

2.2 Strengthening women Capacities for OVC care and support (Cordaid)

2.2.1 Training of VSLA Agents

A total of 12 VSLA agents from Nsanje and Mchinji have been trained in order to scale up VSLA groups in these 2 districts.

2.3 Advocacy for increased access to OVC education support.-

2.3.1 Advocacy toolkit translation into Chichewa

The English version of the 'Advocacy Toolkit on Waiver of user fees' is undergoing translation into Chichewa for easy use by NOVOC members with little understanding of English. The Chichewa version will be distributed amongst members in all the three regions.

2.4 Strengthening Social Cash transfer through linking and learning.

2.4.1 Popularization of the Monitoring and Evaluation Tools.

NOVOC and YONECO facilitated the development of Monitoring and Evaluation tools for Social Cash Transfer Project, initially meant for Chitipa district. This reporting period, the tools have been finalized and popularized to the Ministry of Gender, Children and Community

Development, Ministry of Developmental Planning and Cooperation, UNICEF, NAC and Ministry of Finance.

It is worth noting that, both Ministries are keen at having the tool being adopted for national use as a Bi-annual monitoring and evaluation tool. The tool has since been disseminated to all the 7 districts where Social Cash Transfer is implemented at the request of Ministry of Gender, Children and Community Development.

2.4.2 Popularization of the Social Cash Transfer Advocacy Strategy.

This too has since been disseminated to the various Ministries and partners. The Ministry of Women, Children and Community Development is considering adopting it as an Advocacy Strategy for Social Cash Transfer by all SCT partners and stakeholders.

2.4.3 1st Search Conference for Social Cash Transfer i Project in Mangochi.

This reporting Period, the first search conference with Social Cash Transfer Stakeholders in Mangochi has been conducted. The conference that brings together all SCT partners and stakeholders aims at identifying the gaps and ways and means of bridging it for the successful implementation of social cash transfer programme. A report for this activity will be out soon for further discussion and comments. However, one of the critical issues highlighted during the search, was lack of coordination by various district players in the implementation of the Programme as well as limited knowledge on the Social Cash Transfer as a programme for reducing poverty and vulnerability amongst the ultra poor households in Malawi and Mangochi in particular. As such, the following follow up activities were too conducted in order to reduce the gaps identified.

2.4.4 Study exchange visit to Mchinji district.

NOVOC in conjunction with SAN! Partners supported the district team of Mangochi to a learning exchange visit in Mchinji district. The study that was led by the District Commissioner Mangochi reached out to 10 people. Some of the learning lessons from the study visit included: the way beneficiary households had improved their livelihoods with the little funding they were receiving as transfers. Good housing, access to medical care, increased number of OVC accessing education, were some of the good things observed that the scheme can make the “was destitute” being potential employers.

2.4.5 SCT awareness raising for the Community members.

SAN! Partner's led by Centre for youth and Children Affairs (CEYCA) and coordinated by NOVOC supported the District Council of Mangochi in conducting a Social Cash Transfer awareness meeting for local leaders. The aim of this activity was to increase the local leader's knowledge on SCT in order to understand the implementation process which would lead to creating linkages with the beneficiaries for better performance.

2.4.6 Sensitization of District Extension workers on their roles in the implementation of SCT.

Extension workers ought to play a big role in the implementation of SCT programme. However, for Mangochi, this was not the case as most of them were not aware of their roles thus, were not adequately involved in the implementation of the Programme.

This reporting period, 20 extension workers from Agriculture, health, community development, social welfare, veterinary, were mobilized and sensitized. Their involvement in the SCT programme will greatly increase the creation of linkages to the SCT household beneficiaries, a thing that has been lacking and had negative consequences in realizing the programme objectives of reducing poverty and vulnerability to ultra poor households in Malawi.

2.4.7 Orientation of Community Social Cash Transfer Committee members.

Just Like the extension workers, community social protection committee members play a vital role in the implementation of the social cash transfer programme. These being at the centre of the programme as they work as a bridge between the community and the household beneficiaries, were oriented of their roles this reporting period. 50 CSPC members were reached; this number is almost half the total number of CSPC members in the district.

2.5 The OVC Education Scholarship project (Chello Foundation).

2.5.1 Assessment and selection of OVC for scholarship support.

A total of 289 students have since been enrolled on the Programme, all hailing from Nsanje district.

The table below shows the distribution based on type of school and gender of the students supported by the Chello Foundation.

	Boys	Girls	Total
Primary School	43	118	161
Community Day Secondary School	39	39	78
Boarding Secondary School	31	9	40
Technical Schools	6	4	10
Total	119	170	289

In addition to payment of school fees, all selected children have been supplied with uniform and scholastic materials in the form of notebooks, writing materials, mathematical instruments, and tool kits for technical students. All girls in primary and secondary schools were provided with personal hygiene materials.

2.5.2 End of Term Meetings:

End of term meetings with students were held for all secondary schools except Karambo Community Day Secondary School. Similar meetings were held in five primary schools. The meetings focused on:

- Discussing the welfare of student beneficiaries in schools.
- Discussing their performance and behaviors in schools.
- Discussing issues affecting the beneficiaries' performance and how to deal with them.
- Finding out from the teachers and student beneficiaries if the scholarship support provided marked any significant changes in the lives and hopes of the student beneficiaries and how.

The following are some of the issues arising from the meetings.

(a) *Walking distance*

- It was observed that about 6 students from Magoti and Kadabwako cover long walking distance to and from school each school day (2 hrs walk). It was further observed that these students do report to school late just as they also arrive home late and too tired to study.

As a result some have resorted in self boarding which provides very little control of students most especially the girl child.

(b) *Rental payment for self boarding students*

- Self boarding in itself requires **extra resources** on the part of the child. As such funds for rental payment is another challenge faced by self boarding students under the Chello Scholarship

(c) *School shoes*

- It was observed that the majority of the students do not have shoes including a school shoes. The head teachers of Magoti and Nsanje secondary schools pleaded with NOVOC to provide shoes in addition to school uniform. However, with the Visit of the Chello General Manager who also visited the students, an approval for shoes procurement has been made and all secondary school students will be provided with school shoes.

(d) *End of term examinations*

- It was also learnt that some schools such as Magoti, Mpatsa and Kadabwako did not provide an end of term examination due to lack of resources to administer such exams. This is largely due to government's inability to fund schools. Therefore such a challenge will make it difficult to assess students' progress in such affected schools.
- This reporting period, NOVOC has taken the initiative to assist Magoti Secondary school with the printing of exams to be sat on the 29th June 2011.

(e). *Early marriages*

Nsanje is one of the districts where cultural norms allow for early marriage for the girl child and this poses a threat to education attainment for girls. Poverty also contributes to early marriages in Nsanje. As an example Esther Kabowa (Form 1) of Kadabwako Community Day Secondary school has been eloped twice by her boyfriend against her wish and on both occasions she has managed to get back to her home as her desire is to continue school. NOVOC has alerted the office of the District Social Welfare Office for action to protect the child in meeting her interest to be in school.

(f). *Other observations on students supported by the Chello Foundation.*

- Absenteeism has greatly reduced amongst the supported students largely due the fact that most students are spending very little on Ganyu (piece work which is a source of income for most children)
- The students are able to write assignments than before as they did not have exercise notebooks where to write.
- All the students have hope in finishing their education given that there is someone paying school fees for them. Additionally students are more actively participating in school activities than before. As the Head teacher from Dinde Primary school noted, "Ernest Patrick is nowadays seen playing football during break time, a thing that he was not doing in the past"

2.5.4 Visit to Malawi by the General Manager of the Chello Foundation.

- NOVOC hosted Mr. Ephraim Imaya, the General Manager of Chello Foundation. His visited Malawi to appreciate how the programme had started as part of Chello's monitoring and Evaluation of the project.
- Overall he got impressed with the selection process and how the project is being managed despite the limited resources. To this end he has requested NOVOC to increase the number of beneficiaries to **500** in Nsanje. Additionally NOVOC has been requested to design an expansion strategy to other districts and showcase how it will roll out in the next five years. Chello Foundation will committee to funding the scaling up within and outside Nsanje district
- NOVOC has also been requested to develop a Child Protection Policy that ought to be signed by every staff and member that interfaces with children. Chello has shared a copy of their draft policy for NOVOC to review and adopt as appropriate.
- Chello also observed that the quality of education in Community Day Secondary Schools (CDSS) is poor. To this end Chello requested NOVOC to proactively engage other partners to find a way forward on how the quality of education can be improved in CDSS.

2.6 Participation regional and international forum

2.6.1 Psychosocial Support Forum 2011-South Africa.

With support from STOP AIDS NOW! NOVOC participated at the 2011 PSS Forum organized by REPSS in South Africa. During this forum the **Psychosocial Support Source Book** developed by SAN Partners was presented by Monica, Programme Officer PSS. Of interest the forum came up with the standard package of psychosocial support for OVC and Youths. REPSSI expressed concern that they had not been acknowledged in the document. Efforts are underway have REPSSI acknowledged I and their sticker will be placed in the source Book.

2.6.2 International Symposium on Social Protection in South Africa 25-26 May 2011

Represented by Institute for Policy Research and Social Empowerment (IPRSE), NOVOC participated in the above conference. A paper titled 'Civil Society support for Government-led Social Cash Transfer Scheme in Malawi' was presented based on the Chitipa experience. A consolidated research report on Chitipa was also shared at the conference.

3.0 ADMINISTRATION

3.1 Recruitment of Watchmen

Following a number of break-ins at NOVOC offices, it was resolved that the contract with Universal Security Services be terminated. As such NOVOC has hired its own 2 watchmen who will team up with those hired by JIMAT and SFK. Therefore the premises will effective June 2011 have 6 watchmen five of whom will guard at night.

3.2 VSO Volunteer clearance

DHRMD has officially given clearance to VSO to recruit a volunteer Fundraiser for NOVOC. This therefore means the volunteer will arrive in the country in September 2011.

3.3. Motorbike donation

In an effort to strengthen the monitoring visit for the education support programme in Nsanje, VSO has agreed to donate a Motorbike to NOVOC for use in Nsanje. To this effect an MoU has been signed on how best to use the motorbike.

3.4 Draft Constitution

The draft reviewed Constitution is now available for comments by the Board members before it can be presented to the Annual General Assembly for further review and endorsement.