

The provision and strengthening of support for street children, families and communities in Malawi

Final Project Evaluation for Retrak

Final 2018

Maestral.



Table of contents

Executive summary	i
Main findings and lessons	i
Recommendations.....	iii
I. Background and country context	1
II. Project description	3
III. Evaluation objectives	5
IV. Evaluation methodology	6
V. Analysis and findings	8
a. Relevance	8
b. Effectiveness and impact	11
1. <i>Objective 1: Identify and build relationships with street-connected children, families and communities to improve child protection and as a first step in the reintegration process</i>	12
2. <i>Objective 2: Improve access to services for street-connected children and facilitate their reintegration with families</i>	17
3. <i>Objective 3: Support children, families and communities to move towards successful reintegration...</i>	22
4. <i>Objective 4: Strengthen families and communities in peri-urban areas to prevent children from coming to the street</i>	26
5. <i>Objective 5: Develop the organisational capacity of CCC to become a more sustainable organisation delivering higher quality programmes.</i>	31
6. <i>Objective 6: Develop a National Street Child Consortium and build government capacity to improve the national response to street-connected children and families.</i>	38
c. Economy and efficiency.....	43
d. Sustainability	46
e. Partnership	49
VI. Conclusions and lessons learned	55
VII. Recommendations	57
a. Future service delivery for street-connected children in Malawi	57
b. Further organisational strengthening (CCC)	58
c. Application of learning for project design in Malawi and beyond	58
d. Development and management of partnerships.....	59
Annex 1: Project Results Framework	
Annex 2: Evaluation Framework	
Annex 3: List of Documents Reviewed	
Annex 4: List of Key Stakeholders Consulted	
Annex 5: Sample KII and FGD Questions	
Annex 6: Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool	

Acronymns

CBO	community-based organisation
CCC	Chisomo Children’s Club
CPC	Child Protection Committee
CSI	Child Status Index
FGD	focus group discussion
GOM	Government of Malawi
HDF	Human Dignity Foundation
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IGA	income generating activity
KII	key informant interview
LOP	life of project
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MGCDWSW	Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare
MOU	memorandum of understanding
NPA	National Plan of Action for Vulnerable Children in Malawi
OCA	organizational capacity assessment
OVC	orphans and vulnerable children
PSS	psychosocial support
SHG	self-help group
SOP	standard operating procedure
SWO	Social Welfare Officer
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VT	vocational training

Executive summary

The Provision and Strengthening of Support for Street Children, Families and Communities in Malawi Project has been implemented since 2013 through a partnership between Retrak and Chisomo Children's Club (CCC) and with funding from the Human Dignity Foundation (HDF). Focuses in the two major urban centres of Malawi, Lilongwe and Blantyre, the project aimed to improve the lives of 5,597 street-connected children and their families and communities. This evaluation was undertaken mid-way through the fifth and final year to assess the performance of the project in terms of output, outcomes, impacts, identified good practices and challenges, the partnership approach, and learning. Methodologies used included review of literature and project documents, interviews and focus group discussions, an organizational capacity assessment tool, observation of the two children's centres and review of existing monitoring data.

In summary, the project has had impacts on multiple levels: on the lives of the children who benefitted from the services, including outreach, centre-based services, reintegration and prevention; by sensitising the Government of Malawi on the needs of street-connected children, increasing engagement of government actors such as police, courts and social welfare officers and improving policy; with a range of capacity building activities that have re-built the ability of CCC to implement quality services; and finally on the learning of both organisations in terms service implementation and working in partnership.

Main findings and lessons

The Provision and Strengthening of Support for Street Children, Families and Communities in Malawi Project served 6,253 vulnerable children (well over the target of 3,881), including 2,266 street-connected children and 3,987 vulnerable children in the peri-urban slums at risk of being street-connected.¹

The project outreach activities were effective at identifying children through a number of different avenues including direct street contact by workers to children, building relationships and bi-lateral referrals with other organisations, raising awareness of the risks of street connection within communities, and working closely with police and court diversion actors. Outreach activities reached 1,162 children connected with the streets (81% of the target) by mid-way through project year five. While, diversion activities, including identification, assessment and reintegration of children involved with law enforcement helped street-connected children to avoid an encounter with the criminal justice system, and built understanding within law enforcement and the justice system as to the realities for street-connected children.

The two drop-in centres provided 2,138 children with shelter, food and basic medical care, educational services, and psychosocial support (102% of the target). Catch-up education services helped street-connected children maintain their educational levels and learn new basic skills in reading and writing: over half of the children served (average 69%) returned to full time education. Measurements on child well being indicate that children were stable from multiple perspectives (nutrition, shelter, protection, health, psycho-social care and education) at the time of reintegration but that over the initial six months post-reintegration their life was less stable in terms of food security, shelter and health. This indicates the need for more family strengthening and household economic support, a finding that reflects Retrak's work in other countries. It further confirms the finding that a focus of effort and resources (human and financial) post-reintegration is needed.

The reintegration process for children and families used a case management approach and 521 (78% of target) children were reintegrated. Out of these, 331 children were found to be still living with their parents after 6 months (64% retention rate). The retention rate is lower than the rates achieved in other countries where Retrak is implementing similar projects, which are closer to 70-75%,² highlighting perhaps the importance of

¹ Note that this evaluation was conducted mid-way through the final project year (year 5) figures reports are not final end-of-project outcomes.

²Retrak. (2013). Evaluating outcomes: Retrak's use of the Child Status Index to measure wellbeing of street-connected children. Retrieved from:

rigorous follow-up and the importance of targeted family strengthening activities both at economic and parenting/child protection levels. Follow up was found to be limited due to CCC's decision to limit the cost of field visits in the final project year.

Follow up of reintegrated families appears to be one of the most challenging aspects of reintegration work. It takes dedicated resources and commitment to prioritise those resources towards follow-up. To support reintegration, CCC piloted income-generating activities (IGA) with 56 or 11% of the reintegrated families. The most successful IGAs were selling fresh vegetables, snacks (fritters, samosas, etc.), selling dry fish, and selling beans and rice. The precarious nature of vulnerable families lives meant that any family crisis (e.g. unexpected health need) overtook any small increases to household income and families remained economically vulnerable.

The project was effective in its flexibility, which allowed for the addition of objectives around prevention and strengthening families. The interventions were well received by families and communities, evidence by the fact that all targets for prevention were exceeded. The project established 74 self help groups (SHG) with 1,247 new women members; women whose families were at risk of separation due to factors of stress such as poverty, single parenthood, children out of school, etc. This activity overwhelmingly met targets at 185% and 208% respectively. The participatory approach used to form the SHGs built a sense ownership for the members. Regular follow-up by the facilitators and involvement of community leaders have contributed to the success of this activity. The SHG was used as platform to address crosscutting issues such as improved health and social and economic empowerment. Ninety per cent of those families involved with SHGs were living above the poverty line (an increase of 10% at project year three). This contrasts with the economic strengthening activities with reintegrated families described above, which did not result in changes to household poverty levels.

To strengthen the capacity of CCC, Retrak provided extensive training and mentoring to program staff and management (42 total people trained), put into place organisational and programmatic policies, and worked to strengthen the Board of Trustees. High turnover of management staff had an impact on the long-term sustainability of the organisation in addition to the on going challenge of board engagement. In contrast, 100% of program staff reported feeling better equipped to do their jobs and appreciated the quality of standard operating procedures (SOPs). Trainings included children's rights, outreach, protection and reintegration, project monitoring and evaluation, and resource mobilization. The SOPs and the building of CCC staff capacity to implement them led to effective and consistent services across outreach, centre-based and reintegration program activities, while financial and human resource policies led to improved systems but require time, and on-going training and mentoring to be fully institutionalised. Retrak worked with CCC to develop an organisational strategic plan, financial, human resource and child protection policies, and staff job descriptions.

In an effort to build Government of Malawi capacity and establish a National Street Child Consortium, the project conducted fifteen workshops for children's workers from non-governmental organisations (NGOs), government and community leadership. This was 107% of the target. Fourteen actors joined the Consortium and 37 interface meetings with line ministries and parliamentarians took place (463% of the project target). The enumeration study was significant both in providing on-the-ground data to inform the design of this project, and its strategies and activities, results framework and target outcomes, but also in forwarding the national conversation by giving reliable data towards the development of the Charter for Street Children and being the starting point of the National Street Child Consortium. Additionally, the enumeration work was a pilot for Retrak globally, and methodology has since been used in other countries. Workshops for government and non-government actors provided a platform for building capacity, sharing information, increasing coordination and beginning to standardise services for street-connected children.

https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/7832/pdf/retrak_research_evaluating_outcomes_may_13_f_0.pdf and Retrak. (2011). Retrak summary report: Sustainable reintegration of orphans and vulnerable children into family and community life in Uganda and Ethiopia. Retrieved from: <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/6376/pdf/6376.pdf>

Sustainable impacts have included changed attitudes and behaviours, and increased skills and knowledge in children, families, communities, staff and partners. The project brought a stronger protective environment including improved government policies and strategies focused on preventing and responding to street-connected children and their families and the strengthening of community structures, such as police, court, community leaders, peer groups and child protection committees.

Proper financial control mechanisms are in place as a result of the project, resulting in increased accountability. Human resources became more efficient with the addition of a new organisational structure, creation of a senior management team, definition of job descriptions and putting into place systems of supervision. Work in partnership with other CBOs and government led to efficiencies by each service provider focusing on services within their expertise and sharing information to avoid duplication of services to children and families. However, at the same time, the failure of CCC to develop a coherent fundraising plan linked to a strategic vision and direction poses a real and immediate threat to the organisation's own sustainability and ability to continue serving children and families in Lilongwe and Blantyre. This is complicated by a culture of dependency and reliance of external assistance in general in Malawi. As of August 2018, a number of funding proposals have been submitted. CCC also intends to continue work in partnership with national and local organisations to be efficient with their limited resources, and is looking at models of fee for services (e.g. computer classes and psychosocial counselling) to increase sustainable income.

In terms of partnership itself, this project has provided significant learning for both organisations. The partnership between CCC and Retrak has not been an easy one. It has, however, benefitted from a donor who was flexible, open and consistently engaged. Partnership shared a common vision, similar values and achievements, which will go a long way in ending the relationship positively. On the other hand, the partnership would have benefited from a clearer partnership framework laying out roles, expectations, partnership outcomes, tools for mediation of conflict, etc. Both partners underestimated the time, resources and energy required to form and maintain a strong working partnership. At the same time, the project did exemplify the quality and efficiency benefits of working in coordination and collaboration across international, national and local actors.

Recommendations

The evaluation makes a number of recommendations for future service delivery in Malawi, CCC capacity strengthening, application of learning, and development and management of partnerships. The following recommendations are detailed in the full report:

Service delivery in Malawi:

- Prevention of children separating from their families and becoming street-connected should include psychosocial support, building community connections for isolated and at-risk families, parenting skills building, and household economic strengthening. The SHG approach should be expanded.
- Addressing economic instability in reintegrated families should use a holistic approach that includes case management with longer-term follow up, case planning including household economic strengthening and linking families to resources for basic needs, directly supporting basic needs (e.g. food, medical needs, school fees, clothing, shelter) through time-bound conditional cash transfer or other mechanisms, and income generation.
- Follow up and monitoring of reintegrated children and families must be prioritised to ensure the long-term safety, protection and well being of reintegrated children in their families and communities.
- Efforts of CCC, other CBOs and the Consortium should be intensified to inform and encourage police, courts, child protection committees and others in their responsibilities to protect the rights of all children, dispel myths and address stigma and discrimination.

- The GOM must be engaged by NGOs and CBOs to more fully undertake its duty to protect children through holistic services, and efforts should be made to continue building government capacity.

Capacity of CCC

- Realistic and locally-owned organisational and fundraising strategies linked to vision have to be developed and include mobilisation of staff and Board of Trustees members in working toward CCC's sustainability, an action plan, definition of roles and responsibilities and plans for engaging the business community, religious communities, and women and youth associations.
- CCC will need to find ways to continue building the capacity of the organisational leadership, including the Board of Trustees, in program management, M&E and data utilization, supervision and human resource management, working in partnership and resource mobilization.
- CCC needs to invest in continued capacity building for high-quality data collection, data analysis, quality improvement processes, etc.
- On the local level, future services at CCC will benefit from formalised relationships between court, social welfare, police and other CBOs through memorandums of understanding or other such appropriate mechanisms.

Application of learning

- Supporting a continued learning agenda might include a comprehensive study to understand why some children return to the street after reintegration, long-term reintegration outcomes, diversion and recidivism outcomes that can, in turn, inform the development of new rehabilitation and integration processes.
- Future project design should foresee strategies such as analysing potential employee markets, internal/existing human resources and strategies for retention to anticipate and address potential for staff turnover, which we know happens in high stress social service jobs.
- Family issues such as lack of parenting skills, family discord, domestic violence and violence against children, mental health issues, etc. should be part of future program design and social work capacity building.

Development and management of partnerships

- Using official memorandums of understanding or other such mechanisms, which include a partnership framework outlining purpose, terms, roles/responsibilities, outcome and impact measurements, communications and management systems, exit planning, etc. is suggested to improve future partnerships between Retrak and local/national organisations.
- The work to strengthen local organisations benefits from a start-up assessment focused on organisational capacity including existing capacity, gaps, needs and potential challenges of the partner whose capacity is to be built, but also the capacity, resources and time commitment that will be needed from the capacity building partner.
- Clear communication pathways should be established to help ensure that information is reaching the right people at the right time, including both internal and external communication, and means for mitigating miscommunication, clarifying misunderstandings, communicating plans and progress.
- Capacity building should be outlined clearly within the project results framework or have a separate capacity building focused framework outlining the capacity building theory of change, inputs, outputs, outcomes and impacts, as well as tools for measurement and verification.

I. Background and country context

Malawi has an estimated population of just over 19 million people³ of which 53% are under 18 years of age.⁴ Malawi falls within the World Bank's twenty lowest income countries in the world.⁵ The economy is focused primarily in agriculture, which accounts for about a third of gross domestic product and drives livelihoods for two thirds of the population.⁶ The Government of Malawi (GOM) depends a great deal on external aid, according to the World Population Review.⁷ Low life expectancy combines with a high infant mortality rate and high prevalence of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), estimated at 12% of the population.⁸ The International Monetary Fund reports that 69.6% of Malawi's population live below the poverty line of \$1.90 a day,⁹ with 63% of children living in absolute poverty and over half of children in rural areas suffering three or more severe basic need deprivations.¹⁰ Just over 16% of children under 18 are categorized as orphans and vulnerable children (OVC),¹¹ including nearly one million children whom have lost one or both parents to HIV-related illnesses.¹² According to United States Agency for International Development (USAID), 20% of Malawian households are looking after OVC, with girls, women, and elderly women heading the majority.¹³ In Malawi, many children are vulnerable because of factors including poverty, abandonment, being orphaned, family breakdown, physical and sexual abuse and exploitation; and vulnerability can quickly mean children becoming connected to the streets.

In 2017 the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child brought new attention to children connected to the streets by passing General Comment nr. 21. This comment encourages countries signatory to the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (Malawi included) to use holistic, child-rights approaches to address prevention and response on children in street situations.¹⁴ One of the challenges of working with this vulnerable population is identifying the number of children in this situation. Globally, enumeration has been confounded due to the lack of data, the mobile nature of many children's lives and a lack of agreement on definitions.¹⁵ In Malawi, a 2014 enumeration exercise undertaken by Retrak and Chisomo Children's Club

³ The World Bank. (2018). Malawi overview. Retrieved from www.worldbank.org/en/country/malawi/overview

⁴ National Statistical Office Malawi. (2017). Malawi Demographic and Health Survey 2015- 2016. Retrieved from: <https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR319/FR319.pdf>

⁵ World Bank. (2018). Lowest income countries. Retrieved from: <https://data.worldbank.org/income-level/low-income>

⁶ International Monetary Fund. (2017). Malawi Economic Development Document, IMF Country Report No. 17/184.

⁷ World Population Review. (2018). Population of Malawi. Retrieved from: <http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/malawi-population/>

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid. International Monetary Fund.

¹⁰ Government of Malawi, Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning and UNICEF. (2016). Child Poverty in Malawi. Retrieved from: https://www.unicef.org/malawi/MLW_resources_childpoverty.pdf

¹¹ In the 2010 Extended National Action Plan for Orphans and other Vulnerable Children, The Government of Malawi defines an orphan as "a child who has lost one or both parents and is under the age of 18 years," and a vulnerable child as "one who has no able parents or guardians, staying alone or with elderly grandparents or lives in a sibling headed household or has no fixed place of abode and lacks access to health care, material and psychological care, education and has no shelter."

¹² USAID. (2016). Malawi Fact Sheet. Retrieved from: <https://www.usaid.gov/malawi/fact-sheets/malawi-orphans-and-vulnerable-children-fact-sheet>

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ United Nations. (2017). General comment no. 21 on children in street situations. Retrieved from: https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2fC%2fGC%2f21&Lang=en

¹⁵ The term 'street-connected' is widely used to describe the broad range of experiences children and youth have on the streets: some live on the street; some work on the street; some maintain relationships with their family whereas others break all contact; some are on the streets currently and some are off the streets but could be easily drawn back. All have strong connections to the street. From: <https://streetchildren.org/about/street-children/>

(CCC), a local community-based organisation (CBO), used the capture/recapture approach¹⁶ to articulate who the *street-connected children* are. The resulting report, *Making the Invisible Visible, An Enumeration of Children on the Streets in Malawi*, was published in 2015 and is the first of its kind in the country.¹⁷ It showed that poverty, family breakdown, food insecurity, HIV, family substance use/abuse, child labour, mental illness, physical or sexual abuse or being accused of witchcraft are some of the reasons why children end up street-connected. Other findings included:

- 2,389 children ages 7-15 years were, at the time, living and working on the streets of Lilongwe and 1,776 on the streets of Blantyre, Malawi's two major cities;
- Only 9% of children on the streets in Lilongwe and 12% in Blantyre were sleeping on the streets;
- Two-thirds of children return to their parents' home to sleep, an additional 15% return to the homes of relatives;
- 80% of children on the streets come from homes within the same district;
- Out of the number of children found to be living and working on the street; 50% were children between the ages of 10-13;
- 23% were 14-15 years old; and
- 4 out of 5 street-connected children are boys.

In addition to the UNCRC, Malawi has ratified the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, and has put in place national policies aimed at protecting the rights of all children. The National Policy on Orphans and Other Vulnerable Children (2003) gives special attention to children in need of care and protection, such as those separated from families (e.g. children connected with the streets).¹⁸ The National Plan of Action for Vulnerable

Malawi Child Rights Protection Policies

- Children and Young Persons Act (2003)
- National Policy on OVC (2003)
- Child Care, Protection and Justice Act (2010)
- National Registration Regulation Act (2015)
- Wills and Inheritance Act (1967)
- Prevention of Domestic Violence Act (2006)

Children in Malawi (2015-2019) (NPA) outlines national objectives and actions around access to quality services; capacity of families, communities, government and the social protection system; improving policy, legislation and leadership; awareness raising and participation; and monitoring and evaluation.¹⁹ The NPA explicitly addresses "street children." Also in 2015, the GOM drafted a strategy for children working and living on the street in order to facilitate effective coordination and implementation of interventions aimed at providing a safe and supportive environment.²⁰ The *Making the Invisible Visible* Report and work of Retrak, CCC and other actors informed the strategy and eventual development of the GOM Charter for Street Children (2017), which aims to provide guidance to various stakeholders working with children.²¹

The range of services for street-connected children in Malawi includes training and education, employment support for older youth, civil registration, reunification, and basic services such as washing, health services,

¹⁶ The capture/recapture methodology is suitable for populations where a complete census will be difficult due to their mobile, hidden or hard to reach nature. It provides an estimation of the total population, with a measure of accuracy.

¹⁷ Retrak and Chisomo Children's Club. (2015). *Making the Invisible Visible: An Enumeration of Children on the Streets in Malawi*.

¹⁸ Republic of Malawi. (2003). National Policy on Orphans and Other Vulnerable Children. Retrieved from:

<https://hivhealthclearinghouse.unesco.org/sites/default/files/resources/REPUBLIC%20OF%20MALAWI%20National%20Policy%20on%20Orphans%20and%20other%20Vuln.pdf>

¹⁹ Government of Malawi. (2015). National Plan of Action for Vulnerable Children in Malawi, 2015-2019. Retrieved from:

<http://www.togetherforgirls.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/2015-to-2019-NPA-Malawi-web.pdf>

²⁰ Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare. (2015). Draft Strategy for Children Living and Working on the Street "Home for Every Child Project." (draft shared by Retrak).

²¹ Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare. (2017). Charter for Street Children.

medicine, food and shelter. Services are implemented through police victim support units, community victim support units, one-stop centres, community-based care centres and children's corners, with CBOs implementing most. According to the feasibility study conducted by Retrak prior to the decision to start work in Malawi, services tended to be concentrated in the main cities of Lilongwe and Blantyre and were generally considered not sufficient to meet the needs of the target population.²²

Case management is emerging as an approach to help to ensure effective response and referral between the different services.²³ Outreach, reception centres, shelters and family and community reintegration programs use the national case management model for work with street-connected children, which outlines procedures for case planning, service implementation, referrals, monitoring and case closure. Government provision of services for street-connected children is very limited.²⁴ Addressing the lack of coordination between services is a high priority for the Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare (MGCDWSW) and their partners.

II. Project description

Retrak is one of the leading agencies in the region that is working to move street-connected children from a life of vulnerability, exclusion and poverty to one within a stable family or community.²⁵ Retrak started its operations in Africa in 1994 in response to the large numbers of children on the streets of Uganda. Today, Retrak provides support to children and families, sometimes through partnerships, in Ethiopia, Malawi, Zimbabwe and Uganda, and also has experience in Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Tanzania and Brazil. Retrak uses a holistic approach and works with children and their family members to ensure everyone is as healthy, emotionally well, safe, educated, and economically independent as possible. *The Provision and Strengthening of Support for Street Children, Families and Communities in Malawi Project* is a five-year project (2013-2018) funded by the Human Dignity Foundation (HDF) and implemented in partnership with CCC. The project's aim is to provide protection and other basic services to children on the streets of Malawi.

The project aimed to benefit **5,597 children and families**, including:

- 3,881 highly vulnerable children in Lilongwe and Blantyre
 - 2,045 street-connected children
 - 1,200 vulnerable children in the peri-urban slums at risk of being street-connected (children of self help groups)
 - 636 vulnerable children in the criminal justice system
- 1,116 caregivers of highly vulnerable children
- 600 vulnerable women with children at risk of being connected with the street (self help groups)

In addition, 35 community groups, 40 staff and government representatives were targeted to benefit from community awareness raising and capacity building.

CCC was established in 1998. Prior to 2007, they were well known for work in child participation, child rights, family reintegration, protecting children in the criminal justice system, and reducing the trafficking of children. A series of scandals, fraudulent activity by the director and court cases brought the organisation into public disrepute during 2008 to 2011. Nearly all donors withdrew and the organisation was all but ruined. In 2012-

²² Retrak. (2013). Feasibility study in Malawi with a review of Chisomo Children's Club.

²³ UNICEF Malawi. (2012). Child Protection Strategy 2012 -2016. Retrieved from:

https://www.unicef.org/malawi/MLW_resources_childprotecstrategy.pdf

²⁴ Government of Malawi. (2015). Child Protection Case Management Framework. Retrieved from:

http://www.socialserviceworkforce.org/system/files/resource/files/Child%20Protection%20Case%20Management%20Framework%20Malawi_0.pdf

²⁵ Retrak. (2018). About Retrak. Retrieved from <https://www.retrak.org/about/>

13, Retrak was invited by CCC to help rebuild the organisation and their work with the hope of returning the organisation to its former position as a lead organisation for street children in Malawi. Retrak undertook a feasibility study in Blantyre and Lilongwe to examine the needs and perspectives of street-connected children, review who was providing what services, and to assess the capacity of CCC and then approached HDF for support.²⁶

The Provision and Strengthening of Support for Street Children, Families and Communities in Malawi Project (hereafter referred to as “The Project”) was launched with aim of achieving the following six objectives (See also Annex 1: Project Results Framework). Note: during a project revision in 2016 a prevention objective was added.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- (i) Identify and build relationships with street-connected children, families and communities to improve child protection and as a first step in the reintegration process;
- (ii) Improve access to services for street-connected children and facilitate their reintegration with families;
- (iii) Support children, families and communities to move towards successful reintegration;
- (iv) Strengthen families and communities in peri-urban areas to prevent children from coming to the street (added during revision – 2016);
- (v) Develop the organisational capacity of CCC to become a more sustainable organisation delivering higher quality programmes; and
- (vi) Develop a National Street Child Consortium and build government capacity to improve the national response to street-connected children and families.

The project was implemented through drop-in centres, one in each of the two target cities (Lilongwe and Blantyre). The activities are based in the child rights approach and along key pillars of prevention, protection and provision of care. Activities include:

- Refurbishing and re-equipping the project sites;
- Conducting the enumeration study;
- Re-establishing CCC core activities focused on street-connected children in Blantyre and Lilongwe using the Retrak model and expanding services every year of the project;
- Establishing self-help groups (SHG);
- Building the capacity of CCC;
- Conducting child protection training and healthy parenting workshops for local community leaders and workers; and
- Establishing a National Street Children’s Consortium.

The key project stakeholders included the Government of Malawi (Child Justice Court, community policing and social welfare departments); organisations focused on street-connected children; CCC; and beneficiaries including street-connected children, parents and other caregivers and community leaders. Under the leadership of the Executive Director, the direct workforce involved with activities through CCC were:

- The program director was charged with project coordination and implementation, including managing project staff;²⁷

²⁶ Ibid, Retrak. (2013).

²⁷ Note: the project director position and role was added in 2017. Prior to the project was led by the Executive Director and Retrak’s Director.

- The centre managers oversaw all activities in each of the two centres and worked directly with children and families, particularly more challenging cases;
- Social workers worked directly with street-connected children and their families and were in charge of implementing the day to day activities of the project, as well as 2 dedicated social workers working on the diversion programme;
- Teachers provided catch-up classes to children interested in re-enrolling or continuing with their schooling and offered life-skills training to all children;
- Nurses provided basic health care, health prevention education and referrals to health services for children in the centres;
- The SHG coordinator and volunteer facilitators were selected from targeted communities and trained in running groups, keeping financial records, following up and reporting on SHG saving and loan activities. They were responsible for day-to-day activities of the SHGs; and
- Project support and administrative staff were responsible for supporting the project team.

III. Evaluation objectives

Retrak, HDF and CCC called for an external evaluation of the project to determine outcomes and impact, and to assess the overall effectiveness of the project against the objectives. The evaluation has taken place during the last year of project implementation and builds on on-going project monitoring and the findings of a 2016 mid-term review.²⁸ It should be noted that this is not an end line evaluation as it was conducted six months prior to the project's end date. The evaluation is intended to assess progress, give insight and learning, and inform future work. This report documents the findings of the evaluation process that took place from 4-30 March 2018 and additional data collection and review from July 2018. The evaluation focused on the following key evaluation questions (see also Annex 2: Evaluation Framework):

Project outcomes and progress against objectives:

- What results have been seen against the intended outcomes?
- What evidence is there of any unintended outcomes?
- What progress has been made against each project objective?
- What are the early signs of impact?
- Which activities have been most successful, what key challenges were faced and what recommendations are there for future work?

How has the project performed in terms of economy, efficiency, effectiveness, relevance, sustainability and partnership, and how can this inform future work:

- **Economy:** the costs of inputs and resources of an intervention.
- **Efficiency:** how much you get out in relation to what you put in. It's about maximising an output for a given input, or minimising input for an output.
- **Effectiveness:** how far a programme achieves its intended outcomes, using qualitative and quantitative assessments of change.
- **Relevance:** how well a programme's activities fit with the overall goal and meet the needs of the beneficiaries.

²⁸ Retrak. (2016). The Provision and Strengthening of Support for Street Children Families and Communities in Malawi Project – Midterm Review.

- **Sustainability:** how well the benefits of a programme will continue after the programme is completed, both environmentally and financially.
- **Partnership:** how the project partnership has functioned and what lessons can be learned for future partnerships.

IV. Evaluation methodology

The final project evaluation involved a mixed-methodology approach including a desk review, key informant interviews, focus group discussions and review of existing project data.

- **Desk Review:** Over 60 documents were reviewed including key program documents, job descriptions and organisational policies, situation analyses, country context reports and national policy documents. See also Annex 3: List of Documents Reviewed.
- **Review of case files:** A random selection of 20 case files of both children in the centre as well as those from SHG families were reviewed to better understand the case management process and assess how case management information was being documented by social workers. Case files were selected randomly from a set provided by the CCC staff. The review included documentation including case plans, monitoring notes, change story summaries and child wellbeing assessments contained in the files.
- **Key Informant Interviews (KII):** In total 30 respondents (18 male and 12 female; 19 in Lilongwe and 11 in Blantyre) were interviewed during a field visit made to Malawi early in the evaluation process. These were both individual and pair or small group interviews. Respondents included CCC staff, CBO partners, reintegrated children and their caregivers, head teachers, community police, child justice court officials, as well as representatives of the district level MGCDSW. Three interviews with Retrak staff based in the United Kingdom were also conducted early in the evaluation. Following the need for revisions to the analysis, three additional management level Skype interviews were conducted in July. At this time two CCC management staff were also re-interviewed. See also Annex 4: List of Key Stakeholders Consulted and Annex 5: Sample KII and FGD Questions. The key informants in Malawi were selected using purposive sampling in consultation with CCC and Retrak. Consent to participate in the interview was sought verbally from all participants before KIIs began. Assent was sought from the caregivers of any children interviewed. Social workers from CCC accompanied the interviewer and were available to support children during and after interviews.
- **Focus Group Discussions (FGD):** Five FGDs were carried out in each of Lilongwe and Blantyre. In total, 79 people including 16 girls, 34 boys, six male community leaders and 23 female caregivers participated. The participants included street-connected children, children of the SHG members, SHG members and community leaders. FGD participants were selected using a random sampling of project beneficiaries in consultation with CCC. Caregivers were asked for assent in order for children to participate in the FGDs and social workers were onsite to support children during and after the FGDs. See also Annex 4: List of Key Stakeholders Consulted and Annex 5: Sample KII and FGD Questions.
- **Existing quantitative data:** Project monitoring data collected by CCC during the regular monitoring of the project was reviewed. Outcome numbers were those that had been cleaned and checked and

submitted in annual reports to HDF, up to and including the Year 5 Semi-Annual Report.²⁹ The final project data was not yet available. The project database contained data for children contacted through outreach, children registered at the centres, families traced, children reintegrated and re-enrolled in schools and families in SHG and income generating activities (IGA), including wellbeing assessment data, follow-up data, SHG membership information and IGA beneficiary data.

- **Rapid capacity review with the CCC staff:** A rapid review was conducted with the key CCC staff in each location (17 participants total) with the purpose of capturing perspectives on current organisational capacity and capacity gaps. The review utilised an adaptation of a USAID organisational capacity assessment (OCA) tool.³⁰ Topics related to governance, management practices, service delivery, human resources, monitoring and evaluation, financial resources, sustainability and external relations were explored. See also Annex 6: Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool.

The evaluation process was not without challenges and limitations. Although all efforts were made to meet with and talk to as many relevant stakeholders as possible, a number of logistical and practical challenges were encountered. Due to the long distance between the locations where reintegrated children live and that a number of children's cases had been previously closed and they could not be located, it was not possible to hold FGDs with as many children and families as planned. Home-based interviews were conducted (a total of six reintegrated children and their caregivers). For others information in case files and the data system were relied on. The most significant change stories compiled for the project mid-term review were useful in giving an additional perspective on children's views.³¹ In addition, the Social Welfare Officer (SWO) (district representative of the MGCDWSW) in Lilongwe, who works closely with CCC and was a key stakeholder, was not available to meet the evaluator. Several other representatives of relevant government line ministries gave the GOM views.

The data from the CCC monitoring system was, in some instances, incomplete. It seemed that written case file documentation might not have been always input into the monitoring system, particularly around follow-up or individual child progress. In some cases children had been recorded more than once in the system causing potential duplications; while in others the formulas on spread sheets were not correct causing errors. This was an issue raised regularly to CCC by Retrak, but remained on going.³² Retrak had to continue rigorous checking systems over the life of the project to support the CCC M&E officer to ensure that these duplications and errors were corrected. Retrak supported CCC in improving M&E systems, noting in interviews that, "*it is still a work in progress.*" The evaluator and Retrak decided to use only cleaned data for this evaluation, as final project data was not yet ready. Retrak cleaned data for all submissions of HDF reports to ensure quality. Different versions of M&E tools have been used at different stages of the project. To inform some findings, the consultant used data from household surveys and child wellbeing assessments. Even with these limitations, the use of mixed methodologies provided enough data that the evaluator could draw the following findings and conclusions. Challenges and limitations often provide the basis for learning, to which both Retrak and CCC are committed.

²⁹ Retrak. (2018). Retrak Year 5 Semi-Annual Report, Progress towards targets final. Provided by Retrak.

³⁰ John Snow. (2012). Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool for Community-based Organizations. Retrieved from: <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1864/OCA%20Tool%20for%20Community%20Based%20Organizations.pdf>

³¹ Ibid. Retrak. (2016).

³² According to interviews with Retrak key management staff

V. Analysis and findings

This section presents the main findings of the project evaluation process, identifying the key outcomes and impacts, challenges and gaps, and key lessons learned. The analysis and findings relate to the key evaluation questions listed earlier in this report and include relevance, effectiveness, impact, economy and efficiency, sustainability and partnership. A section on overall conclusions and major lessons will be found at the end of the section.

Overall, the project is well on its way to meeting or exceeding its targets, serving:³³

- 6,253 vulnerable children (well over the target of 3,881), including:
 - 3,953 boys and 2,300 girls
 - 2,266 street-connected children (just below target of 2,681)
 - 3,987 vulnerable children in the peri-urban slums at risk of being street-connected (significantly more than the 1,200 targeted)
- 732 caregivers of street-connected children (below the target of 1,116)
- 1,247 vulnerable women with children at risk of being connected with the street (more than double the 600 targeted)

Fifty-six per cent of the stakeholders interviewed noted the number of direct beneficiaries served as one of the most significant accomplishments of the project, with those interviewed mentioning such successes as: “serving a large number of children,” “working with so many parents and increasing their responsibility,” “addressing the needs of children connected to the street,” and “providing direct support to families and children who needed it.” While the project, thus far, has worked with fewer street-connected children than was planned, it still had reached 84% of the projected 2,681 projected street-connected children the mid-point Year 5. This also represents just over 54% of the 4,165 children identified as street-connected through the enumeration study.³⁴ Worth note here is that at the time of the 2013 feasibility study there were widely ranging estimates of children on the street, up to 10,000 being a common figure cited, hence the target was set high, according to Retrak. Furthermore, given that the enumeration found over 80% of children returning to parents’ or relative’s homes to sleep it may have been difficult to set actual targets because of the fluctuation of numbers on any given day. This would explain fewer children being targeted for reintegration because they were already with a caregiver. Therefore, the project only met 65% of their goal for services to caregivers of street-connected children. The adjustment midway through the project to a focus on prevention and targeting of children at risk made sense given what the enumeration learned and what the CCC staff were finding on the ground. This shift resulted in an additional 2,787 vulnerable children and double the number of vulnerable caregivers (1,247) being served in per-urban slums than planned, a significant achievement. Interestingly, the ratio of girls to boys was found to be one to five at the enumeration (or 20% girls) while the project served 36% girls and 64% boys.

a. Relevance

Relevance refers to the extent to which the objectives of the project are consistent with the needs of street-connected children and their families, aligned with the country’s needs and strategies, and matching the

³³ Note: The evaluation was conducted early into Year 5, outcome figures represent those provided in July 2018 and include the semi-annual figures reported for 2018. They are not the final project figures.

³⁴ Retrak and Chisomo Children’s Club. (2015). Making the Invisible Visible: An Enumeration of Children on the Streets in Malawi.

organisational priorities, policies and practices. The desk review and stakeholder discussions showed that the project was aligned to national and organisational priorities, was relevant to various stakeholder needs, and has involved the various key stakeholders throughout implementation, contributing to the success of strategies and activities. Key informants agreed that the project was timely and appropriate in addressing the issue of children connected to the street in Malawi.

KEY FINDINGS - RELEVANCE

- The project addressed the care and support needs of children connected to the streets and their families as evidenced by the objectives' alignment to the findings of the feasibility and enumeration studies, as well as feedback from beneficiaries including staff, partners, caregivers and children.
- The project was aligned to government policies, strategies and priorities and, in fact, was a vital partner in the development and finalisation of the GOM 2017 Charter for Street Children.
- The enumeration study has been a major contribution to the field, filling a data gap and enabling programs and services in Malawi to better align directly to the realities and needs of street-connected children and their families. The GOM used the information from the study in developing the above Charter for Street Children.
- The project involved various stakeholders including street-connected children in the design and implementation of the project activities, which helped to make it relevant for and owned by them.
- The project was well aligned to Retrak's 2013-2017 and the CCC strategic plans; meeting organisational objectives outlined in both documents: to transform the lives of street-connected children and build strong organisations and partnerships.

Reflective of needs

From the beginning the project was designed and informed by on-the-ground realities. The learning from the feasibility study conducted in 2013 and the enumeration completed in 2014 (published in 2015) meant that strategies and activities that were well aligned to the needs of street-connected children and their families, GOM partners, and CCC. At the time of the enumeration, 4,165 children ages 7-15 years were connected to the streets of Lilongwe and Blantyre. By mid-way through Year 5 the project had served 2,260, meaning this one project served over 54% of the children identified in the enumeration. Adjustments were made throughout the process to ensure that activities remained relevant as new information was learned. For example, a baseline survey on vulnerable families informed the development of new SHG activities mid-way through the project.³⁵ According to project documents, a key rights-based principle of the project was participation. Stakeholders, including street-connected children, participated in the design and implementation of the project strategies through such activities as the feasibility study and baseline assessments. These were means to ensuring the strategies and activities were relevant to stakeholder needs. The midline review, household surveys and continuous consultation with community groups gathered stakeholder opinions that were then used to inform and adjust the project.

Targeting was another way that the project worked to ensure relevancy. Based on information from the enumeration, the project's targeting criteria included: children under 18 years with a focus on six to seventeen-year olds; both girls and boys; any connection to the street; desire of the child to be part of the program; and special vulnerabilities like illness, disability and the girl child. One Retrak staff said, *"the project*

³⁵ Retrak. (2016). CCC Self-Help Group Baseline Survey – Draft Findings.

was open to any child that needed services, but they had to want to come. Outreach worked to make sure children knew what the services were and where to come to." The project quickly recognised the challenge of outreach to girls given that girls were often connected with various types of work, including housework and commercial sex work, which means they are not as visible as boys. Girls were also found less likely to sleep on the streets and more likely to be living with relatives compared to boys.³⁶ To address issues specifically related to girl children, the project did not exclude targeting outreach, however worked closely with organisations more experienced in working with girls connected to the street, such as Theatre for Change and Tikondane. The partnership focused on having these two organisations focus on girls' outreach and receiving referrals of girls for shelter and reintegration services when CCC identified girls in need.

The prevention strategies were targeted to children and families living in poverty and facing factors known to put children at risk for connecting to the street in the targeted communities, such as single parent households, households with no income sources, families with many children, etc. The enumeration study found over 80% of street-connected children return to parents or relatives to sleep (approximately 3,300 of the 4,165 children identified), making the strategy of working with families and communities extremely relevant. It could be deduced that the remaining approximately 800 children would benefit from reintegration services. Therefore, the 521 children reintegrated through the project represents 65% of the need served by this one project. The SHG's were an approach targeted to address the risk factors vulnerable families face. The goal was to reduce the influence of factors that 'push' and 'pull' children into street connections, such as food insecurity, family breakdown, lack of access to education and inadequate shelter, as well as to address public perceptions. Said one interviewee, *"communities are more likely to report minor issues between children and families to community organisations to help now (after the project outreach to communities)."* The project oriented 50 community groups on the National Child Care Protection and Justice Act (143% of the target) and held workshops for 15 children's workers from NGOs, government and community leadership (107% of target). Over 50% of the stakeholders interviewed felt communities were more "enlightened" on myths related to street-connected children and aware of issues that cause children to connect to the street to begin with.

Alignment to national priorities

The project was implemented in-line with the GOM's draft National Strategy for Children Living and Working in the Streets,³⁷ but, furthermore, it worked to see this draft completed and finalised as the GOM Charter for Street Children.³⁸ The project triad focus including prevention, early intervention, protection and reintegration are also explicit priorities for the GOM as detailed in the aforementioned documents. The project was also relevant to the NPA by working to increase access to services, addressing the capacity of families, communities and government, and helping to improve policy and public awareness. Lastly the project directly responds to the national call for de-institutionalisation by focusing on reintegration within families rather than detention or previous approaches such as police "sweeping" and sending all children to residential institutions rather than back to families. The referrals from police diversion increased dramatically starting in Year 2, jumping from three children referred from court diversion programme in Year 1 to 67 in Year 2, and to over 200 in both Years 3 and 4. This is a significant success and greatly contributed to government priorities.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare. (2015). Draft Strategy for Children Living and Working on the Street "Home for Every Child Project." (draft shared by Retrak).

³⁸ Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare. (2017). Charter for Street Children.

The project recognised safe and secure families as the optimal environment for the growth and development of children,³⁹ aligning not only with national priorities but also with global best practices and international conventions which Malawi has ratified. Reintegration with families of origin was a priority whilst also recognising that reintegration is not always in the best interest of the child. The project built relationships with and linked to other service providers such as family and girl's shelters, and organisations such as Theatre for Change and Samaritan Trust. Referrals to these programs served children who could not go home but required such services. Standard operating procedures (SOPs) developed by Retrak were introduced to bring a case management approach focused on individualised support.⁴⁰ As evidenced in the review of case files, significant change stories from the midterm review, and KIIs and FGDs with beneficiaries and staff, SOPs ensured that children and families received relevant support based on a well-developed understanding of their needs.

Orientation to organisational strategy

The project was designed and implemented within the priorities outlined in the Retrak 2013- 2017 strategic plan: to provide a safe and real alternative to life on the street; to promote family preservation and work with communities to prevent highly vulnerable children from coming to the street; and to be better at listening and engaging children's voices in order to change policy and practice.⁴¹ Thirty-three per cent of the CCC/Retrak staff interviewed mentioned the project matched with organisational policies and strategies. This increased to 90% with analysis of the management level CCC/Retrak staff and board member interviews. Furthermore, the project's capacity building activities were responsive to CCC's aims to "regain its strong reputation as a vibrant organisation working in the best interests of the child, strong on child participation and child rights,

"Our hope and desire is that one day Chisomo will stand again strong and independent and be known for its excellence and passion to ensure that no child is forced to live on the street, and that all families and communities are safe and protective places for children to grow and develop." Retrak Management quote in Chisomo Children's Club Newsletter, 2015, Page 3.

and with solid programming focussed on family re-integration, court work and anti-trafficking."⁴² Significant efforts have been made to build the capacity of CCC and bring it up to the level required to implement this and future projects. The numerous trainings and refreshers were directly relevant to capacity needs and gaps identified in the initial review of CCC, identified by the mid-term review and/or

outlined in the Retrak internal report on M&E capacity building.⁴³ Seventy-four per cent of the CCC staff interviewed reported that building staff capacity was one of the most successful outcomes of the project. The project was relevant in responding to CCC's need for capacity.

b. Effectiveness and impact

The evaluation looked at the effectiveness of the project in terms of its six objectives, whether or not they were achieved as defined, the extent to which outputs have led to expected outcomes as planned, and what the early signs of impact are. It is important to note that the outputs (activities) and outcomes were evaluated

³⁹ Retrak. (2015). Standard Operating Procedure, Family Reintegration

⁴⁰ Ibid and Retrak. (2015). Standard Operating Procedure: Street Outreach. Retrieved from: <https://www.retrak.org/content/uploads/2015/11/Retrak-Outreach-SOPs-Oct20151.pdf>.

⁴¹ Retrak. (2015). *Retrak Strategic Plan 2015-2017*. Retrieved from: <https://www.retrak.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Retrak-Strategy-2015-2017-F.pdf>

⁴² Ibid. Retrak. (2013). Page 14.

⁴³ Retrak. (no date). Retrak Monitoring & Evaluation Capacity Building under the Human Dignity Foundation grant: 2013-2018 for Chisomo Children's Club.

in February-March 2018 and at that time the project still had six months of implementation left. Outcomes data reflects up to mid-way through Year 5 and is not final project data as this was not ready at the time of the evaluation. Annex 1 provides a full view of all objectives, target indicators and outcomes.

1. Objective I: Identify and build relationships with street-connected children, families and communities to improve child protection and as a first step in the reintegration process

KEY FINDINGS – OBJECTIVE 1

- The project outreach activities were effective at identifying children through a number of different avenues including direct street contact by workers to children, building relationships and bi-lateral referrals with other organisations, raising awareness of the risks of street connection within communities, and working closely with police and court diversion actors.
- Effective diversion activities, including identification, assessment and reintegration of children involved with law enforcement helped street-connected children to avoid an encounter with the criminal justice system, and built understanding within law enforcement and the justice system as to the realities for street-connected children.
- Tracing and building relationships with families prior to reintegration takes time, staffing, and transportation resources, as well as connections with communities to ensure healthy and protective reintegration and acceptance of the child.
- Retrak SOPs for outreach and reintegration brought quality to the outreach, diversion and tracing activities. They were highly appreciated.

	Indicator	Target LOP ⁴⁴	Actual to date (Yr. 5 mid)	% of target achieved
1.1	Children who participated in outreach activities	2,045	1,662	81%
1.2	Children referred from court diversion programme	636	598	94%
1.3	Families traced	922	394	43%

Outreach and identification

CCC engages with and identifies children through street outreach, and community, court and police referrals. Social workers conduct street outreach three days a week and some nights, weekends and holidays with the goal of building relationships with children and ensuring they are aware of services. The social workers encourage children to come to the centre for services. The project had met 84% of its target for identifying children through outreach and court diversion referrals by mid-way through Year 5 – serving 2,260 children with these two activities. Looking back to the enumeration study this represents 54% of the 4,165 children found to be street-connected in Lilongwe and Blantyre. Based on this data, we could

“The social workers are always warm to us and they prioritize our best interest. They ask us all kinds of questions and wait for us to open up to them. They are always available to us.”

Child FGD participant

⁴⁴ life of project

conclude that the activities were effective in meeting an identified gap. As noted by the social workers interviewed, outreach was effective in connecting and building relationships between the workers and the children. The formerly street-connected children whom participated in FGDs expressed agreement. Based on the staff's assumption that the longer a child is on the street, the harder it is to reintegrate them, the program staff described trying to identify children and reinstate family connections as quickly as possible. One of the reintegrated children who were interviewed describes the process, which starts with outreach, *"they found me on the street, they approached me, and I discussed lots of things with one of the social workers and she told me about CCC and that day I decided to visit CCC centre. After receiving counselling at the centre, I decided to go back to my family. If they had not found me that day on the street, I would have been on the street and ended up may be in detention centre, which is not a good place to be. With all the problems we have at home, I still prefer to live with my mother."*

Interviewees described identification of children through court, police, social welfare offices, CBO referrals and community members. In fact, the project may be effective in outreach simply because it is done in different ways and through different avenues. The numbers would indicate that street contact by outreach workers was most effective, accounting for 88% of children identified in Blantyre and 68% in Lilongwe. Partners such as police and CBOs interviewed described understanding the CCC services and referring children to them. It is possible that data was better collected in Lilongwe, where it showed that in addition to social workers and police, one per cent of children were identified by the court and another three per cent by the community. Data shows that Lilongwe activities were more rigorous in engaging others in outreach, for example Lilongwe made 183 contacts with police versus 95 in Blantyre; and made eight community contacts and eight court contacts while these types of contact were not mentioned or recorded in Blantyre. In Blantyre, only 12% of children were identified through the police, whereas in Lilongwe, 28% of children were. This led to over 100 more children being identified by police in Lilongwe than in Blantyre, while Blantyre social workers identified over 900 more children than the workers in Lilongwe. According to CCC director, Lilongwe is where the national police are headquartered and, therefore, they have a police unit dedicated to community policing, child protection, gender-based violence and human trafficking; meaning they have more capacity and awareness on child issues as compared with Blantyre. In addition, the enumeration study showed that Lilongwe had more children in conflict with the law than Blantyre. In Lilongwe the project worked with the police on training for community policing, referrals and diversion, which may have led to a stronger relationship. This indicates the importance of such training on building connections and relationships with police.

Identification of children in Blantyre					
Means of contact	# of visits made to contact	Total identified	Girls	Boys	% total
Police	95	239	85	154	12%
Outreach/Social worker on street	452	1,830	663	1,167	88%
Other	6	6	4	2	0%
Total	553	2,075	752	1,323	
Identification of children in Lilongwe					
Police	183	366	90	276	28%
Outreach/Social worker on street	262	889	117	772	68%
Court	8	12	0	12	1%
Community	8	41	6	35	3%
Other	1	2	1	1	0%
Total	462	1,310	214	1,096	

The enumeration study conducted at the beginning of the project found 2,389 children connected to the streets of Lilongwe and 1,776 children connected to the streets of Blantyre, yet the outreach and identification activities found more children in the latter. This may be accounted for simply in the fluctuation of numbers of children, that Blantyre city centre is a more defined geographical area, or it may be that the Lilongwe team was more effective at finding the “hidden” children, such as those involved in work during the days. Important to note is that the total number enumerated in 2014 during the study was approximately 700 more children than the project identified, looking at totals. This finding indicates that the enumeration activity was quite effective and accurate.

During interviews, 100% of the staff involved in outreach noted that the quality of the outreach service benefitted from the standards for street outreach developed by Retrak. Interviewed social workers were able to describe the outreach and identification service and process. The work is based on the individual needs and wishes of children in accordance with Retrak’s outreach principles.⁴⁵ The children interviewed noted they were allowed to actively participate in decision-making about accessing services and that the social workers listened to them. The 22 child participants of FGDs described how the first contact with social workers was what brought them to services, indicating outreach effectiveness at increasing access services. Good inter-sector coordination and collaboration by CCC staff with community police, court, the social welfare department and other CBO’s have contributed to successful outreach.

Diversion

Police and children’s court magistrates referred children to the CCC program. Two social workers (one in each location) were employed to specifically work with courts and local police, encouraging diversion of children under the age of fifteen, first time offenders of petty crimes, away from the justice system and towards community reintegration. These social workers also conducted visits to the detention centre to assess cases and fast track appropriate cases to diversion services based on the same criteria. Given only two staff dedicated to this activity, meeting 94% of the target outcome is remarkable. In total 598 children were diverted. A Retrak senior manager described, *“In year two of the project this activity really took off. Police and courts started to understand and work with the project.”* The four police and court representatives who were interviewed echoed this; one said, *“It (the project) ended up making my work easier. These are cases that we do not need to be working on and we could trust CCC to do the work.”* The four interviewees from police and court all described making increasingly more referrals to CCC resulting in fewer children with minor offences being detained and/or incarcerated and more being reintegrated into community and family. CCC also, in turn, referred youth to vocational training and life skills courses depending on individual case planning.

The Retrak diversion approach is based on the specific needs of each individual child, and thus included activities such as catch up learning classes, an intensive life skills program, and reintegration home with case management by a social worker. It would be useful for a follow up to look at longer-term reintegration and recidivism rates. However, as the children generally attested, being home and back at school is considered a success. One child shared, *“I have been enrolled in different CCC rehabilitative programs such as life skills and took part in counselling sessions to give me information on the consequences of committing an offence and*

⁴⁵ Retrak’s guiding principles for outreach: 1. following a rights-based approach, 2. understanding each child and his/her situation, 3. building relationships, 4. being flexible, 5. building in reflection, and 6. ensuring staff care and protection as found in Retrak. (2015). *Standard Operating Procedure: Street Outreach*. Retrieved from: <https://www.retrak.org/content/uploads/2015/11/Retrak-Outreach-SOPs-Oct20151.pdf>.

how to not do it. The diversion program saved me from being labelled as criminal and from being subjected to the justice system.”

Children referred from Court Diversion Programme									
Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4		Semi-Annual Year 5	
Target	Total	Target	Total	Target	Total	Target	Total	Target	Total
30	3	126	67	180	221	200	244	100	63

“Before (the project) street children run away from us because we used to sweep (local term for regular round ups) them. Now, they know we are there to support them and they start to come to us when they face any problem. They are even helping us in our community policing work through reporting criminal activities. This is because of the good relationship we established with them through CCC.”

Police officer

More children came in to services through diversion than the project anticipated, according to the senior manager. This would indicate the effectiveness of the collaboration with police and court, and the outreach done to help law enforcement and the justice sector understand the program. This

also relates to the changing of the attitudes of police. Both police representatives interviewed described having a better understanding of the street-connected child and more awareness about what services they need as alternative to detainment and detention.

One of the weaknesses noted in the diversion services was the lack of follow-up and monitoring of children. The children living closer to the project sites were monitored more closely than those living further away. *“At the early stage of the project especially in the year 2014 and 2016, follow ups were conducted frequently. However, as the budget decreases, we do less and less, especially in 2017. We rely on phone calls,”* said one social worker interviewed. Several of the senior management interviewed explained that there has been a prioritization of funds at the end of the project toward organisational operation. Despite Retrak’s encouragement that funds be used, up to the end, to conduct follow-ups to diversion and reintegration cases, it was not prioritised as much as it should have been. While some follow-up was done it was not sufficient. According to the current CCC director, *“It (follow up) was an issue in this year (year five) due to low funding that led to curtailing of trips in to the field.”*⁴⁶ According to Retrak, the budget was there but was prioritised for other activities. It was expected that target numbers would be lower in year five as direct service activities slowed down approaching close out. To ensure the children living in remote places were safe and cared for, the social workers tried to maintain connections via phone. Where social welfare officers are available, there is an arrangement for these officers to conduct the follow-up.

Family tracing and building relationship

Initially the project assumed (based on the numbers quoted by stakeholders during the 2013 feasibility study) that more children would be living and sleeping on the streets, and therefore would need robust family reintegration services. The project expected to trace 1,465 families. Looking back to the enumeration study, which identified only 20% of the 4,165 children being disconnected from family homes, the target was estimated too high. Twenty per cent would be just over 800 children in potential need of family tracing towards reintegration. This can help to explain why fewer family tracings took place than planned. The project

⁴⁶ Received in written communication August 17, 2018

traced 394 families through CCC staff visits to families identified by children or in existing paperwork (e.g. court files or referral forms) and families making visits to CCC and through phone calls. According to annual reports submitted to HDF, in year two the family tracing numbers were low as the CCC team focused on tracing only after children were considered ready for reintegration, rather than when a child first enters the programme. Improvements to tracing practices in year three meant an increase in tracing (from 26 in year two to 152 in year three). The year three Annual Report states, *“The results for and reporting on this indicator has improved in year three although it is not quite on target. There has been an improvement in capturing the data when family visits are done. In some cases, tracing visits turn into pre-visits and placement visits (especially if the families are far away) and therefore recorded separately. The visits helped in assessing the home situation for child placement suitability and also aimed to build trusting relationships with caregivers in order to improve child protection and as a first step in the reintegration process.”*

Tracing and then working with families is an essential component of successful reintegration. One of the key activities of the project was finding and building relationships with the vulnerable families from which children came from before being to be connected to the street or justice system. Building the relationship involved first tracing the family, building trust, assessing the family using SOPs, providing counselling to encourage attachment or reattachment between the caregiver and the child, and planning towards addressing barriers to successful reintegration before the child returns to live at home. The relationship building process involved as many family members as possible. This aims to create an environment where the child will feel safe and be protected upon return. Social workers travelled to peri-urban and rural areas to do this work. Social workers also had the responsibility of raising awareness within the communities around myths about vulnerable families and street-connected children, such as street-connected children all being drug users or involved in witchcraft. The CCC director described the effectiveness of tracing as due to *“a coordinated effort using our (CCC) social worker, social welfare office, community leaders, police, child protection committee members and religious communities, who often all came together to locate families.”* According to the social workers and program managers interviewed, some families were visited only once before reintegration. This was largely influenced by both the time needed for assessment, but also on the distance and travel constraints of the staff. The social work staff interviewed unanimously agreed that the SOP’s for reintegration and training provided by Retrak, which include tracing, helped to strengthen the case management system and led to higher quality activities. The SOPs were felt to be *“flexible,” “useful,”* and *“practical”* by those interviewed. Generally the SOPs were adhered to, but in some cases there could have been more pre-reintegration visits.

Staff described how it takes time to get children to open up about where they came from. Some children do not want or are unable to help in tracing their families, such as experienced by courts when children are in conflict with the law. *“Children are arrested, they do not want to tell where their families are and this makes family tracing challenging. If we could not find the families, the only thing we can do is to send them to detention,”* said one child court judge. *“It helped that CCC could do tracing of families,”* he continued. Children often take time to open up, and do this more easily with a social worker than police, due to the fear of violence or repercussions. Social workers appreciated the flexibility of SOPs in allowing the time needed for each child before tracing family and beginning a reintegration process. All six families interviewed were willing to take their children back and felt well prepared to do so after counselling. Some, however, struggled to establish their relationship after placement. During an interview one mother shared her concern, *“My daughter was exposed to drugs and drinking alcohol when she was living in the street. She said she has stopped taking all those things but I am not sure. She sometimes meets her peers from the street and I am not sure she is really happy here and if she will stay with us for long.”*

2. Objective 2: Improve access to services for street-connected children and facilitate their reintegration with families

KEY FINDINGS – OBJECTIVE 2

- The catch-up education services helped street-connected children both maintain their educational levels and learn new basic skills in reading and writing. This led to over two thirds of the children (average 69%) returning to full time education.
- Vocational training (VT) provided an opportunity for a further 95 children who were not returning to school to build up relationships with adults and plan for being productive citizens through employment, even though employment opportunities were reported as a barrier to these plans coming to fruition.
- Child Status Index (CSI) measurements indicate that children were stable from multiple perspectives (nutrition, shelter, protection, health, psycho-social care and education)⁴⁷ at the time of reintegration but that over the initial six months post-reintegration their life was less stable in terms of food security, shelter and health. This indicates the need for more family strengthening and household economic support, a finding that reflects Retrak’s work in other countries. It further confirms the finding that a focus of effort and resources (human and financial) post-reintegration is needed.
- The life skills support provided by the project has promoted better communication skills of the children, positive thinking, problem solving and cooperative skills, according to the children interviewed. This is reflected in the reported improved relationships at home. Caregivers also report children are more helpful with chores, have better behaviour and improved relationships with caregivers and siblings.

	Indicator	Target LOP	Actual to date (Yr. 5 mid)	% of target achieved
2.1	Children received services in centres	2,105	2,138	102%
2.2	Children reintegrated	665	521	78%
2.3	Caregivers supported	931	732	79%

Centre-based services

According to the project proposal, *through the provision of shelter, nutrition and medical care as well as a package of support to bring stability to their lives, children will be helped to learn to trust and build positive attachments with adults, progress their educational and psycho-social development, and prepare them for a transition from street life to return home.*⁴⁸ Indeed, the project provided centre-based shelter, feeding, hygiene, basic health care and recreational activities at its two centres to children who willingly wanted to be a part of the program. With centre-based services the project surpassed the target, meeting 102% of the planned outcome or serving 2,138 children with a variety of centre-based activities. These include provision

⁴⁷ The Child Status Index provides a framework for identifying the needs of children, creating individualized goal-directed service plans for use in monitoring the well being of children and households. Since its development in 2008 it has been used in more than 17 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and Latin America. <https://www.measureevaluation.org/resources/tools/ovc/child-status-index>

⁴⁸ Retrak. (2013). Retrak Human Dignity Foundation Revised Proposal.

of basic services (e.g. feeding, shelter, medical care, daily activities), case management for reintegration, referrals to services, catch up education, life skills and vocational training, and psychosocial support (PSS). These activities aim to prepare children for reintegration to family, school and community. Due to lack of funding the overnight shelter services were no longer offered after February 2018. In the original grant phase out plans CCC would have secured funding to continue the overnight sheltering, however they were not able to secure the resources needed. The centre-based services and outcomes included:

Service	Outcomes
Overnight care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children in safe care whilst preparation for family reintegration was done.
Feeding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children received nutritious meals as they prepared for family reintegration.
Health care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health needs addressed so that children were in good health when they reintegrated home.
Counselling and psycho-social support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All children attended counselling sessions to deal with the trauma, challenges and barriers to forming or reforming attachment with their families as they prepared for reintegration. Children and families both indicated that behaviour problems were less and children were more motivated to stay at home and attend school.
Catch up education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An average of 69% of children returned to full time education. Children interviewed and in FGDs indicate catch up education helped them stay in or return to school.
Referrals to other services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vocational training referrals as a positive example of cooperation with another CBO and effective use of referral for services. Health, dental, SRH services and diversion work (in collaboration with Irish Rule of Law) are other examples that ensured holistic care and service provision.
Life skills training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children report increased positive thinking, cooperation, problem solving and positive conflict resolution skills. Caregivers note improved cooperation at home and more positive behaviours.

Catch-up education services helped children with schooling and motivated children to remain in or return to formal education. Catch up education had the purpose of helping “each child begin the journey of transition from the street back to an educational setting,” according to project documents. In all five of the FGDs with children the participants indicated that CCC services helped them stay in or return to school. In four out of five FGDs children agreed they are doing well in school. Said one teacher who was interviewed, “There are two

Impact of centre-based services on children’s lives

- Improved ability to communicate with respect and without using language that is abusive;
- Increased ability to recognize and manage feelings of anger;
- Increased ability to hold aspire for the future; and
- Increased responsibility for their own lives.

girls and two boys from CCC in my class. They have really changed both in behaviour and performance. They were able to catch up with the class.” Two children interviewed noted that they had limited or no access to formal education before joining the project, but reported they are now in school. The four others interviewed indicated the catch-up education services ensured they maintained their

educational levels or learned new basic skills. The approach to catch up education was one-to-one based on the initial child assessment.

Comments made by the youth participants visited with at Samaritan’s Trust suggest that vocational training (VT),⁴⁹ provided through this partner, was an opportunity for the older children who would not be returning to school to build relationships with adults and develop skills for employment. VT in carpentry, bricklaying, electronics, farming and tailoring, was backed up with classes in literacy, numeracy and life and independent living skills, according to the staff interviewed. Trainings were conducted in groups of fifteen by tutors. The children interviewed were very positive about the counselling and life skills services they received and their effectiveness in building confidence and motivation. One young man shared, *“Since I started training here at Samaritan’s Trust, I do not have time to go to the streets. I do not think of using drugs, as I feel good and comfortable here. I am focused to finish my education and get work.”* However, the children and staff alike mentioned the lack of employment opportunities and small grants to start small businesses as constraints. They noted that to find a job, family connections are important, and most do not have them. According to the current CCC director, *“in the future we hope to connect the vocational students to employment by building relationships with businesses.”*⁵⁰

“At Chisomo there were learning catch up classes in different subjects for example English, mathematics and others. I was also counselled on good behaviour and the importance of school. This has helped me to focus on my education and stay with my family.”

Reintegrated child

Students supported by CCC for vocational skills development ⁵¹							
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Total
Girls	1	1	2	2	4	20	30
Boys	8	8	8	8	10	23	65
Total	9	9	10	10	14	43	95

Life skill trainings were provided to all the children in the centre. The life skills sessions gave children new or strengthened existing skills such as communication, positive thinking, cooperation, coping, problem solving, and non-violent conflict resolution. Three out of five of the FGDs with children showed children had increased information on sexual health, avoidance of drugs and other harmful substances, and knew the risks of being street-connected. The two CCC teachers interviewed agreed that the interactive and participatory life skill sessions were useful, particularly to older children and those coming from the court diversion programme. They said the topics covered included: child rights and responsibilities, child protection, sexual health, substance abuse, dealing with peer pressure and negative stereotypes and more. The six children interviewed suggested that the life skills support has promoted a healthier lifestyle.

Social workers were trained in communication with children. All three of the interviewed social workers said the new skills helped them with providing PSS to children. PSS had the purpose of counselling all children who came through the centre to address and overcome the trauma of being separated from their families and the abuse experienced whilst living on the streets. In addition, the project supported 732 caregivers (parents or guardians) with counselling, parenting training and support to reintegrate their children back home. This was 79% of the target objective as of mid-way through Year 5. Families had the following positive feedback to share regarding about the time children spent at the centre:

⁴⁹ Note that vocational training was not an activity funded through this project. Children who chose vocational training were provided it through Samaritan’s Trust.

⁵⁰ According to written communication from CCC director received 17 August 2018.

⁵¹ Figures provided by CCC in an email October 3, 2018.

“My son was a thief and one day he was caught and sent to Mpemba; a Juvenile Centre for children. From Mpemba, CCC took him in and since he came back he has improved in his behaviour a lot. Now I rely on him. He shows support and respect to me.” (Mother of reintegrated child)

“My son was taken in by Chisomo for two weeks. Since he came back there has been a tremendous behavioural change that we have taken note of. For example, he does all the house chores on a daily basis and his class performance has improved. Since he came back, he started to look after his younger brothers and respects me as well. He listens to me and we talk to each other better than before” (Mother of reintegrated child)

Family reintegration

Five hundred and twenty-one children were reintegrated under this project (78% of the project target). The reintegration process used a case management approach as described in the Retrak SOPs for reintegration.⁵² A social worker was assigned to each family/child pair to prepare the child and his/her family for the reintegration. All of the social workers interviewed agreed that the Retrak SOPs strengthened CCC's case management system and were beneficial to their work with families. Reintegration happened on an individualised timescale adjusted for each child based on needs identified during the assessment and planning steps. While children received the centre-based services described above, families benefitted from counselling, child protection and parenting skills training. The six caregivers interviewed expressed satisfaction with the services they received. In all five of the FGDs with children, children reported parents are “better able to provide what they need.” The case management process is documented in case files and includes individual case plans. Twenty case files were reviewed and all showed that reintegration preparation took around three months. In cases where parents were not ready or able to receive their child, social workers try to trace and work with extended families. In the few cases where reintegration with family was not in the best interest of the child, social workers arranged alternative care through partner CBOs. Due to lack of new funding streams, as of February 2018 there were no more overnight services at the centres.

Out of these, 331 children are still living where they were reintegrated after six months after placement. The home retention rate is 64%. From the Year 2 report to HDF we learn, *“More children were reintegrated in the year than initially planned and this is reflective of the numbers of children going through the centres and children being ready for reintegration. The team have highlighted that this is also due to timely programme planning and team coordination. Follow ups conducted indicate that most of the reintegrated children have remained at home with a positive behaviour change towards their parents and siblings.”* The retention rate is lower than the rates achieved in other countries where Retrak is implementing similar projects, which are closer to 70-75%.⁵³ The 2015 Comic Relief evaluation for Uganda showed a retention rate in that programme of 84%, for example. The low level of follow up support provided could be impacting the sustainable reintegration rates, and it would be important to provide more rigorous follow-up and then revisit the rate of children remaining home. Here it is important to consider the Malawian context and peri-urban nature of the work. According to Retrak, other countries where they have worked have higher rates of retention but are

⁵² Retrak. (2015). *Standard Operating Procedure: Family Reintegration*. Retrieved from: <https://www.retrak.org/content/uploads/2015/05/Retrak-Family-Reintegration-SOPs-revised-Apr-2015.pdf>.

⁵³Retrak. (2013). Evaluating outcomes: Retrak's use of the Child Status Index to measure wellbeing of street-connected children. Retrieved from: https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/7832/pdf/retrak_research_evaluating_outcomes_may_13_f_0.pdf and Retrak. (2011). Retrak summary report: Sustainable reintegration of orphans and vulnerable children into family and community life in Uganda and Ethiopia. Retrieved from: <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/6376/pdf/6376.pdf>

reintegrating a much higher proportion of children back to rural areas.⁵⁴ *“Malawi is unusual in that most children are going home to peri-urban areas where families do not have land, do not grow their own food, keep any animals, etc., tend to be much more transitory with dependence on casual labour and much less connected with community,”* wrote Retrak’s programme director. This, in combination with lower levels of follow up, impacts on the longer term sustainability and presents many more challenges in working with these families.

As part of the reintegration process, the Child Status Index (CSI) tool was used to assess the children’s wellbeing in six areas of the child and family environment (nutrition, shelter, protection, health, psycho-social care and education) at enrolment in centre services, at reintegration, and at six months post reintegration. It was intended to show if the reintegration was and continued to be safe and in the child’s best interest. In Lilongwe, over 50% of the children enrolled in centre-based services were identified as at risk in all six critical needs areas at the time of enrolment. The percentage of children at risk decreased significantly at reintegration because they have been receiving all necessary services at the centre. After six months of reintegration with their families the percentage of children at risk increased again to 25%. As noted by the social work staff, most families of the reintegrated children live in poor conditions and it is difficult for them to provide for them resulting in poor scores on nutrition, shelter and health, even whilst protection, psychosocial and education scores might be within an acceptable range. Family and child interviews and FGD indicate that children were doing well in terms of feeling protected and supported by families and that they were going to school and 80% reported “doing well in school.” According to senior Retrak management, programs in Ethiopia and Uganda have had similar findings around increase in risk immediately after reintegration, suggesting that support to improve family strengthen and household economic security is critical and takes more time and investment. “In the centres the children are provided with meals and education on a daily basis, life skills training, counselling, etc. and so there is usually a drop in their wellbeing when they are placed as transition back to families and communities,” explained Retrak. The importance of taking a family approach to reintegration and addressing the, often overwhelming, root causes of poverty, violence, etc. that results in street-connectedness. This takes time and is so much more than just moving a child from one place to another.

Caregivers supported

Anecdotal evidence presented in conversations with the several of the CCC staff and two other CBO representatives noted challenges with children returning to the street after receiving services. They felt that

“For families in our community, social problems are always there and even are increasing every day. By organisations working together and synergising what we do we can be effective in helping families keep children from the streets.”

NGO partner

many children who returned had been living on the streets longer before being reintegrated or had lives complicated by either drug abuse or reliance on street-related income (begging or petty theft), making the adjustment to family life more difficult. This is not an area where the project collected data, however it would be a useful analysis to compare return rates versus length of stay on the streets.

According to the annual report for year three to HDF, *“Staff is continuing to provide parental counselling in different areas. They are also working with families to engage in preventative ways to avoid children from running away from their homes and going to the streets.”* Towards the prevention of children returning to the streets the project supported 732 caregivers of street-connected children. These were not the families involved with

⁵⁴Per email communication received September 27, 2018.

reintegration, but families identified as having children connected to the streets, but sleeping home at night. These families had access to advice, information, referral to services and parenting skills training by social workers and centre managers to encourage children to return to school and caregivers to prevent street connection.

3. Objective 3: Support children, families and communities to move towards successful reintegration

KEY FINDINGS – OBJECTIVE 3

- Follow up of reintegrated families appears to be one of the most challenging aspects of reintegration work. It takes dedicated resources and commitment to prioritise those resources towards follow-up.
- School reintegration is most successful (indicated by lower drop out, higher attendance and student satisfaction) when social workers engage with schools, teachers and peers of reintegrated children to address misperceptions and fears. Data indicates that this engagement is best done consistently over time and not as a one-time contact.
- Household economic strengthening is a critical component of successful reintegration, however not one that CCC or Retrak have yet perfected. By piloting IGA with reintegrated families CCC and Retrak were able to learn more about how to best strengthening families' economic situation and which types of IGA worked best in the Malawi context. IGA was less effective for highly vulnerable families facing food insecurities and/or illness.

	Indicator	Target LOP	Actual to date (Yr. 5 mid)	% of target achieved
3.1	New families followed up and supported (reintegration)	850	487	57%
3.2	Children returned to full-time education	70%	48%	69%
3.3	Families supported to who become economically independent	10%	0%	-
3.4	Families phased out from support	478	393	82%

Strengthening reintegrated families

“The visits help me to share the problem I have with my child. For example, they were here last week and I told them that we are not in good terms with my child and they talked to him alone and later sat with both of us and advised us how we can improve our relationship. He is better this week and I hope he will continue like this.”

Mother

The project has made efforts to ensure each child's safety and wellbeing through family counselling, material support, parenting skills counselling, household economic strengthening, and follow-up visits both face-to-face and via phone. The project met 57% of its target for follow up, perhaps explained in part because reintegration numbers were lower than anticipated (see text in previous section). During the follow-up visits social workers

reported that they met with the child, caregivers, siblings, and any other people in the household or

community who are of importance to the child (e.g. teachers, child protection committee members, community leaders/chiefs). Anecdotal evidence suggests that families residing closer to the two-targeted cities were followed up with in-home visits more frequently than those living in rural and hard to reach areas. Both families and children noted the importance of the follow up visits.

In Year 3 a budget revision was undertaken in order to address the prioritisation of funding for support and follow up of reintegration.⁵⁵ According to Retrak there should have been funds for adequately following up all reintegration cases. However, 40% of the program staff interviewed cited distance to families combined with lack of human and financial resources hampered the follow-up process and meant the project prioritised centre services over follow-up visits as resources were limited nearer to the final year. In written communication, the CCC director confirmed that limited resources meant fewer visits to the field in year five. Ability to fundraise is complicated by a lack of financial sustainability and extremely limited fundraising, as will be discussed in the section on sustainability, below. As one social worker noted, *“The focus is on outreach and reintegrating children. Follow-up usually comes second and it depends on how many children we have in the centre. Funding also slowed down follow-up. We do phone follow up but it is not consistent,”* while another noted, *“We reintegrated children all over the country. Some places are challenging to get back to after placement so we do the follow-up through phone calls. We know that because of lack of strict monitoring after placement, some children got back to the streets. When we ask them why they came back, they tell us either they are having problems with their families or communities. Some of these are the issues we could solve if we pay frequent visits.”* According to Retrak management interviewed, a choice was made by CCC to prioritise funding in the direction of centre-based operations even while Retrak was continuing to encourage quality follow-up at all quality control checks and monitoring visits.

School reintegration

In the reintegration process, the project also works with schools. From the total of reintegrated children, over the life of the project 48% of reintegrated children returned to full time education according to the M&E records. This was lower than the 70% projected. Ninety-five older children and those who had been out of school for longer were engaged in life skills and vocation training rather than returning to regular public education schools, in fact in years four and five there were more children suited for vocational training referred to Samaritan’s Trust rather than reintegrated in formal education.

Children returned to full time education									
Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4		Semi-Annual Year 5	
Target	Total	Target	Total	Target	Total	Target	Total	Target	Total
50%	88%	50%	74%	70%	70%	70%	57%	70%	48%

School materials and fees were provided for some children when case plans showed this would be a need in order to get the children back to school. According to the social workers interviewed, collaboration with public school teachers, who in turn reported issues or concerns about the children to the social workers, was important. Six reintegrated families were interviewed as part of this evaluation. In two of the families the children were not attending school. The caregivers reported this was because of lack of money for school fees or uniforms, illustrating the on going challenges that economic vulnerability pose to successful reintegration.

⁵⁵ According to interviews with Retrak Financial Director and Head of International Partnerships

The other four families had all children going to school. Of the six children interviewed, the two not attending school said teacher and peer stigmatisation and attitude was the reason for not attending. Said one child, *“The most difficult part is to deal with the teacher that always sees me as a thief. I sometimes decide not to go to school because of him.”* Social workers are meant to support the reintegration of children and it was not clear why, in these two sample cases, children appeared not to be supported. In the other four interviews children reported being happy with school, progressing in learning and feeling happy with teachers and classmates. The family’s role in monitoring their children’s education is noted as *“vital to keeping children in school”* by the social workers. Of the four families interviewed whose children were in school, they noted following school attendance. One mother noted, *“I need to know his performance at school I check his notebooks on a daily basis when he comes back from school and check with all his friends that come from the same community. These friends are in his class and they also act as watchdogs to check his class attendance.”* One explanation for the differences may be the capacity and level of work of the social workers themselves.

Household economic strengthening

In year three a budget revision included activities for improving household economic strength towards sustaining the reintegration. This was supported with a livelihoods consultancy from Retrak, meant to provide CCC with a comprehensive plan for strengthening the implementation of IGA with families. Prior to this, there was not a robust IGA programme in place and the enumeration showed that more such work in the peri-urban areas would be beneficial. The subsequent budget revision included a consultant to provide independent review of what was needed to support families. Unfortunately, the consultant hired did not align with the scope of work produced by Retrak and the resulting report was not useful in terms of providing innovative solutions to IGA with peri-urban families, according to Retrak. One interview with a senior member of Retrak staff highlighted, *“On the ground the consultancy was not handled well and the IGA program was problematic from the start.”* The small number would indicate that IGA was a sort of pilot activity for CCC. According to CCC, none of the other CBOs working with street-connected children provide IGAs to families so this was a very new model for Malawi.

Over the life of the project a total of 56 families received an IGA (an average of 11 per year). This was an extremely small number compared with the 1,247 women who joined SHG. The total number of children taken home to family was 521 over the life of the project, therefore 11% of the families who received a child back home also got an IGA. According to Retrak reports, these families were randomly spread in both rural and urban areas indicating possible issues with targeting complicated with the follow-up constraints that were discussed earlier.

Of the 56 families who received an IGA, all received at least three follow-ups: 38 have made successful businesses with their IGA, meaning that over half or 68 % of all IGAs continue and are strengthening and sustaining families. The following table reflects types of businesses that were developed and rates of success and failure. The most successful IGA were selling of rice and beans, fritters/mandazi/samosas or dried fish. Selling clothing, stationery, plastic items, soap/washing powder and breeding chickens were not successful ventures.

Successes	Failures
7 Selling fresh vegetables	4 Selling fresh vegetables
2 Selling charcoal/firewood	1 Selling charcoal/firewood
8 Selling fritters/mandazi/samosas	2 Selling fritters/mandazi/samosas
2 Selling oil	1 Selling oil

2 Selling used clothes /shoes	3 Selling used clothes /shoes
5 Selling dried fish	2 Selling dried fish
No failures	All failures
7 Selling rice and beans	1 Selling stationery items
1 set up grocery shop	1 breeding chickens
2 Maize and fish	2 selling plastic bowls/items
1 selling popcorn	1 selling soap/washing powder
1 goat breeding	

There were specific reasons cited by caregivers for the failures of IGAs. These were gathered by staff follow-ups and shared with the evaluation team. The majority failed because of either urgent need for food security at home or because of illness and the need for medical care. These two reasons accounted for 68% of the failures, indicating that precarious family situations related to basic needs may not be well matched when granting an IGA on it's own. Interviews with the six reintegrated families seem to confirm this. When the family experiences an urgent need they might prioritise use of the capital for that need, as in this example shared by one caregiver, "I received 35,000MK from Chisomo to start a business to help my family. As soon as I started my business of selling charcoal and rice I went into labour. The arrival of a new baby meant I had to use the capital for something else. Currently I have no business but I am working as a housemaid for income". In another example, a female caregiver described, "I was doing a small scale business to provide for my family. I was given 40,000 MK by Chisomo Children's Club to start.

"In future, for these very poor families, it would be better to give some immediate cash/in kind benefit like a sack of maize, five litres of oil, or salt at the same time as setting up IGA, as well as we have to have closer follow-up of these highly vulnerable families."

CCC staff person

Everything was going on well. I opened an account for my savings. I later used most of my capital to pay for the hospital bills. My husband cannot provide for the household and now I am finding it difficult to make ends meet."

REASONS CITED FOR IGA FAILURE		
	# failed	% of total
No food at home – used IGA money to buy food for the family's immediate needs	7	40%
Child/family member got sick - bought medicine/paid for medical care (this was sometimes mixed with school needs as well)	5	28%
Used money to repair leaking roof of house	1	5%
Paid for funeral expenses	1	5%
Families relocated so unable to follow-up	4	22%
	18	100%

Case closure – phase out of support

The project managed to phase out support to 393 families or 82% of the target. The majority of these cases were in years four and five (74%), which is to be expected as the project phases out. The social workers interviewed gave the following as the criteria for closing cases or phasing out support: family shows economic stability, child reaches the age of 18, health or education indicators have improved, the family is showing that they take full responsibility for the protection of their child, monitoring reports show the child is safe at home. It should be noted here that at the time of the evaluation the project had not yet closed out and further data

on case closure was not available as many final visits had yet to take place. The CSI child wellbeing assessment tool mentioned earlier was used to ensure that reintegration, after six months, was ensuring the child's health, education and safety, etc. The review of case files showed that the CSI was being used to track such progress. In interviews the CCC staff noted that the decision on when to close the case is done jointly by the social work team, not just the individual case social worker. This is in alignment with the Retrak SOPs for case care reviews throughout the reintegration process.

4. Objective 4: Strengthen families and communities in peri-urban areas to prevent children from coming to the street

KEY FINDINGS – OBJECTIVE 4

- The project was effective in its flexibility to allow learning to lead the addition of objectives around prevention and strengthening families. The activities were well targeted to beneficiaries and well received by families and communities, evidence by the fact that all targets were exceeded.
- The SHG was an effective platform to address crosscutting family issues resulting in social and economic empowerment through: household economic strengthening; forming supportive peer communities and information sharing; financial literacy and skills training; and parenting skills training.
- Sustainable ratio rates fluctuate dependent upon group savings amounts, rates of interest, loan repayment averages and group leadership. These provide important insights for future program development, such as continuing to build leadership skills and combining financial activity with financial literacy skills.
- Evidence suggests that SHGs are effective in increasing economic independence, improving provision for basic needs, increasing awareness on gender-based and childhood violence, strengthening parenting skills, increasing community connections, and addressing childhood risks such school attendance and performance and child labour.
- Raising the awareness of community groups (e.g. community leaders, village chiefs, Child Protection Committees and other existing groups) led to the beginning of attitude changes around children connected with the streets, children in contact with the law, and vulnerable children. Once aware, evidence indicated that community members took more responsibility for the protection and wellbeing of children.

Objective four focused on strengthening families and preventing children from becoming street-connected. It was added during a project budget revision in year three (2016) and at the request of CCC, who had noted the need to work at the community level with vulnerable families showing risks for children becoming street-connected and wished to direct unspent funds towards this activity. Retrak was in support of this change, according to those staff interviewed. The flexibility of HDF was cited as a major factor in the project's ability to adapt to the identified needs in Malawi. This work involved the development SHGs and increased work with community groups.

	Indicator	Target LOP	Actual to date (Yr. 5 mid)	% of target achieved
4.1	New Self Help Groups (SHGs) established	40	74	185%
4.2	New vulnerable women joined SHG	600	1,247	208%
4.3	New children supported as part of SHG members family	1,200	3,987	332%
4.4	SHGs reached sustainable savings:loans ratio	40%	19%	48%
4.5	SHG families living below national poverty line	90%	71%	78%
4.6	SHG families with children attending school	90%	89%	99%
4.7	Community groups oriented on Child Care Protection and Justice Act	35	50	143%

Self-help groups

The project surpassed targets for number of SHGs established, and number of women, children and community beneficiaries. The project mid-term review, conducted only shortly after the activities of SHGs and prevention began, found:

Even though the community work preventing separation was a new activity implemented by CCC as part of the revision to this project, the work with the SHGs has already started demonstrating early signs of impact. SHGs members have been regularly saving money, started taking out loans and setting up businesses. The household survey revealed that the wellbeing of children improved after their caregivers joined SHGs. The survey also reported that the number of SHG members earning an income increase, along with the average monthly household income. The Provision and Strengthening of Support for Street Children Families and Communities in Malawi Project – Midterm Review, 2016, Page 62.

Seventy-four SHG had formed by mid-way through year five, significantly over target (185%) with 25 in Blantyre and 49 SHG in Lilongwe. CCC facilitators supported the women in forming new groups. The target community sites for the SHG were selected by CCC to align with peri-urban areas where street-connected children tend to come from, although selection did not always align with the findings of the enumeration study because some communities already had SHG or other groups going through other organisations. CCC targeted also to avoid duplication. Women from within the community could join the groups through self-selection. This is different from the IGAs, which was a targeted intervention to specific families. The self-selection may have been a motivating factor for success and saving. This would be an interesting area of further exploration. During FGDs the members of the SHGs noted that they are from similar socio-economic backgrounds and this homogeneity contributed to mutual understanding and equal participation. One thousand, two hundred and forty-seven (1,247) new vulnerable women joined SHGs (208% of the original target), indicating the groups were much more popular than anticipated. The charts below show the savings realized in each location.

Number of SHG	Min saving	Max saving	Median saving	Total saving	Average
LILONGWE					
49	11,900	380,680	182,155	6,332,720	158,307
BLANTYRE					
25	17,960	1,088,765	245,653	8,118,787	324,751

The SHGs were trained in financial management and basic accounting. Groups started with a small amount of savings (e.g. 50KW/week) and progressed from there (to 200KW/week). The total loans divided by total savings is an indicator of how a group utilizes their money. Fifteen (19% of target) SHGs reached sustainable loans/savings ratios of 4:1 or higher. It was noted by SHG facilitators interviewed that SHGs were formed at different times and due to this their level of progress towards meeting sustainable loans/saving ratio varies. The table below shows that ratios did increase over time as expected, just not at the rates anticipated.

Rates of sustainable savings:loan ratio									
Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4		Semi-Annual Year 5	
Target	Total	Target	Total	Target	Total	Target	Total	Target	Total
-	-	-	-	10%	7%	20%	9%	40%	19%

This indicates that, while some groups are stronger in saving, collecting loans regularly and using their saving effectively, it generally takes groups longer to form and build ratios than projected. This was echoed by the SHG facilitators interviewed who noted that SHGs need more time to get to a sustainable loans/savings ratio. Evidence indicated that the time needed to reach a sustainable ratio differs from group to group and depends up on savings amount, rate of interest, loan repayment and group leadership. As a result of this learning CCC has been working to link up the groups with lending firms and assisting them to form Cluster Level Associations to learn from each other.⁵⁶ Group leaders were elected by the membership from within the group and served on rotation. A secondary outcome of the SHG, according to facilitators, was the member’s ability to build leadership skills.

The major aim of the SHG was to prevent street involvement of children through caregiver economic

“From the businesses we are doing, some of us bought bicycles to deliver our children to school, some of us bought livestock. We are able to provide for the family in terms of food. We have saved enough to buy our children some clothes and school uniforms without asking money from our husbands.”

SHG member

empowerment. Beneficiaries included the 3,987 children (332% of target) of SHG families. SHG had positive outcomes for families. According to the Self Help Groups Household Survey (2018), by round three, 100% of women in both Blantyre and Lilongwe reported they had cash income. This is an increase from 88% at the baseline in both locations.⁵⁷ According to the 23 participants of SHG FGDs loans

were generally used to start new businesses or grow existing ones. The two FGDs with SHG women were unanimous in agreeing that the SHG has increased household income stability. In FGDs the women mention the impact of their involvement in SHGs as: being more able to make decisions and increased independence;

⁵⁶ A Cluster Level Association is made up of 8 to 10 SHGs from a specific geographic area. The association takes up social, economic and political issues that are beyond the scope of a individual SHG and allow groups to learn from one another.

⁵⁷ Data in this section comes from: CCC and Retrak. (2018). Self Help Groups Household Survey: A comparison of baseline, round 2 and 3 results for Lilongwe and Blantyre.

knowing how to manage groups; ability to pay school fees and provide food; increased family happiness; new business skills; and better parenting. *“The group opened our eyes to a better viewpoint and now we are claiming economic liberty from our husbands,”* said one SHG FGD participant.

The SHG have been used as a platform to raise awareness with women on economic empowerment, parenting skills, child protection, and leadership. Weekly training topics by facilitators included home and self-hygiene, gender-based violence, anti-trafficking information, child protection, business management, vegetable gardening and environmental conservation. The SHG was an effective platform to address crosscutting family issues. Comments from FGDs included, *“From the group we have also acquired some skills on how to deal with gender-based violence, and we help one another on how better to raise our children”* and *“From the group we have learned how to evaluate our businesses in terms of profit and loss. We also learned that no matter what hardship they we meet, we should never use up the capital.”*

“Since we joined SHG, the one thing we discussed most is how we should provide care for our children. Most of us stop sending them to work so they can focus on their education. Some of us bought bicycles to so they can get to school. We make sure that they have the school materials and uniforms. We talk to them about how they are doing in school.”

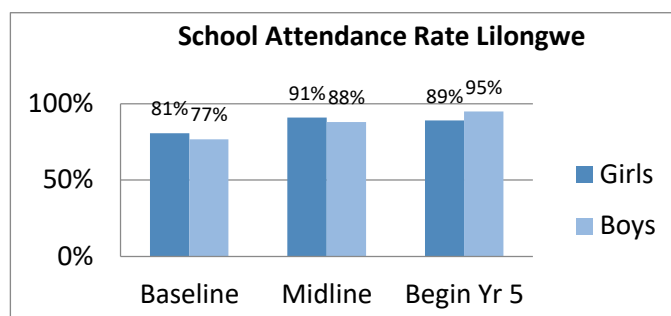
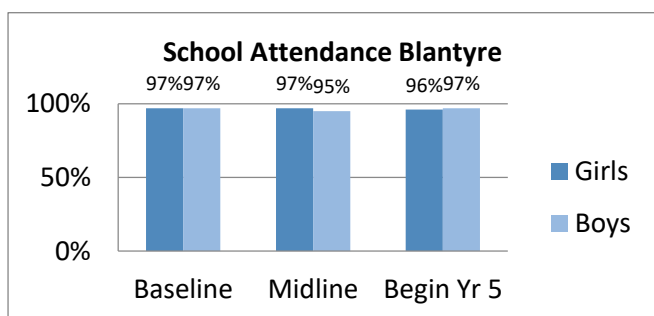
SHG member

A CBO representative spoke of family issues beyond income, *“If we want to address the current issue of street kids for good, we need to train parents. Poor parenting is the major contributing factor to the increase in street kids in the country.”* Anecdotal evidence from conversations with program staff in both locations also indicated the importance of increasing parental skills. Caregivers from the SHGs who participated in focus groups (23 total) noted that they are more involved in raising their children than they were before joining the group. Fifty per cent of the program staff noted that building caregiver’s parenting skills so that children are cared for in a way that promotes their ability to thrive and ensures their survival is very important. An increase in parenting skills was also mentioned by the two SHG FGDs. *“As a mother, my focus was only making sure that all my children had food at least twice a day, but now because I have learned how important nurturing is for good upbringing, I try my best to support them, show love and concern,”* was heard from one focus group participant.

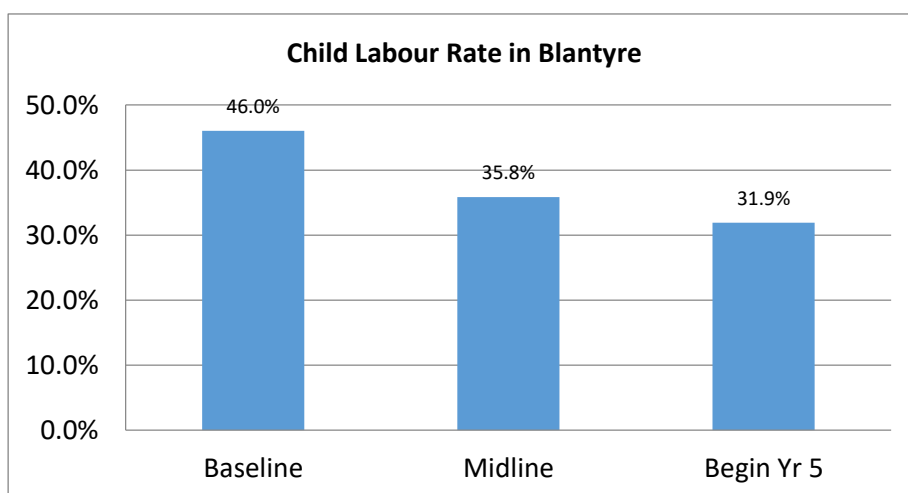
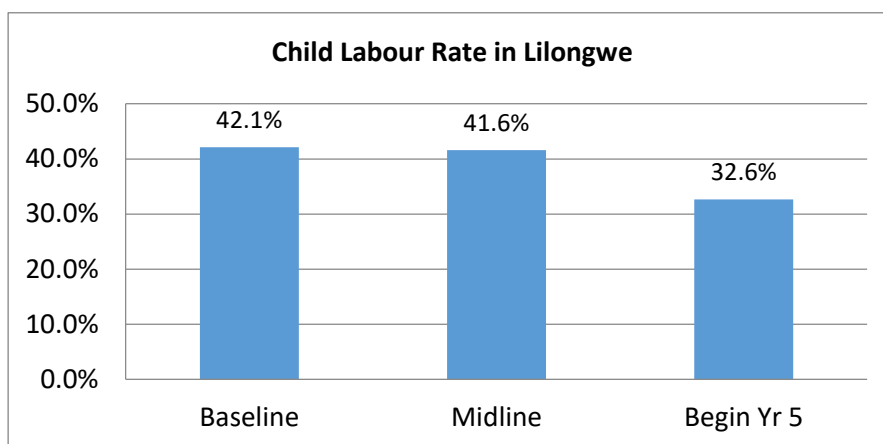
Positive outcomes were also reflected in the FGDs with 28 children of SHG members. One child commented, *“Since our mother joined the self-help group we have observed some changes. For example, before our mothers joined the group we could not afford breakfast but now we usually have three meals a day. Our parents have bought livestock which they could not afford before.”* Another child noted, *“We used to live in a grass thatched house but now my family has roofed our house with iron sheets from the money my mother collected. There is enough care from my parents now.”* In the discussions with children the impacts of SHG on the family were noted as: family is happier; caregivers are providing better; and improved attendance and performance in school. The project achieved an 89% school attendance rate in these families, nearly 100% of the target projected. Data on school attendance was collected through household surveys from families in SHG at the baseline, midline and at beginning of year five. The data analysis showed significant improvement in school attendance of SHG children in Lilongwe (79% to 92%), while in Blantyre school attendance rates decreased by 1%. In both targeted cities the girls’ attendance rate is slightly higher.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Data in this section comes from: CCC and Retrak. (2018). Self Help Groups Household Survey: A comparison of baseline, round 2 and 3 results for Lilongwe and Blantyre

According to the data collected from household surveys, child labour in the SHG families decreased. In



Lilongwe, the number of children who were involved in labour decreased from 42.3% to 41.6% by midline and 32.6% by the beginning of year five. In Blantyre, the percentage of children who were involved in labour decreased from 46% to 35.8% at midline and down to 31.9% by year five.



Each SHG developed their own rules, regulations and sanctions, including procedures for meetings, leadership nomination, purpose and function, rights and responsibilities, etc. According to the SHG facilitators interviewed the agreement on the rules and responsibilities minimized risk of groups dissolving. During the project period evaluated only three SHG were dissolved. The participatory approach used to form groups

seemed to build a sense of ownership, as exemplified by one SHG FGD participant, *“There is no group that is falling apart among us. This is owed to our work together.”*

Work with community groups

The project endeavoured to work with community groups such as existing groups of community members, community-based Child Protection Committees (CPCs) and community leaders such as village chiefs. The target was to reach 35 groups with orientation to national child protection laws, policies and instruments related to children’s rights, and help them to understand the Child Care Protection and Justice Act of 2010, which includes the community’s role in protecting children. The project exceeded the objective, reaching 50 groups with this awareness raising (143% of the target). According to reports, discussions were held with the community members on integration of the children from the diversion programme back into the community, impacts of stigmatisation of street-connected or vulnerable children, community and parental responsibility towards children, child trafficking and the importance of education. Interviews with two community leaders and FGDs with community leaders (8 stakeholders total), indicated that the community groups were in turn able to share knowledge wider into the community and that communities took an active role in monitoring the wellbeing of reintegrated children and with the functioning of the SHGs. Having these groups linked the project to the community influenced the community worked to protect children, as evidenced by the fact that nine out of ten community stakeholders (police, community leaders, teachers and CBO representatives) agreed that one of the project’s biggest successes was increasing and improving linkages and collaboration between different actors responsible for children.

“The community awareness activities helped us to understand how these children came to be in the streets and to recognise that these children have rights as part of our community. We are assisting CCC and the community police to return back these children to their families and communities.”
Community leader

5. Objective 5: Develop the organisational capacity of CCC to become a more sustainable organisation delivering higher quality programmes.

KEY FINDINGS – OBJECTIVE 5

- Service provision SOPs and the building of staff capacity to implement those SOPs led to effective and consistent services across outreach, centre-based and reintegration program activities. Combined SOPs, training and mentoring was an effective staff capacity building approach.
- The establishment of financial and human resource policies did result in improved systems being in place and functional by the time of this evaluation. However, it was clear that effective policy implementation also required time, training and mentoring to be fully institutionalised.
- Staff capacity to implement high quality, effective services was increased through policy implementation such as supervision policies, standardisation through SOPs, and training and on-the-job mentoring.
- High turnover rates within senior management and challenges with recruitment has led to lack of organisational leadership and has negatively impacted organisational capacity to sustain operations and challenges to ensure sustainable capacity for M&E and data-driven decision-making.

- Lack of a feasible and longer-term funding strategy linked to a strategic plan and supported by a strong board poses a major risk to ensuring the financial capacity to leverage resources needed for CCC's future beyond this project.
- Evidence shows that a lack of understanding of the importance and purpose of M&E and data-driven decision-making persists at CCC despite efforts by Retrak to build M&E capacity, in turn leading to data quality issues and requirement of ongoing support for data collection, analysis and utilisation. Evidence may suggest that a fledgling organisation needs more time, in addition to capacity building, in order to institutionalise results-based management.

Building organisational capacity involves a number of things from building financial resources to creating or bolstering organisational policies and procedures, developing human capacity for management and service delivery to getting a strong and functional Board of Trustees in place and ensuring data systems for services. Developing the organisational capacity of CCC was undertaken within the context of an organisation that was all but ruined by the series of scandals, fraudulent activity and court cases, the latter which were ongoing when Retrak engaged in the partnership at the request of CCC. This sentiment was echoed in all six of the senior Retrak and CCC management interviews, summarized by this comment from a Retrak manager, *"Everyone was somewhat naïve about the extent of the damage."* Prior to 2007, CCC was well known for their work. According to Retrak, *"one of the things that CCC wanted most was a return to the glory days."* The hope of both organisations was to build back the capacity of CCC as a leader for street children in Malawi. In early 2013, Retrak undertook a feasibility study in part to assess the capacity of CCC.⁵⁹ This study found:

- Poor and inconsistent record keeping with lack of organised inputting of hard copy into computer database;
- Need for refresher training on child protection, child rights, listening to children's views, family economic strengthening, in addition to outreach and reintegration programming to continue work toward systematic rather than ad hoc approaches;
- Need for staff supervision mechanisms including clear targets and performance indicators;
- Lack of an adequate child protection policy and training on said policy;
- No consistent or reliable funding, no recent audit, need for review of financial policies;
- Need to recruitment a new executive director, in addition to training of Board of Trustee members; and
- No strategic plan but mission and values well aligned to Retrak's.

"This project brought tremendous success on the ground – lives have been transformed – and there were benefits to CCC. It has grown as an organisation and really this has been a tremendous learning experience for Retrak about where and how we want to have a wider footprint."

Senior Retrak management staff

In the end the project did come close to meeting the outcomes for capacity building under objective five. All program and management staff were trained, work was done to bolster the Board of Trustees, and a full set of organisational and programmatic policies were updated or developed. Strengthening the capacity of CCC

⁵⁹ Ibid, Retrak. (2013).

was an integral part of the strategy and all activities throughout the five years, but perhaps one that was under-estimated in terms of the time and resources required.

	Indicator	Target LOP	Actual to date (Yr. 5 mid)	% of target achieved
5.1	Full set of organisational and programmatic policies updated or developed, including child protection, HR, finance, family reintegration, outreach	Completed	Completed	-
5.2	Staff receiving training in child protection, family reintegration, child and family assessment, and M&E	40	38	95%
5.3	Senior staff received training in management and resource mobilisation	5	4	80%
5.4	Phase out of Retrak support completed		In progress	-

Organisational and programmatic policies

Building capacity involved updating, developing, putting into place and training on organisational and programmatic policies. At the start of the project this was deemed necessary for all operations to run smoothly and services to be implemented at the highest level of quality.⁶⁰ According to monitoring data, the full set of organisational and programmatic policies was updated by the end of year four. Work on policies and strategies included financial, child protection and human resource policies, service provision SOPs (outreach and reintegration case management) and organisational strategy (strategic and fundraising plans). According to an interview with a CCC centre manager, Retrak is to be commended for “... *understanding big versus small organisations and was very open to helping adapt policies to the context of CCC and Malawi.*” Management staff from CCC who were interviewed mentioned such things as, “the guides were practical and user-friendly,” “financial policies helped us to do diligent work,” and “SOPs helped us to do our work better.”

Policies and strategies in place at the time of the evaluation:

- SOPs for outreach
- SOPs for reintegration case management
- Child protection policy
- Finance policy and procurement guidelines
- Human resource policy and handbook including staff supervision and line management system
- CCC strategic plan (revision)
- Draft fundraising plan
- Guidelines for drop-in centers and health services

The SOPs put into place for both outreach and reintegration case management have been mentioned several times earlier in this report. Forty per cent of all staff interviewed, and 100% of social workers interviewed described the SOPs as useful and practical. The SOPs for reintegration case management are found to be one of the successes of the project, having strengthened the case management system for street-connected children, according to social workers, program managers and partners. A check of case files found that the forms and procedures outlined in the SOPs for reintegration are being followed by the case social workers. Furthermore, comments made by social workers regarding challenges with resources for reintegration follow up, indicates they know what to do when they have the resources to do it. Centre guidelines were developed

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

in an effort to standardise the services for children. Data from the review of centre-based services showed that the same range of services was offered in both the Lilongwe and Blantyre sites indicating that there was consistency. Unfortunately, lack of financial sustainability (see following section) has resulted in a significant reduction of centre-based, daytime services at both centres, as well as the closure of the overnight shelter facility at both centres.

The Retrak global child protection policy was revised while this project was being implemented. At the same time, all staff at CCC spoke into a process to formulate a Malawi version for use at CCC and was trained in this version. Training included staff responsibilities and protocols for reporting and managing protection issues.

During an interview, one of the centre directors noted, *“each staff position had a role in child protection and from the policy those roles and responsibilities were very clear.”* Anecdotal evidence such as this would suggest that the capacity built around child protection through the policy and training helped in strengthening CCC’s ability to manage such cases. For example, staff interviewed described how their work links with statutory child protection systems and how they are better able to work with police and court. According to Retrak, *“During the life of the project there were several child protection issues that were raised and it was observed that the staff addressed these issues professionally and according to policy and good practice standards.”*⁶¹

“Formal policies guide and improve work results and ensure adherence to regulations and laws. This safeguards and mitigates the organization from risks.”

CCC Director in a written communication

For example, staff interviewed described how their work links with statutory child protection systems and how they are better able to work with police and court. According to Retrak, *“During the life of the project there were several child protection issues that were raised and it was observed that the staff addressed these issues professionally and according to policy and good practice standards.”*⁶¹

In 2014, a finance policy and procurement guidelines were developed. This included putting a new finance system in place for accountability, monitoring and reporting. At the baseline the due diligence review of CCC concluded a low score of 4 out of 10 in terms of finance (including management and financing or funding).⁶² At the time of this evaluation, the Retrak Financial Director was able to describe, *“improved financial capacity in terms of better financial recording, increased understanding about the importance of budgeting, and more thinking around value for money,”* albeit a work in progress. In addition to the policy and guidelines, the project brought in new financial software (QuickBooks), updated the fixed assets register, and re-assessed CCC’s properties for insurance purposes. The procurement guidelines led to establishment of a procurement committee, which according to CCC is still operating as of July 2018. According to Retrak key management, CCC financial officer has been provided with continuous support through training, mentoring and review of reports finding that the *“financial policy has helped to focus their work and bring steady improvement,”* even while some errors were found in financial reporting up to the time of this evaluation.

CCC’s human resource policy and handbook was updated. Training was provided on the policy, and on-going supervision and the line management system that were both introduced. According to one of the centre managers, *“the system of supervision has led to us working better as a team and everyone knowing their job. People are more able to make their own decisions and know when to come to supervisors for problem solving.”* All staff interviewed was able to confirm that supervision happens on a monthly basis, something that did not happen prior to this project. A review of job descriptions found alignment of the roles and responsibilities to SOPs and new procedures. Revisions of job descriptions led to signing new employment contracts that were

⁶¹ According to email communication received September 27, 2018.

⁶² Ibid, chart on Summary of Due Diligence Findings

clearer, more comprehensive and adhering to Malawi Labour Law.⁶³ This will be effective in avoiding labour disputes like the one that almost ruined CCC in 2011-2013.

According to progress reports and interviews with top CCC management, the organisation’s strategic plan was revised in 2015 with the involvement of key personnel including the director, finance manager, staff, Board of Trustees and a number of child beneficiaries. It is not clear whether the strategic plan has been used beyond this. According to follow up interviews with two key CCC managers, the strategic plan has not helped in terms of organisational sustainability (see following section). Retrak senior management interviewed suggested that strategic planning and management was perhaps a new way of thinking for CCC and that there might not have been full ownership of the strategic planning process throughout the organisation. Review of the strategic plan together with the fundraising plan found misalignment. Furthermore, review of CCC’s strategic plan with the Retrak Strategy 2015-2017 finds a near identical document. It should be noted, however that CCC’s strategic plan does put forth a theory of change, an organisational chart, and articulates CCC’s vision and mission, and likewise, the organisational capacity assessment (OCA) conducted with 17 staff showed high scores for adherence to mission and decision-making aligned to vision. Regardless, one of the CCC centre managers described how having policies in place “...helped to make sure we were all working in the same way and also that we were taken more seriously as a good organisation”

One of the CCC staff interviewed summed up by saying “Retrak is not leaving us in the same state they found us. CCC became a model for other organisations involved in similar work. Policies were developed to control the financial and other resources and for accountability. They are there now. This will encourage other donors to support us.”

Staff capacity

In terms of building capacity for quality service provision, the project may have been most successful in building the capacity of program staff. All staff received training, follow-up refreshers, and mentoring in child protection, outreach, family reintegration, child and family assessment, and M&E. Training was also provided to other stakeholders such as partner CBOs and government SWO. The Social Rehabilitation Centre of the Social Welfare Department participated in the training on the *Standard Operating Procedures on Family Reintegration*. This was an opportunity for joint learning, networking and communication towards standardisation of reintegration work nationally. Government staff interviewed were very positive about the training they received. A view of the staff training outcomes over the LOP shows a parallel with the project activities ramping up. It was mentioned earlier that most activities were fully operational by year two and three, the same year that the majority of training activities took place. Thirty-eight staff was trained.

Staff training across LOP									
Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4		Semi-Annual Year 5	
Target	Total	Target	Total	Target	Total	Target	Total	Target	Total
20	10	30	13	40	32	40	21	40	0

⁶³ Retrak. (2015). The Provision and Strengthening of Support for Street Children, Families and Communities in Malawi Year 1 Annual Report to HDF. Provided by project Retrak.

Training topics

- Child Status Index
- Child Reintegration SOPs
- Street Outreach SOPs
- Resource mobilization
- Child protection
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Basics of first aid
- Health and safety
- Household surveys
- Capturing significant change stories

The OCA indicated that program staff is one of the strongest assets of the organisation and the area where, in both centres, the staff teams self-scored the highest in terms of capacity (rating a 4 out of 4). High service staff quality was mentioned as one of the main successes of the project by 73% of the interviewees including the staff themselves, management, Retrak staff, partners and government stakeholders. The staff noted that training and mentoring helped them to understand their responsibilities better and to have higher work principles. One staff member interviewed stated, *“The training and human resource development activities enabled us to achieve the project*

objectives. The process as a whole helped us to understand our strengths better and identify areas where we should concentrate most.” And another shared, *“at the end of the five years we as CCC managed to rebuild a positive reputation because of the efficient, transparent, and accountable system*

we have put in place. Retrak is not leaving us in the situation they found us in. The staff benefited from the capacity building a lot.” Staff capacity played the major role in CCC’s ability to implement effective outreach, centre-based, reintegration and prevention services. This is a success to be celebrated.

CCC centre manager

Senior management capacity

A focus of the capacity building strategy was on strengthening the management structure and the capacity of senior CCC managers. This was challenging due to a number of factors: at the start of the project CCC was still reeling from the impact of an unscrupulous former director; the first newly recruited director only held the post for three months (July to September 2013); for the subsequent year an interim director held the position (seconded by Retrak); only in September 2014 did a new full time and permanent director get put in place; and in the final year of the project that director also left. Inconsistent leadership has negatively impacted the project and the ability to build sustainable capacity at the higher management level. Over the life of the project, four senior managers received training and mentoring in management and administration including organizational and management skills, team building and leadership, performance management and supervision, change management and resource mobilisation. According to project M&E data the training occurred in year 1, however mentoring occurred throughout the project period according to the seconded manager (who spent 15 months in country) and other senior Retrak management. One Retrak management staff member commented, *“so much extra time was needed to build the capacity of senior management. We were so unrealistic in what we estimated it would take to build this capacity. It has taken a huge amount of time, financial and human resources on our (Retrak) end.”*

The project was also forced to terminate two newly recruited centre managers early on, and the grants manager and the first M&E officer both resigned in the second year. Malawi is a small country and recruitment of high quality management level staff proved challenging. Turnover and time spent on recruitment had unexpected cost implications and delayed project implementation. In hindsight, one senior Retrak manager shared, *“while Retrak had hoped to build capacity by bringing in new expertise, we may have been better by investing more in building the capacity of existing staff into management positions, but with only six key staff*

in place at the beginning of the partnership, this was very limiting and obliged us to recruit externally for most positions.” Another commented that the capacity building part of this project was “like a project onto itself and one that Retrak may not have been fully prepared for. We might have benefitted from a whole separate results framework for capacity building.”

The goal, according to project documents, was to create and train up a senior management team, which did happen in 2014. This team included the director, financial director, M&E director, centre managers and a new grants manager (who subsequently left only a few months later). In theory, it had a role of managing the project, while Retrak provided guidance throughout to help with management skills development as well as mentoring in subject areas (e.g. M&E, finance, resource mobilisation, etc.). Terms of Reference were developed for team meetings and it met formally every month to assess the previous month’s performance and plan for the new month. Several CCC staff noted that, while in place, the senior management team meeting was helpful for information sharing, critical decision-making and coordination. Unfortunately, after the departure of the director in 2017, the meetings stopped. The OCA highlighted a gap in leadership particularly in carrying out key roles such as fundraising, public relations, program development and lobbying/advocacy, even with all the training and all of the new policies in place.

Development of the Board of Trustees

As noted in the feasibility study, before the project began CCC had a non-functional Board of Trustees. Part of the capacity building approach was re-training of Board of Trustees members on roles and responsibilities, including fundraising. Retrak conducted an interactive workshop for seven of the eight CCC board members and independently organised for the Retrak Board Chair to travel to Malawi to engage face to face with the CCC Board of Trustees and share experiences. The workshop focused on board functions, responsibilities, good practices in governance and gaps identified in governance, such as fundraising leadership. The board was also involved in the training provided to senior management on resource mobilisation and management and donor relations. According to Retrak management this training was introduced from the beginning of the project to encourage financial planning and strategic fundraising toward sustainability once the project and Retrak’s engagement ended. The OCA showed staff perspectives that board members *“are very busy people and struggling to provide overall policy direction and oversight to CCC.”* It was in the area of board governance that the staff gave the lowest score on the OCA. According to interviews, most board members are not carrying out their key roles in policy formulation, fundraising, public relations or advocacy.

Monitoring and evaluation capacity

Creating a system for monitoring and evaluation and building capacity for data-driven decision-making is an important aspect of organisational capacity. It was an emphasis of the capacity building work under this project. At the time of project start up CCC had no systems in place from a results framework to data collection and monitoring tools through to an excel-based data system for holding and analysing data. Retrak helped CCC to put all of this in place and developed specific tools fit for the purpose. A number of trainings, as well as on going mentoring, aimed to help staff with understanding and using the M&E processes. Specific M&E training included:

- Using the CSI tool to assess children’s wellbeing and changes in wellbeing;
- Interviewing techniques, data collection and ethical standards (for the enumeration study);
- Quantitative and qualitative data analysis;
- Household survey use to assess family wellbeing;

- Capturing most significant change stories and conducting KIIs; and
- Network mapping for the mid-term review data collection and analysis.

In addition to setting up systems for collecting monitoring data, the project conducted baseline, midline and 2017 (year five) household surveys and child wellbeing assessments using the CSI tool mentioned earlier. This was done as part of the case management process. Data collection tools were aligned with the project indicators outlined in the results framework. These indicators had to be discussed and reviewed with M&E and management staff numerous times, according to Retrak. According to interviews with Retrak data collection, analysis and presentation were inconsistent and remained issues throughout the project. There were significant challenges in recruitment of quality M&E staff. Over the LOP the project has had two different M&E officers, both of whom required intensive support and who struggled to produce consistently clean data independent of Retrak support, according to Retrak.⁶⁴

Retrak's team mentored CCC's M&E Officer on the set up and use of the database to ensure data quality. The M&E process plan outline the role of social workers to input data and the role of CCC M&E Officer to check quality. However, according to the M&E officer, entering data was not a priority for social workers and their data entry delays caused loss of data and inconsistency. According to the CCC program staff interviewed, data collection tools were revised at different times to include changes in indicators, such as when prevention activities were added. This created confusion for some of the social work staff and resulted in wrong data collection tools being used and, later, in the need to review and clean data. According to Retrak, data always had to be crosschecked and reworked after it was received from CCC. This issue never improved and was found by evaluators also. Weekly, monthly, quarterly, semi-annual and annual reports were also produced from the quantitative and qualitative data but, according to Retrak, consistently required one to three rounds of editing and clarification before they were adequate to present to the donor.

Despite the trainings and mentoring, a key challenge noted by Retrak was the lack of understanding of the importance and purpose of M&E by the CCC staff. Evidence suggests that the staff focus was more on implementing activities rather than data or indicators, ownership of the M&E system was low, and that staff changes really impacted the ability to change these factors despite efforts to increase capacity. It may be that given the staffing changes and the complexity of introducing a results-based system of managing a project more time was needed to gain ownership and build buy-in and lasting capacity.

6. Objective 6: Develop a National Street Child Consortium and build government capacity to improve the national response to street-connected children and families.

KEY FINDINGS – OBJECTIVE 6

- The enumeration study was significant both in providing on-the-ground data to inform the design of this project, and its strategies and activities, results framework and target outcomes, but also in forwarding the national conversation by giving reliable data towards the development of the Charter for Street Children and being the starting point of the National Street Child Consortium.
- Workshops for government and non-government actors provided a platform for building capacity, sharing information, increasing coordination and beginning to standardise services for street-connected children.

⁶⁴ Communication received via email on September 27, 2018

- The National Street Child Consortium was established (16 core/lead members) and resulted in street-connected children’s voices being amplified, bringing focus to the issue, and increasing coordination and capacity of partners involved in work on the topic. In addition, it provided an avenue for CCC to repair their reputation with non-government actors.
- Work through interface meetings with key national government entities has brought the issue of street-connected children to the forefront through the Charter for Street Children, which reflects the strategies of this project including diversion (as opposed to police sweeps) and reintegration through case management.

Not only did the project aim to build back the capacity of CCC, but it also set forth to build the capacity of the GOM and its partners to improve the response to street-connected children nationally. Overall, the project was effective in the strategies to do so, meeting 107% of the target for workshops for children’s workers and 463% of the target for interface meetings with line ministries and parliamentarians. The enumeration study was extremely effective in providing reliable data at the national level and informing a new agenda for street-connected children and their families. The National Street Child Consortium brought together many partners. The following table outlines the indicators and outcomes for objective six:

	Indicator	Target LOP	Actual to date (Yr. 5 mid)	% of target achieved
6.1	Baseline survey completed	Yes	Yes	-
6.2	Workshops held for children's workers from NGOs, government and community leadership	14	15	107%
6.3	Consortium organisational membership ⁶⁵	28	14	57%
6.4	Interface meetings with line ministry and parliamentarians	8	37	463%

Enumeration study

The enumeration study has been mentioned numerous times throughout this report. It used innovative methodologies, tried and tested in Ghana, Mali, Brazil, Egypt and Senegal to review the situation of street-connected children in Blantyre and Lilongwe. Prior to undertaking the study, Retrak provided training on basic survey techniques and the capture/recapture methodology. Discussions were held with a number of NGOs, police and the MGCDWS to identify the criteria for the survey, potential challenges and risks and how to address them, and ensure that the various locations of street-connected children were considered.⁶⁶ This became the beginning of strategically bringing partners to the table on the issue and built ownership. The joint work on the enumeration study helped to secure the commitment and willingness of stakeholders to take part in the project, according to key management staff interviewed. According to both Retrak senior management and CCC management, the policy conversations were informed by the enumeration of street-connected

⁶⁵ At the time of the feasibility study in 2013 there were more NGOs identified as “working with street-connected children” than proved to be reality – therefore this target may have been set too high.

⁶⁶ Retrak and Chisomo Children’s Club. (2015). *Making the Invisible Visible, An Enumeration of Children on the Streets in Malawi*.

children (e.g. the draft national strategy for street children and the Charter for Street Children). This work contributed to the project in a number of ways:

- It enabled Retrak and CCC to outline the objectives, indicators and expected outcomes of the project based on on-the-ground needs;
- It resulted the production of a quality report providing the most accurate estimations to date on the number of street children in Malawi;
- It continues to serve as reference for program design, advocacy and policy changes, such as informing the new 2017 Charter for Street Children; and
- It has been used as an example for work in other countries interested in its innovative approach. For example, in 2016 Retrak planned and conducted a larger enumeration activity in Uganda (4 cities) and made plans for a similar action in Ethiopia in 2017 but the Government changed their mind; and
- It provided a launching pad for continued collaboration across different organisations, government and non-government, including formation of the National Street Child Consortium.

Workshops for NGOs, government and community leadership

The project providing capacity building opportunities to other NGOs, government partners and community leaders working with street-connected and highly vulnerable children. Retrak’s training included the SOPs for outreach and family reintegration, the importance of deinstitutionalisation, alternative family-based care and other services for street-connected children, as well as project implementation and management, child protection and other organisational policies. Over 15 workshops were held (107% of the target). In addition to providing new information to key participants the workshops allowed for increased networking and building of partnerships that may not have happened otherwise. Through the organising of workshops CCC became re-engaged with the network of local government and non-government actors involved in work with street-connected children. Overall, the project has increased the visibility and reputation of CCC nationally. CCC worked together with others on strategizing on certain issues (e.g. street begging), developing joint proposals, networking specifically for diversion activities, participating in the UNICEF Diversion Review, strengthening coordination on early childhood development, and developing guidelines for organisations working with street-connected children. As evidenced in the chart below, the majority of workshops were held in years two and three.

Workshops held over LOP									
Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4		Semi-Annual Year 5	
Target	Total	Target	Total	Target	Total	Target	Total	Target	Total
2	0	2	5	2	7	4	2	4	1

Anecdotal evidence from interviews with both CCC program staff and partner CBOs showed that workshops led to more standardisation in services and increased referrals and improved coordination of various activities. One of the centre managers noted, that the GOM and other CBOs are now referring to the Child Safeguarding Policy, the SOPs and the case management tools in their work with street-connected and other vulnerable children. There is discussion amongst the National Street Child Consortium members to use the SOPs as reference to develop a national model.

“The workshops brought us together to discuss key strategies and assisted us in gaining common understanding. It has given us an opportunity to share our experiences and learn from each other. These types of trainings and workshops have to be organised from time to time so that we can keep coordinating and standardising our activities”

Partner CBO

National Street Child Consortium

The National Street Child Consortium was supported to come together under this project. It brought government and non-government partners together around the issue and needs of street-connected children, with the hopes of bringing a more coordinated approach. Consortium grew from no members in year one to

“The Consortium brought lots of focus to the street-connected children issue. It brought capacity and expertise in street children programming. It created a platform to come together and find a solution for challenges. We share lots of information and helped us to avoid duplication.”

Consortium member

ten mid-way through year five. The whole group met quarterly while a leadership committee met monthly. The purpose of the meetings was to share information and experiences. It was suggested by the members interviewed that the Consortium has helped to amplify the voices of street-connected children by bringing all concerned entities together, bringing focus to the issue, and sharing

observations from direct work with children. For example, the Consortium organised a celebration of the International Day of the Street Child and the Day of the African Child, with the goal of bringing public awareness to the rights of street-connected children. Children were involved in the celebration and had a floor to voice their concerns and share their stories. It was important that government partners here from the non-government experiences. The Consortium also gave the police, social welfare and courts a place to be involved on the issue and share their observations. Sharing of experiences and working on joint messaging together both built capacity and led to multi-sector solving of issues. For example, a connection with the Lilongwe Indian Businessmen’s Association supported CCC with in-kind donations such as soap, clothing and food, as well as sharing information within their membership aimed at de-stigmatising street-connected children. In another example, during the enumeration both police and line ministry officials were heard to comment how much the activity helped them to understand the issue better and encouraged them to refer to CCC.⁶⁷ The consortium membership was lower than targeted (14 versus targeted 28). This difference was explained by Retrak as a difference between the numbers of NGOs that appeared to be working with street-connected children at the time of the feasibility study as compared to those who were actually working when the consortium was forming. Some of the initially identified CBOs had changed profile to working with institutionalised children and were no longer interested in joining a street child coalition, according to Retrak. At that time, CCC re-focused attention on meetings with line ministries, which is reflected in those targets being significantly higher than anticipated (37 meetings compared to 8 targeted).

⁶⁷ As described by Retrak in email communication, September 27, 2018

The Consortium has contributed to the attitude change of various partners working with children. For example, one partner CBO said, *“The consortium helped us to use similar approach and have a clear understanding on the street-connected children issue.”* It was also noted by the program staff that, the Consortium work helped to redefine and broaden the definition of street-connected children from “homeless children who live and sleep on the streets in urban areas” to include trafficked children, children rescued from child labour and child sex workers.

The consortium members noted that the continuation of the work is expected to be a challenge without support after the end of the project. This project has allowed CCC to play a vital role in bringing together and coordinating the consortium activities, including covering most expenses. Senior management staff interviewed agreed that this has gone a long way in restoring CCC’s reputation among other non-government partners. One member of the Consortium stated, *“Sustaining the consortium could be a challenge without CCC in the lead. Maintaining the success of the consortium is a challenge. We will be forced to scale down. It will be like taking away the parent of the consortium.”*

Interface meetings with line ministry and parliamentarians

Thirty-seven interface meetings were held with government counterparts with an aim to strengthen the collaborative efforts and raise the issue of street-connected children at the policy level. This outcome was well above the target of eight meetings due to a re-focus on the line ministries by the CCC director at the time. As evidenced by the monitoring data in the table below, most of this interface activity took place in year three and year four.

Interface meetings over LOP									
Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4		Semi-Annual Year 5	
Target	Total	Target	Total	Target	Total	Target	Total	Target	Total
0	0	0	0	4	19	2	14	2	4

Meetings with entities such as the Malawi National Police, The Blantyre and Lilongwe City Assemblies, the Ministry of Labour, the Pastoral Fraternal and the MGCDWS took place under this activity. According to project reports, CCC established working relationships with the Ministries of Health, Nutrition and HIV and AIDS, Home Affairs and Internal Security, GWCDWS, and Education Science and Technology. Discussions focused on working together to tackle the issue of children being and becoming connected to the street. Approaching different Ministries was in line with targeting the various types of risks that children face, for example, lack of access to education through the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, or family health issues through the Ministry of Health, Nutrition and HIV/AIDS. This seems a strategic approach for addressing the multi-faceted issues around the vulnerable families children come from. The meetings informed the drafting of a strategy for children on the street, which was later finalised as the Charter for Street Children. Interviews with key CCC program staff indicate that the work on a charter was a significant sign of government engagement on the topic. The national stakeholders further agreed, in a series of inter-face meetings to bringing in more faith groups to help with reintegration of children and address the giving of alms by parishioners, which is found to be a pull factor.⁶⁸ Reflective of the work of this project, the charter importantly acknowledges that sweeps of children on the streets by the police achieves little and what is needed is a case

⁶⁸ Retrak. (2015). The Provision and Strengthening of Support for Street Children, Families and Communities in Malawi Year 3 Annual Report to HDF. Provided byRetrak.

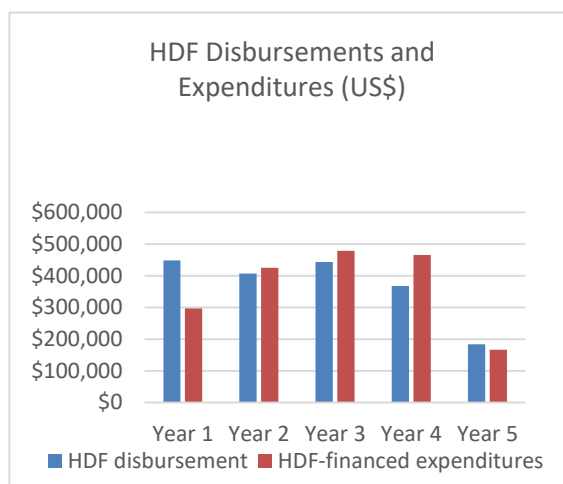
management approach and coordination between organisations.⁶⁹ This is a significant sign of the learning that this project and others has brought to the national agenda. Furthermore, the interface meetings contributed to better working relationship between CCC and the other CBOs and the government. This is evidenced by such examples as:

- The re-registration of children expelled from a school in Lilongwe with the help of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology line departments and schools;
- The effective fulfilment of referral services by government hospitals as a result of engagement with Ministry of Health, Nutrition and HIV/AIDS and sub-national health departments;
- Increased referrals from police and courts to CCC as described earlier in the diversion section of the report; and
- Work with the MGCDWS and SWOs for effective reintegration of children back to families.⁷⁰

c. Economy and efficiency

Overview. Retrak maintained detailed financial accounts throughout the life of the project. At the end of Year 5, total project expenditures were US\$2,086,776, of which \$1,829,926 was contributed by HDF. Variances between the original budget and actual expenditure appear to have been well managed – the total grant had a balance to spend of \$45,744 for the final six months of the project, or only 2.4% of the total grant amount. The accounts include thorough explanations for variances in budget within line items – these variances appear reasonable and often aimed to improve service delivery and project outputs.

HDF funds were disbursed in two annual tranches for the five years. Grant expenditure was lower than anticipated in the first year, with a much greater balance between HDF disbursements and expenditures in the following years. Total grant expenditures were highest in the second through fourth years (see graph at right). To strengthen local capacity and overall project sustainability, roughly 80% of the grant was allocated to CCC.



About 45.4% of total project expenditures were devoted to national staff, many of which were engaged in direct service delivery and other project activities. Retrak made a strategic decision after project launch to avoid staff specialization and to train staff on a broad range of service methodologies, which allowed staff to address the holistic and cross cutting needs of children in the field at a lower recurrent cost. This approach – which seeks to maximize the impact of individual national field staff -- appears well suited to Malawi’s limited capacity and very high incidence of children and families experiencing severe risks and adversities.

Service delivery, efficiency and economic impact. About 72.7% of project expenditures were allocated to direct service delivery to program participants (inclusive of an 80% allocation of a range of recurrent expenses such as rent, maintenance, utilities, communications, overhead and related costs to this category). This equates, in aggregate, to **US\$34.96** annually for each service participant (children, families and carers).

⁶⁹ibid.
⁷⁰ ibid

While a detailed cost comparison analysis is beyond the scope of this evaluation, data are available that show the expenditures per child of a variety of OVC programs, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. Care should be taken in drawing too many conclusions from the below costs, as the scope of each program was different from the Retrak project. That said, the direct service delivery costs of the Retrak project, which included several programmatic areas, appear quite reasonable relative to other interventions, likely to its heavy reliance on local partners:

- Total costs for a World Bank Street Children Project in the DRC (inclusive of all grant proceeds disbursed) were **US\$124.47** annually per child;⁷¹
- A CARE Rwanda OVC program in 2004 had annual costs per child of **US\$187.86**;⁷²
- Bwafwano Zambia recorded annual costs per child the same year of **US\$290.46**;⁷³
- Tracing and reintegration programs in Burundi and Eritrea range from **US\$114** to **US\$55** per child;⁷⁴
- A UNICEF project on street children working in Kabul reported costs of about **US\$1,500** per participant household annually;⁷⁵
- Institutional ('orphanage') care of a child in Benin was calculated at **US\$1,558** annually;⁷⁶ and
- Basic family home support (bednets, clothes, shoes, bedding) came to **US\$76** per child in one study of 22 countries of sub-Saharan Africa.⁷⁷

A long-term, longitudinal study would be required to quantify the human capital benefits of the project. Global evidence demonstrates that children in safe and nurturing families are more likely to attend school and to improve school performance. They are also likely to achieve better health status and fewer social problems. While not quantifiable without separate study, these are likely long-term economic impacts from the project to the extent they result in higher labor performance and lower demand for health services in future years by those children and youth successfully reached.

Related, this project will likely have a positive impact on costs related to detention. Street-connected children are frequently rounded up by police and placed in detention.⁷⁸ Some 7.7% of prisoners in Malawi are under

⁷¹ World Bank (2016). Implementation Completion and Results Report (IDA-H5780) on a Grant in the Amount of SDR 6.6 Million (US\$10 Million Equivalent) to the Democratic Republic of the Congo for a Street Children Project. Retrieved from <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/862531467992043336/pdf/ICR3749-P115318-PUBLIC-disclosed-2-29-16.pdf>

⁷² Dougherty, L., Forsythe, S., Winfrey, W., Buek, K. & Chatterji, M. (2005). A Costing Analysis of Community-Based Programs for Children Affected by HIV/AIDS: Results from Zambia and Rwanda. Retrieved from <https://bettercarenetwork.org/sites/default/files/A%20Costing%20Analysis%20of%20Community-Based%20Programs%20for%20Children%20Affected%20by%20HIV-AIDS.pdf>

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Santa-Ana-Tellez, Y. DeMaria, L., & Galarraga, O. (2011). Costs of Interventions for AIDS Orphans and Vulnerable Children. Retrieved from <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/j.1365-3156.2011.02856.x>

⁷⁵ UNICEF (2017). Evaluation of "Improving Street-working Children's Access to Education and Livelihood Support for Their Families." Kabul, Afghanistan. Retrieved from http://samuelhall.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/UNICEF_SWC_Final-Samuel-Hall-Report.pdf

⁷⁶ Prywes, M., Coury, D. Fesseha, G., Hounsounou, G. & Kiellan, A. (2004). Costs of Projects for Orphans and Other Vulnerable Children: Case Studies in Eritrea and Benin. Social Protection Discussion Paper Series. The World Bank.

⁷⁷ Stover, J., Bollinger, L., Walker, N. & Monasch, R. (2007). Resource Needs to Support Orphans and Vulnerable Children in Sub-Saharan Africa. Health Policy & Planning 22, 21-27.

⁷⁸ For one recent example, see VOA (2016). Malawi Aims to Clear Beggars Off City Streets. Retrieved from <https://www.voanews.com/a/malawi-aims-to-clear-beggars-off-city-streets/3321660.html>

18,⁷⁹ the age of criminal responsibility is only 7, and those interred face significant risks of physical and sexual abuse, severe overcrowding, HIV, hunger, and a lack of legal assistance.⁸⁰ The average annual cost of detention in Malawi was roughly **US\$100** in 2014, a reflection of the dire conditions in detention facilities in the country.⁸¹ While it is impossible to determine in aggregate how many youth were diverted from detention under this project (e.g. through successful reintegration), each child successfully diverted received protective and supportive, rather than harmful, services at roughly one-third the cost of institutionalization.

Other project costs. Other project costs appear reasonable. Global support charges were 7.9% of total project costs (the international NGO benchmark for overhead is typically below 15%).⁸² Those costs came in 6.2% below budget at project conclusion. Headquarters and international staff utilized only 2.3% of the total budget, as compared to the 45.4% allocated to national staff – a clear indicator of the focus on local capacity building. Capital equipment costs were 3.2% of total project costs, and equipment maintenance/repair/vehicle costs were a modest 2.4% of total costs. It is noted that Retrak provided additional input over and above the costs included in the grant, including for example, the seconding to Malawi of Retrak’s Programmes Director during the first 18 months of the project.

Accounting and finance. Retrak staff reported that financial monitoring and accountability systems were strengthened because of the project. This included the introduction of QuickBooks and a new finance policy, along with associated training of financial management staff. The finance policy included procurement policies and procedures to ensure transparency and efficiency in seeking value when acquiring equipment, vehicles and materials. One CCC Centre Manager noted that “*it is more clear who should make what decisions, and workers are working much more as a team.*” CCC did struggle with statutory payments and had difficulty meeting them in a timely manner, and this issue persisted throughout the period of the project.

Organizational efficiency and external coordination. Under the project, the organizational structure was reviewed and strengthened to include development of a new senior leadership team, new line management, staff supervision mechanisms, a human resources policy, and related written materials such as handbooks. The establishment of the new senior management team aimed to improve quality assurance, efficiency and effectiveness, but OCA scoring indicated ongoing issues with leadership. Fifteen staff were interviewed and reported that they felt qualified for their positions and that the training they received was valuable. New periodic performance appraisals were introduced, and eleven staff reported that these improved work performances and the overall work environment.

CCC developed partnerships with other CBOs and government offices to ensure that outreach, reintegration and prevention activities were shared, and duplication of services was avoided. For example, SHG facilitators met regularly to check that families were not registering in more than one group. Facilitators also checked with other organisations operating SHG to ensure that families were not double-served. CCC partnered with other organisations to maximize outreach to girls, especially in cases where those organisations were more experienced than CCC.

⁷⁹ Institute for Criminal Policy Research (2017). World Prison Brief. Retrieved from <http://www.prisonstudies.org/country/malawi>.

⁸⁰ Stapleton, A. (2000). The State of Juvenile Justice in Malawi. CYC-Online. Retrieved from <http://www.cyc-net.org/cyc-online/cycol-0400-malawi.html>.

⁸¹ Centre for Human Rights Education, Advice and Assistance (2015). Tilitonse Project. Retrieved from <http://chreaa.org/tilitonse-project/>.

⁸² Queenan, J.E., Allen, J., & Tuomala, J. (2013).. Stop Starving Scale: Unlocking the Potential of Global NGOs. Retrieved from <https://www.bridgespan.org/bridgespan/images/articles/stop-starving-scale-unlocking-the-potential/Stop-Starving-Scale.pdf?ext=.pdf>

KEY FINDINGS – ECONOMY & EFFICIENCY

- The project was managed at budget, and reallocations of resources within the budget were at acceptable levels to improve the quality of project deliverables
- While it is impossible to draw detailed conclusions about overall costs per participant, comparisons with other programs suggest that these costs were modest
- Retrak's focus on local partnering facilitated both the efficiency and impact of the overall project
- The project supported organizational capacity building, including in financial management, that will strengthen Retrak's accountability over the long term

Results framework. Retrak and CCC worked hard on putting a results framework in to place that would help to track outputs and outcomes (see annex). With the leadership of Retrak, the framework was adjusted after the mid-term review. This shows a good use of incorporating learning during project implementation. It was noted in conversations with Retrak that program managers at CCC did not easily implement the results framework. Retrak was unclear if this was lack of understanding or if more time was needed to institutionalise this new way of managing, according to senior Retrak managers. Outputs and outcomes seemingly did not always align to the results framework as evidenced by the issues with inconsistent reintegration follow-up or with ensuring IGA reached more of the vulnerable families, for example. It was noted by Retrak that one of the challenges they faced was trying to encourage CCC to use the results framework and monitoring data to help with programme decisions. This would imply room for growth and improvement when it comes to service efficiency – maximum impact for investment.

d. Sustainability

In terms of sustainability, the evaluation looked at whether or not the outcomes and impacts of project activities are likely to continue after the project ends and overall organisational viability. The project was flexible which allowed for the project design to evolve over time in response to lessons learned and needs or challenges encountered. For this, interviewees appreciated both HDF and Retrak. The revision of the results framework after the enumeration, the addition of prevention activities including SHGs, and the formation of the Consortium, all highlighted that the project was learning from experience and working to be relevant for beneficiaries. Learning and an ability to adapt is key to sustainability.

KEY FINDINGS - SUSTAINABILITY

- Changed attitudes and behaviours, as well as increased skills and knowledge are sustainable impacts and have been evidenced in children, families, communities, staff and partners alike. However, further sustaining the improvements on the lives of children is also dependent on continued mitigation of the risks that families are likely to continue facing.
- A stronger protective environment has been established and includes improved government policies and strategies focused on preventing and responding to street-connected children and their families. This environment remains in place.
- The strengthening of community structures, such as police, court, community leaders, peer groups and child protection committees creates protective and nurturing environments for children. A

combined approach of training, modelling quality services, regular meetings and Consortium development all contributed to sustainable change at the community level.

- The failure of CCC to develop a coherent fundraising plan linked to a strategic vision and direction, and fully supported by the board, poses a real and immediate threat to the organisation's ability to continue serving children and families in Lilongwe and Blantyre. This is complicated by a culture of dependency and reliance of external assistance in general in Malawi.

Sustainable impacts

Sustainable impacts are those that we might expect would continue or last well beyond the end of the project for various beneficiaries. Often these relate to the change in attitudes, behaviours and capacities (knowledge and skills) that continue for beneficiaries after inputs have ended. Changes in attitudes and resulting new or changed behaviours at many different levels have been discussed throughout this report.

Building family relationships has been an important part of the reintegration of children and signs are that the majority of those relationships may be sustainable. The efforts made to further draw in extended families also strengthen the protective community. This is aided by the links established between the children and families and local communities creating a stronger protective environment around them. This project has resulted in changing community perceptions around street-connected children and vulnerable families. Community groups and members such as child protection committees, community leaders, etc. have been equipped with knowledge on child protection will help community structures to continue building suitable community environments for children. With increased awareness on existing laws and policies they can continue acting as advocates for the street-connected children. The threat to sustaining children in families is ensuring that all basic needs can continue to be met – this seems an unknown in many of the reintegrated families with whom the evaluation spoke.

The SHGs were established in a way that they can be self-sustaining and they can manage by themselves. The women who participated in FGDs gave no indication that they will not continue meeting and sharing information, experiences and resources. The training has changed the way that they manage funds at home, as well as their actions and treatment of their children. Leadership skills have improved as well. On the other hand, the picture is less clear for IGAs. While some of the stronger ones may continue, the targeting of vulnerable families that may experience a health or basic need crisis at any moment is a threat to their sustainability. It has been mentioned that in these families there is need for both sustainable income generation and assistance to address both basic and critical needs.

The project was well designed to align with and/or improve upon government policies and strategies. The policy improvements indicate that the GOM is better prepared to support and implement services for vulnerable children and families because, for example, they have a strategic direction regarding work for street-connected children. *"The project has helped to shape the collaboration between different actors including government and non-government and this collaboration will continue,"* said one interviewee from a partner CBO. Another commented, *"The Malawi National Parliament came to visit as the CCC program was seen to be a model that could be used across the country."*

Organisational sustainability

Many of the inputs were allocated to building the capacity of CCC. Building a strong organisation to continue after the five years was an important aspect of the sustainability strategy outlined in the proposal. Aligned

with this, training, mentoring and support was provided to increase the capacity of CCC, including in its ability to mobilise resources and raise funds. Retrak provided training and mentoring on financial and human resource management, M&E, communications, partnership management, and technical guidance in child protection. During the project the capacity building activities brought a higher standard to the work that could continue if financial sustainability is addressed. SOPs service delivery including outreach, centre-based services and reintegration were adapted for Malawi and put in place. All of these factors do lend to a more sustainable organisation while at the same time lack of secure finances threatens the ability to continue with the activities developed under the partnership. Staff describes new skills and knowledge and how they use it in their work. Managers can describe a new way of working and systems that make the organisation more “professional,” “recognised and respected” by partners. However, in reality five years is a short period of time to know whether or not systems and capacity is enough to carry a small Malawian CBO into the future.

Financial sustainability

According to the current CCC director, the financial sustainability plan includes: continuing to engage with donors and partners to fund various projects; to form new partnerships that will help CCC to implement programs with no cost (e.g. a partnership with Opportunity International to provide training to SHGs and with African Honey Products to engage SHGs in honey production); introduction of fee-for-service activities including computer courses and psychosocial training; and a mobile schools project that involves training of eight CCC staff; and in-kind support.⁸³ As of August 2018, a \$7,000 grant had been secured from DanChurch Aid but other fundraising and grant efforts were still pending.

Unfortunately, the future of CCC from a financial perspective is unknown. CCC remains reliant on external funding if it is to continue with the same level of service provision. According to both of the CCC senior managers re-interviewed in July, no further funding for the activities developed under this project have yet been secured. *“On fundraising we really could have done better – we did not do as much as we could have and we have not been thinking with the end in mind,”* said one of the CCC centre managers. The following table shows pending grant applications (as of August 2018):

Project/Grant Name	Amount	Duration	Objective	Donor
Clinic for Street Children	\$900,000	3 Years	Access to health services for street children (construction, personnel, operations and program)	Rotary International Children’s Fund
Reintegration of Street Children	\$104,000	1 Year	Reintegrate Street Children to community	Reserve Bank of Malawi
Vocational Skills and Economic Empowerment	\$35,000	1 Year	Training in life skills, economic empowerment and ICT for vulnerable youth, children and women	DanChurch Aid

In addition to the training and mentoring outlined in the capacity section, Retrak supported knowledge and skills development in grants management, strategic planning, fundraising, board development, proposal writing. Many joint proposals were written with an aim to increase CCC’s ability to secure grants. Interviews with board members, staff and government indicated that the solution to CCC’s future and more broadly to

⁸³ According to written communication received from CCC director on 17 August 2018.

services for street-connected children and vulnerable families in Lilongwe and Blantyre is continued support from HDF and Retrak. Following multiple requests and guidance from Retrak, CCC senior management team and Board of Trustees finally drafted a fundraising strategy focused on diversifying funding streams towards sustainability.⁸⁴ One Retrak Senior staff member shared their perspective, *“It seemed they felt this was just a document that needed to get done rather than a process that could have been useful to the organisation.”* This strategy has not yet been finalised, and according to follow up interviews with two CCC management staff its development did not result in securing funds. Failure to develop a coherent fundraising strategy and plan to address the challenge of resources and to promote the mission of CCC contributed to a lack of sustainability and has resulted in the likely near closure of the centres at the end of this project. In addition, the perspective of Retrak is that the fundraising strategy was not done in parallel with the overall organisational strategy so *“without this strategic focus in the plan the fundraising strategy took them in directions away from street child focus”* (quote from one Retrak staff).

According to Retrak interviews, CCC staff interviews and the OCA exercise, the Board of Trustees remains unable to take on any leadership in fundraising. According to interviews with key CCC staff and Retrak, there was lack of consistent participation and commitment from trustees to work with staff to strengthen CCC’s broader fundraising plan, according to the staff participants of the OCA. Reasons cited by staff were that the Board of Trustees seemed to lack the time, skills and commitment needed. Interviews with two board members revealed found their response to organisational sustainability would be the continued engagement of HDF and Retrak.

Within the context of Malawi, financial insecurity, reliance on external partners and risks to financial sustainability are not a surprise. The country is heavily reliant on foreign aid. The GOM lacks the resources to implement services and is reliant on non-governmental organisations with external funding. According to the World Bank, the country’s economic performance has historically been constrained by policy inconsistency, macroeconomic instability, poor infrastructure, rampant corruption, high population growth, and poor health and education outcomes that limit labor productivity. The economy depends on substantial economic assistance from global entities and donor nations.⁸⁵ However, explained Retrak’s Director of International Programs, *“There was always a sense of dependency on the partnership, but the message was always clear from our side that this was a five year project and then they (CCC) would be on their own.”*

CCC has struggled to diversify its funding portfolio, seeming to assume that HDF would continue support. As the HDF funding comes to completion, the project activities have had to be scaled down. Seventy-five percent of the staff was laid off between January and April 2018 as contracts ran out and no further funding had been obtained. Financial sustainability is the biggest risk that CCC faces.

e. Partnership

The Provision and Strengthening of Support for Street Children, Families and Communities in Malawi project has been implemented through a partnership between HDF, as the donor, Retrak, grant administrator and internationally recognised NGO, and CCC, implementing partner and, at the time of start-up, a struggling Malawian organisation. There were also a multitude of on-the-ground secondary partners such as government, non-government and community actors. In this way the partnership was multi-layered. For Retrak this was a larger-scale partnership than ever taken on before and in a new country. Retrak had not

⁸⁴ Chisomo Children’s Club (ND). Fundraising Strategy. Blantyre, Malawi. Provided by project management.

⁸⁵ World Bank. (2018) The World Bank in Malawi. Retrieved from: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/malawi/overview>

before taken on building the capacity of a national organisation to the extent required under this project, though had themselves been recipients of a significant capacity building grant in 2008-12 that had been transformational and gave them direct experience and a positive model to replicate. For CCC the partnership was a critical relationship of organisational survival. The partnership with a known international entity, such as is Retrak, was required for CCC to receive funding of this scale. While appreciated by all parties interviewed, it has not been an easy partnership.

KEY FINDINGS - PARTNERSHIP

- The partnership between Retrak and HDF as the donor was one of flexibility and consistent engagement. This approach to donor-grantee partnership led to the project partners applying a learning approach and being able to adapt to needs and challenges or opportunities that were encountered along the way.
- Partnerships benefit from the beginning with a clear partnership framework that can be revisited as the relationship develops. This framework benefits from inclusion of adequate articulation of roles and responsibilities, discussion on partnership purpose and mutual expectations, and partnership goals and outcome measurements. The Retrak-CCC partnership would have benefitted from such a framework.
- Working in partnership takes time, human and financial resources and these costs are often hidden. This project has provided learning for Retrak and CCC on the resources required to work in coordination and collaboration, nationally and internationally.
- In a resource-constrained setting such as Malawi, the government is often dependent on non-government partners for services, in turn, this project has shown that efficiency and quality of services greatly depends on partnerships at the sub-national and community levels between government actors (e.g. SWOs, police and court) and communities (e.g. community groups, CBOs, etc.)

Working in partnerships has many benefits: more can be accomplished than what might be possible working alone; learning and sharing skills and knowledge can happen across all partners; impact can be wider; and there can be added value and efficiency in sharing responsibilities and resources. However, the benefits of effective partnerships do not come without work and establishing successful partnerships takes time and concerted effort. It requires a partnership framework from the start that outlines the structures and processes of the partnership.

Retrak brought over 20 years of experience in working with street-connected children to this project. They provided everything from a central support infrastructure including financial, human and information management systems, service models and SOPs, technical guidance and training, data management and reporting assistance. Retrak's Director of Programmes spent fifteen months in the country recruiting a team

"We always tried to be aware of where we (Retrak) end and they (CCC) start – where are we building capacity and where do we need to push ownership."

Retrak Senior staff

and building the programme. She and numerous other key staff (e.g. Finance Director, Fundraising Director, M&E Advisor, etc.) provided weekly email communication, regular virtual meetings and frequent in-country visits. Consultants such as

child protection experts, board development specialists, economic strengthening consultants and others provided inputs at key points. Retrak's internationally transferable toolkits and SOPs helped to standardise the core project activities including outreach, case management for reintegration and prevention. Those key CCC management staff interviewed described Retrak's support as committed and well rounded. Likewise,

Retrak senior management interviewed felt that the organisation went above and beyond expectations to support CCC.

When Retrak entered the partnership, CCC was trying to rebuild from a past history of unethical management and legal issues, as explained earlier in this report. Through the sub-grant Retrak supported the re-establishment of the organisation, including recruitment of staff, establishing financial and monitoring systems, providing management and direct service trainings, mentoring, and leading feasibility, enumeration, mid-term and other studies. CCC was responsible for project direct implementation of all activities in Lilongwe and Blantyre based on the model introduced by Retrak. Some interviewed felt that the CCC crash, which happened before this project began, may have been underestimated in terms of its reputational impact and the time and resources that it would require to build back. In the words of one Retrak senior staff members, *“the partnership took a huge amount of manpower. We really were not realistic in estimating what it would take to build back this organisation without compromising quality of services to children.”*

The grant award between HDF and Retrak was formalised by a grant agreement, and in turn the relationship with CCC was outlined in a sub-agreement with Retrak. The nature of a donor-grantee-sub grantee relationship added a layer of power dynamic to the partnership. CCC, in turn, partnered with other CBOs and various government actors in order to serve children and families. In the two FGDs with community leaders, as well as interviews with the three partner CBOs interviewed, CCC was appreciated for their commitment and constant presence on the ground. This was echoed also by community partners such as police who commented, *“I would like to commend CCC for their hard work with the street-connected children and their commitment to working with us to find solutions for this problem”* (Lilongwe Police Department representative). This comment was echoed in different words by the magistrate, *“I do not know what we will do with the children if CCC were not there. Their dedication for the street children is something all us has to have.”*

As noted by Retrak, the donor-grantee partnership with HDF has been very smooth and well managed. To quote one Senior Retrak staff member, *“The relationship (with HDF) has been a very positive experience. They (HDF) have been very involved and supportive. We could even use them as a sounding board for new ideas or challenges.”* HDF was noted for their understanding and flexibility throughout project implementation. This has helped the project partners to adjust activities to the needs of children and their families. Retrak’s Programme Director appreciated that HDF was always available and open to discussing the successes and challenges of the project. Regular reports were provided to HDF and feedback was given to Retrak in a timely manner. For their part, CCC prepared the reports and, according to two of the Retrak staff interviewed, their ability to do so improved over the LOP.

There are a number of aspects of an effective partnership. These include having a common understanding of the project and partnership, beginning from mutual interest and common values, holding shared goals and commitment to common results, systems of coordination, strong leadership and a good relationship, commitment to collaboration, and promotion of a learning agenda.⁸⁶ Any effective partnership takes work and focus beyond the day-to-day. The following table shares some of what worked well within the Retrak-CCC partnership and the areas of weakness or where improvement was needed, as noted either in reports or by

⁸⁶ Partnerships: Frameworks for working together. Retrieved from: <http://www.strengtheningnonprofits.org/resources/e-learning/online/partnerships/Print.aspx>

stakeholders, including Retrak senior management, CCC management, staff and board members, and external partners such as CBOs and government actors.

	What worked well	Weaknesses in the partnership
Common understanding of the project and partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The relationships between HDF – Retrak – CCC were formalised with written agreements. • There was a clear partnership management structure in terms of who worked with whom between Retrak and CCC, lines of reporting, and responsibilities relative to the donor relationship. • Evidenced by the way that both Retrak and CCC staff described project activities, there was good understanding of the common approaches to services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retrak – CCC did not adequately articulate roles and responsibilities and expectations leading to varying perceptions of the nature and purpose of the partnership: Retrak viewing it as a sub-grantee/capacity building relationship whilst CCC perceiving almost a relationship of CCC being a division of Retrak (often referred to as “parent/child” by the director). • There were differences in work style and cultural differences that impacted the partnership (e.g. differing perceptions of deadlines, understandings of board responsibilities, organisational independent versus dependence) • The project lacked a results framework with clear indicators and monitoring outcomes for the partnership development itself. • This project did not establish a separate results framework for the partnership itself nor for the capacity building of CCC component, which Retrak felt would have been useful for building a stronger partnership and mitigating partnership challenges.
Mutual interest and common values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentation including strategic plans shows that Retrak and CCC shared common missions and visions – this was evidenced from the beginning when the partnership feasibility work was done before the project started. • By building capacity through developing and putting in to place policies and procedures based on Retrak’s global model, the two organisations shared similar policy and service implementation frameworks. • There has been Shared ownership for objectives and targets. • The partnership showed a commitment to learning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Retrak self identifies as a “learning organisation” and staff interviewed highly regard learning (and training others). ○ HDF is described as very open and flexible, which enabled project adaptation according to learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to honestly reflect on successes and failures – feeling that CCC only celebrated successes. <i>“Often it seemed like they only told us (Retrak) what they thought we wanted to hear,”</i> shared one senior manager. • CCC was, at times, reluctant to change or try new approaches, for example when pushed by Retrak program management to take new family follow-up approaches.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ CCC sought to learn new needs and was active in designing new activities to meet those needs. 	
Shared goals and results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Decision making around the project results framework, goals and challenges with meeting certain objectives was transparent. ● There seemed to be a mutual understanding of the project's goals across both partners. ● There was a shared vision for the desired beneficiary results – a commitment to improving the lives of street-connected children and their families. ● Both organisations share pride in meeting of objectives and the numbers of children and families reached – <i>“This project brought success on the ground – lives have been transformed”</i> Retrak Finance Director. The both recognised the role of the other in achievements. 	
Coordination and grant systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Systems set by the donor were not cumbersome and allowed for CCC to learn about working with a grant of this size. ● Narrative and financial reporting templates were clear and easy to work with, feedback on reports from HDF was timely, and the donor was flexible as CCC learned how to meet reporting expectations. ● At the same time, the sub-grant relationship required more time to build capacity around this grant system than was anticipated by Retrak. ● CCC appreciated support from Retrak to manage the grant. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Perception of CCC was that decision making around grant systems and coordination was not always a shared process. ● The funds transfer process was not always clear and adjustments to transfer schedules were not always well understood by CCC. ● Reporting (narrative, data and financial) consistently required revision by Retrak to reach satisfactory levels. Reports often submitted late and inadequate, which made the HDF relationship sensitive for Retrak. ● There was significant and regular changing of management staff, which meant that grant systems capacity was always being lost. ● Retrak did not adequately resource for coordination of the grant.
Leadership and relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Because this was a sub-grant partnership there was a power differentiation from CCC being highly dependent on Retrak – this led to an inequality in the partnership. ● Retrak provided strong leadership in maintaining open and positive relations with the donor. ● Regular communication, including face-to-face was one way that both organisations tried to strengthen their relationship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Issues with leadership at CCC have already been mentioned – the lack of consistent leadership was a challenge to the partnership. Retrak senior management did not seem to have a trusting relationship because of the lack of leadership. ● CCC was often delayed in responding to feedback or requests. Reliable communication via Internet was one of the challenges.
Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Evidence from interviews in Malawi indicated that Retrak and CCC work so closely together toward a common vision, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Key management staff turnover at CCC impacted collaboration because the partnership often was focused on

	<p>it was hard to distinguish where one organisation stopped and the other began.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other CBOs and community partners unanimously appreciated CCC for their collaborative approach to work, which led to efficiency in services and quality improvements. • Information was well shared across both organisations. • Retrak dedicated an unexpected high level of staff and financial resources to face-to-face relationship building important for a strong partnership 	<p>building new inter-personal relationships rather than improving collaboration and coordination.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was no evidence of an ability to confront and deal with conflict within the partnership, or internally at CCC. • CCC felt that more face-to-face would have been beneficial, perhaps having Retrak staff on-the-ground for longer, in contrast to Retrak’s view that considerably more face-to-face was provided than anticipated, and that more intensive on-the-ground support would risk to drive more dependency.
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The matrix above makes clear where the partnership was strong and where there could have been improvement. In terms of strength, both partners shared a common vision, similar values, and goals. This has led to mutual ownership for the project’s successes such as the high number of vulnerable children served. In addition, many aspects of the grant management system worked well, and partners were both highly regarded for their ability to collaborate and coordinate. Likely this has led to efficiencies and quality in terms of direct services.

The partnership would have greatly benefitted from development of a partnership framework at the beginning and one that could have been revisited during times when challenges occurred or partnership dynamics needed to be clarified. This framework would include clear distinction on the nature, terms and length of the partnership, clear expectations, partner exit strategies, roles and responsibilities, and well-defined measurements for partnership development and success. The matrix also shows the importance of consistent relationships, time for relationship building and the value of reliable and transparent communication in forming and maintaining a good partnership.

“This work (partnership) has been huge for Retrak. It was all new and has helped us to become clearer about partnership – to be more realistic, to better estimate the time and resources needed to help a partnership flourish.”

Head of International Partnerships, Retrak

Whilst there was a feeling of general satisfaction with the work delivered by the partnership, both Retrak and CCC considered they could have done better to promote a closer collaboration that would have benefitted both organisations. They both feel they have learned from the partnership. For example, Retrak noted that they have better understood the resources and support needed to both manage a grant of this size and what is needed to rebuild a partner organisation. The value in this experience around partnership is that it has given Retrak the opportunity to look at questions such as: What is really desired from partnerships? What is the future strategy going to be around partnering? Within what we want and how we want to partner, what can we do better to seek and maintain strong partnerships?

Learning for CCC around working with others – on a case level – really saw that case management requires partnership and collaboration with others. As one centre manager said, *“We realised that we must work with others. We must look around and see who can do what and be comfortable with being dependent on others in order to better serve children.”*

VI. Conclusions and lessons learned

The Provision and Strengthening of Support for Street Children, Families and Communities in Malawi was relevant at all levels: for bringing back the struggling CCC; for bringing best practice models to Malawi and helping the GOM to be more strategic in their approaches; and, more importantly, responding directly to the needs of street-connected children and their families. Significant progress was made across the project's six objectives. Achievements were strong in outreach, centre-based services, reintegration, prevention, and in raising awareness on the rights of street-connected children, achieving stakeholder buy-in and beginning to tackle some of the root causes of child vulnerability.

The police and child justice court magistrate lauded CCC diversion work as one of the most impactful aspects of the project and one that could be an example for other organisations. *“Exposure of children to formal criminal justice processes has negative impact on child development. The diversion initiative will go a long way in promoting child rights and development in Malawi. All police officers at Lilongwe Police Station and the court have embraced the concept of pre-trial diversion and implemented in corroboration with CCC social worker/probation officers,”* shared the commissioner of police.

Family reintegration has been given a paramount place in this project, as both Retrak and CCC strongly believe that a loving and caring environment of a stable family is the best place for a child to grow and develop. Under this project, reintegration focused on the best interest of the child has been exemplified, and partners have learned about what is needed to support families and communities in taking back their children. The Family Reintegration SOPs developed and introduced to Malawi by Retrak have shown to be relevant to improving service quality, efficiency, coordination, and child outcomes.

The SHG approach was applied to empower women economically and develop family financial capability to support children. This objective was added in the project after a review in 2015. There was unanimous agreement between the women interviewed that the SHG has helped them to have a stable income, but also to empower them in family decision-making, providing for children's education, improved parenting, family planning, land and property ownership, and more. At the same time, IGAs for the most vulnerable families were shown to need more development. Within these families, critical needs must be addressed at the same time that household economic security is addressed.

The project presents an effective model for addressing the needs of street-connected children. The availability of basic services for washing, bathing, sports and play opportunities, and health care services helped meet the immediate needs of children while the catch-up education, counselling, information, life skills and vocational training worked to address the more long-term needs of the children, and counselling and support helped to strengthen families. Retrak's rights-based design with the key pillars of prevention, protection and provision of care was essential to all of the work with the children. The project was able to make an impact on the lives of the children it reached.

A notable aspect of the project was flexibility, which allowed the project design to evolve over time in response to lessons learnt and challenges encountered, leading to the development of a model that can be adapted by others, including government. The inclusion of the SHG approach, establishing a consortium in 2015, and the revision of the results framework after the enumeration show how the project evolved over time. The capacity building of the staff has also contributed a great deal toward achieving the results in effective manner and within the timeframe.

The main findings of this evaluation include:

1. **The project has demonstrated that the effective model,⁸⁷ which Retrak has been using in other countries, also has potential for the Malawian context.** The model includes identifying children and aligning design to their needs and realities, establishing contact with children through outreach, as well as facilitating attachment between children and caregivers and case management for reintegration with families. The project incorporated follow-up as a key activity and once children were reintegrated and no longer required CCC's support, they provided a model for phasing out support. Attention to follow up is of critical importance.
2. **The project addressed needs of street-connected children holistically through prevention, provision, participation and protection and by working with government, partners, parents and communities to change attitudes about vulnerable children.** The project focused on strengthening connections with families, schools and the wider community, and making the voices of street-connected children heard by initiating discussions about the policies and laws that affect their lives. This combined direct service and advocacy approach was important to sustainable change.
3. **Education services such as centre-based catch-up classes were designed around individual needs of children and proved important to reconnecting children to schools.** Furthermore, engaging with students and teachers to help them deconstruct myths around street-connected children and understand their experiences helps reintegrated children to settle better in to the school and community.
4. **Establishing the Consortium has provided a platform for collaboration and meaningful sharing of knowledge and experience amongst and between non-governmental partners and policy makers.** The consortium was a good starting point for creation of a common language, common working tools and common goals, as well as mutual accountability.
5. **SHGs empower women both economically and psychosocially and prevent children from connecting to the street by enhancing caregiver contribution to household income, improving skills and knowledge, and building social connections.** The social and leadership skills and the confidence they develop through participation in the SHGs helps women to have more control in decision-making. IGAs, as another approach to household economic strengthening, did not have the same sustainable improvement in families. This activity targeted a more vulnerable population and generally showed that such families need to have support (financial, psychosocial and case management) to meet immediate needs while also engaging in more sustainable income generation.
6. **There is a need for improved data management and use for decision-making.** The project could have benefitted from better local management of the existing database, analysis of outcome level data and data-informed decision-making could have helped the project in making its services more effective, efficient as well as helping the project management to gain more timely insights for future programming.
7. **Financial sustainability in a context like Malawi is extremely difficult and discouraging for smaller organisations.** The importance of consistent and strong leadership (including boards of trustees), strategic and visionary envisioning, financial and fundraising planning, partnership and relationship building, and capacity for the above should not be underestimated.

⁸⁷ Retrak (2011). *Retrak's model: Journeying together*. Retrieved from: https://docs.google.com/viewerng/viewer?url=https://www.streetchildrenresources.org/wp-content/uploads/gravity_forms/1-07fc61ac163e50acc82d83eee9ebb5c2/2013/01/1-Retrak-Model-journeying-together.pdf.

8. **A partnership framework would have been extremely useful.** In addition to pre-project feasibility analysis for services and organisational engagement, a partnership of this nature also requires strong framing and defining of the partnership itself, the parameters of the relationship, roles and responsibilities, conflict mitigation, sustainability and exit planning. This framing has to be done from the beginning of the partnership.
9. **Working in partnership has significant benefits but also requires time and resources that must be factored in.** Partnerships are not easy, in fact implementing services for children and families can often be done faster and easier alone. However, the benefits of partnership include efficiency (more impact for less input), and mutual learning and capacity building. Certainly, this partnership had all of those benefits. At the same, time working in partnership has hidden costs and takes significant commitment of time and resources.

VII. Recommendations

In the light of the evaluation findings and learning, the following recommendations are offered toward addressing some of the challenges highlighted and, ultimately, for the benefit of Malawi's most vulnerable children.

a. Future service delivery for street-connected children in Malawi

Follow up and monitoring of reintegrated children and families – follow-up must be prioritised to ensure the long-term safety, protection and wellbeing of reintegrated children in their families and communities. CCC has to strengthen its linkage with social welfare departments if they cannot do this follow up themselves. Training for SWOs on follow up should be conducted and cases should be transferred, again if CCC is not going to further look after the reintegrated children. Coordination with other CBOs, child protection committees, community leaders, faith communities, etc. working in the communities where children are should also be strengthened. A mapping of existing organisations and actors may be useful. Future resource planning must provide and prioritise for longer-term follow up.

Addressing economic instability in reintegrated families – The project has shown the need to address the economic situation of extremely vulnerable families in order for reintegration of their children off the streets and into families to be sustained. A holistic approach should be considered that includes case management with longer-term follow up, case planning including household economic strengthening and linking families to resources for basic needs, directly supporting basic needs (e.g. food, medical needs, school fees, clothing, shelter) through time-bound conditional cash transfer or other mechanisms, and income generation. Regular follow-up, guidance and encouragement must be part of the work. An in-depth feasibility study on economic needs and strengthening approaches for reintegrated families in Malawi could be informative.

Prevention focus – Given that the enumeration showed the majority of street-connected children are returning home at night, a focus on prevention services should continue. Based on the learning from this project, prevention should include psychosocial support, building community connections for isolated and at-risk families, parenting skills building, and household economic strengthening. The SHG approach should be expanded to other areas where children are found to be at-risk of coming to the streets. Other strategies such as strengthening community referral mechanisms, parenting skills training in parenting groups and working

with existing structures in the community (e.g. child protection committees or schools) to provide follow-up and monitoring would also be useful.

Continued awareness raising and advocacy – There is still a need to share knowledge and raise awareness within communities on the needs and realities for vulnerable families and street-connected children. Efforts of CCC, other CBOs and the Consortium should be intensified to inform and encourage police, courts, child protection committees and others in their responsibilities to protect the rights of all children, dispel myths and address stigma and discrimination.

Government involvement – The GOM must be engaged by NGOs and CBOs to more fully undertake its duty to protect children through holistic services. CCC should continue working to build the capacity of the relevant sector departments to implement services and provide oversight and coordination. More policy advocacy, through the Consortium, is suggested beginning with development of an advocacy plan.

b. Further organisational strengthening (CCC)

Fundraising strategy and local ownership – A realistic fundraising strategy linked to vision and organisational strategy has to be developed and include mobilisation of staff and Board of Trustees members in working toward CCC's sustainability. This should include an action plan and definition of roles and responsibilities and plans for engaging the business community, religious communities, and women and youth associations. Beyond a strong plan, actions must be taken immediately to address the financial sustainability issues, particularly for the services developed under this project and for the continued follow up of children that CCC has returned home.

Strengthening CCC leadership – CCC will need to find ways to continue building the capacity of the organisational leadership, including the Board of Trustees. This includes continuing knowledge and skills development in program management, M&E and data utilization, supervision and human resource management, working in partnership and resource mobilization. This should be combined with a commitment to continued professional development for program staff as well.

Better management and use of the existing data – Quality data and analysis drives decision-making. CCC needs to invest in continued capacity building for high-quality data collection, data analysis, quality improvement processes, etc. Building staff understanding of their role in M&E will be an on-going need. As services for street-connected children in Malawi further develop, CCC will have thus have lessons to share with national information systems.

Formalise relationships – Future services at CCC will benefit from formalised relationships between court, social welfare, police and other CBOs through memorandums of understanding or other such appropriate mechanisms. This will help to outline the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder in various partnerships, facilitate an effective referral system and improve the coordination of case management and direct services to avoid duplication and maximise efficiency in the resource-constrained context.

c. Application of learning for project design in Malawi and beyond

Supporting a learning agenda – The centres are effective as temporary places of safety. Street-connected children have passed through the drop-in centres successfully to become responsible and self-sufficient

members of their communities. Case files for each child include the reports on follow up visits and the current situation of each child. There have been some cases where children are reached on the street, taken to the drop-in centre, reintegrated with their family, and then go back to the streets and begin a cyclical process. In view of this, a comprehensive study to investigate this phenomenon by tracing movement of individual children would inform future programming. This study could also look at diversion outcomes. The study could help determine the best ways to ensure success in the rehabilitation and integration processes.

Addressing issues of staff retention – Project design should foresee strategies such as analysing potential employee markets, realistic pay scales, internal/existing human resources and strategies for retention to anticipate and address potential for staff turnover, which we know happens in high stress social service jobs. Strategies should be part of periodic review and include topics such as salary rates and benefits, supportive supervision, and developing effective and supportive workplace culture. Knowing that staff retention is part of an active strategy conversation could help to maintain staff morale.

Understanding harmful views of children as a push factor – One of the reasons why children are going to the street in Malawi is specifically related to myths about vulnerability, for example beliefs in child witchcraft. The extent and impact of the role of vulnerability perceptions and beliefs needs to be further understood and then addressed in future programming to ensure that children stay with their families and in protective community environments. A qualitative study to investigate further community perceptions would inform future program design and be an added value to existing information in the sector.

Parenting – Lack of parenting skills, parental physical and mental health issues in families, family discord, and child abuse were all raised as concerns and factors around the inability of parents to provide nurturing homes for their children. Negative, or even harmful, parenting practices are known to be a factor pushing children to the streets. Mental health issues such as depression and substance abuse, which can be linked to HIV and vice versa, should be considered in future programming and special care should be taken to increase staff capacity for increasing parenting skills, sharing positive parenting messages, as well as understanding mental health and providing basic psychosocial support. Referral mechanisms should clearly link to any existing clinical health and mental health services.

d. Development and management of partnerships

Organisational readiness assessment – Assessing the readiness of partners to undertake a project has to be an integral part of the initial project feasibility study conducted before the launch of any new project. It would be important to assess the organisations readiness to change the way it does work. Exploring partner perceptions around change and how to best manage change helps to ensure smoother transitions and deeper learning. It can also build a partnership culture of openness and mutual ownership from the beginning.

Due diligence process – the process of due diligence of local implementing partners needs to consider all aspects, including the organization's reputation. Impacts of previous reputational damage must be transparently discussed in planning. The due diligence process should aim to realistically consider impacts on: the time it may take to build a project team, timelines for start up, capacity building needs, organizational leadership (including Board of Trustees), financial management systems, monitoring systems, in-country relationships with government and non-government actors, and organizational long-term sustainability. Organizational reputation must be part of annual diligence and quality review processes.

Elaborating partnership using MOUs – Using official memorandums of understanding or other such mechanisms and which include a partnership framework outlining purpose, terms, roles/responsibilities, outcome and impact measurements, communications and management systems, exit planning, etc. is suggested to improve future partnerships. A monitoring mechanism should be incorporated to first identify partnership needs, necessary inputs, expected outputs, and outcomes, establish timelines and means for verification, and outline mediation protocols for challenges and conflicts. It is suggested that such frameworks also be purposeful in outlining how partnership successes will be celebrated.

Initial start-up assessments – The work to strengthen local organisations benefits from a start-up assessment focused on organisational capacity including existing capacity, gaps, needs and potential challenges of the partner whose capacity is to be built. This assessment should also include what capacity, resources and time commitment will be needed from the capacity building partner to engage effectively. The findings from such an assessment should be carefully included in any partnership agreement.

Communication Pathways – Clear communication pathways should be established to help ensure that information is reaching the right people at the right time. This should include both internal and external communication. Communication should be documented and followed up by both partners. Within the earlier mentioned partnership framework, it should be made clear that communication will be transparent and what the roles and responsibilities will be around communication. A plan should be in place for mitigating miscommunication, clarifying misunderstandings, communicating plans and progress. Face-to-face partnership meetings are of importance to a strong and effective partnership and should be built in to project design. Changes made over the life of the project should be well documented and annexed to prior/original agreements to prevent confusion. These should focus on the partnership and not on other aspects of the project.

Capacity building delivery strategy – Capacity building should be outlined clearly within the results framework or have a separate capacity building focused framework, in addition to being linked to a realistic budget to deliver. This should outline the capacity building theory of change, inputs, outputs, outcomes and impacts, as well as tools for measurement and verification. Both partners should be open to learning and growing through the partnership, even while one might receive more technical capacity building than another, therefore there should be objectives and indicators for both parties. The first action of capacity planning should be an assessment to identify the gaps as well as the best strategies for capacity building activities, one that fits the context and organisational culture. As was done for this project, management and staff should be part of identifying capacity needs, means and progress.

Annexes

Annex 1: Project Results Framework

Improve outcomes for 5,597 street-connected children and families and communities in Malawi, through effectively extending and sustaining activities at Chisomo Children's Club in Blantyre and Lilongwe and improving sector wide cooperation and practice nationally.									
Objectives	Indicators	Baseline (2012)	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Total	Methods of verification
Identify and build relationships with street-connected children, families and communities to improve child protection and as a first step in the reintegration process	1.1 Children participated in street outreach activities	0	210	570	650	410	205	2,045	Children's Files and Monitoring Records
	1.2 Children referred from Court Diversion Programme	0	30	126	180	200	100	636	
	1.3 Families traced	0	78	277	265	190	112	922	
Improve access to services for street-connected children and facilitate their reintegration with families	2.1 Children received services in centres	0	134	436	650	560	325	2,105	Children's Files and Monitoring Records
	2.2 Children reintegrated	0	0	134	256	175	100	665	
	2.3 Care-givers supported	0	0	188	358	245	140	931	
Support children, families and communities to move towards successful reintegration	3.1 New families followed-up and supported	185	185	134	256	175	100	850	Children's files, CSI assessments and monitoring records, Progress out of Poverty Index (PPI) records
	3.2 Children returned to full-time education (total reintegrated children /children reported to be enrolled at school)	unknown	50%	50%	70%	70%	70%	70%	
	3.3 Families of the reintegrated children become economically	unknown	n/a	n/a	n/a	5%	10%	10%	

The provision and strengthening of support for street children, families and communities in Malawi

	independent (% of families crossing the poverty line)								
	3.4 Families phased out of support	0	92	47	80	154	105	478	
Strengthen families and communities in peri-urban areas to prevent children from coming to the street	4.1 New Self Help Groups (SHGs) established	0	n/a	20	20	0	0	40	SHG monitoring records, household survey, PPI
	4.2 New vulnerable women joined SHG	0	n/a	300	300	0	0	600	
	4.3 New children supported as part of SHG members family	0	n/a	600	600	0	0	1,200	
	4.4 SHGs reached sustainable savings:loans ratio (total groups/groups with a ratio of 4 or more)	unknown	n/a	0	10%	20%	40%	40%	
	4.5 SHG families living above national poverty line (average of PPI poverty likelihoods)	unknown	n/a	n/a	80%	85%	90%	90%	
	4.6 SHG families with children attending school (total SHG families/SHG families with children attending school)	unknown	n/a	n/a	80%	85%	90%	90%	
	4.7 Community groups oriented on Child Care Protection and Justice Act	n/a	n/a	n/a	20	10	5	35	
Develop the organisational capacity of Chisomo Children's Club to become a more sustainable organisation delivering	5.1 Full set of organisational and programmatic policies updated or developed, including child protection, HR, finance, family reintegration, outreach	N/A	In progress	In progress	In progress	In progress	Completed	Completed	Training records; policies in place; staff signed up to policies, understand them and are committed to following them

The provision and strengthening of support for street children, families and communities in Malawi

higher quality programmes	5.2 Staff received training in child protection, family reintegration, child and family assessment, and M&E	0	20	30	40	40	40	40	Log of staff training in monitoring records Checklist of phase out activities completed
	5.3 Senior staff received training in management and resource mobilisation	0	5	5	5	5	5	5	
	5.4 Phase out of Retrak support completed	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Yes	Yes	
Develop National Street Child Consortium and build government capacity to improve the national response to street-connected children and families	6.1 Baseline survey completed	n/a	n/a	Yes	n/a	n/a	n/a	Yes	Baseline report
	6.2 Workshops held for children's workers from NGOs, government and community leadership	0	2	2	2	4	4	14	Log of workshops in monitoring records
	6.3 Consortium organisational membership	0	0	4	6	8	10	10	Membership list
	6.4 Interface meetings with line ministry and parliamentarians	n/a	4	4	4	2	2	16	Director's report/feedback on meetings

Annex 2: Evaluation Framework

Evaluation Criteria: Relevance					
Key Evaluation Question: How appropriate and relevant were the interventions of the Project? - To what extent:					
No	Sub Questions	Measures/Indicators	Main Source of data/Information	Data Collection Method	Data Analysis and Triangulation approach
1	How relevant is the project to address the needs of children on street and their families?	Evidence of alignment at country level	Project and national policy and other program documents and other	Desk review	Narrative/thematic analysis of secondary data Discourse analysis of primary data from FGDs and individual interviews
2	Are the objectives and strategies in line with the government agenda in terms of child protection and care and support to children?	Evidence of alignment in terms of stated mandates of the two implementing agencies	Primary sources	Individual and Group interviews	
3	Has the project aligned with the mandates and capacities of Retrak and CCC?	Evidence in design of intention of working together with other CBOs and NGOs (Evidence of overlap or complementarity)			
4	Was the project designed to achieve coherence, alignment, and complementarity between this project and other street children initiatives?				
Evaluation Criteria: Effectiveness					
Key Evaluation Question: How has the project performed in Blantyre and Lilongwe?					
5	What have been the intended and unintended results of the project?	Intended outcomes vs. actual outcomes (baseline compared to M&E data)	M&E data base	Desk review, Individual and group interviews, Focus group discussion with beneficiaries and Capacity assessment of CCC	Narrative/thematic analysis of secondary Data Data disaggregation by age and sex Discourse analysis of primary data from KII and FGD Analysis of the primary data from capacity Assessment
6	How effective has the project been in achieving its stated objectives?		Project proposal, annual and Semi-annual plan and report documents		
7	What have been the main successes and challenges?	Evidence of project position and/or analysis of documentation and planning	Project Result Framework		
8	Is there any evidence of un-intended outcome?	Annual work plan vs. actual work done in the five years	Primary sources		
9	How has the project performance and results been affected by the operational and policy environments, in country	Use of Result Framework indicators for results sought	Case files House hold survey		

The provision and strengthening of support for street children, families and communities in Malawi

10	How has the project performance and results been affected by capacity and resources, skills and knowledge in CCC and Retrak?	Capacity required vs. Existing Capacity			
Evaluation Criteria: Efficiency					
Evaluation key Question: How efficient has the project been in terms of inputs compared to its outputs?					
11	What are the costs of inputs and resources of the interventions?	Budget allocation vs. spending	Financial reports	Desk review and Key informant interviews	Analysis of Financial data Narrative/thematic analysis of secondary Data Discourse analysis of primary data from KII Staff capacity Analysis
12	Was the project efficient in implementation and utilisation of resources (cost compared to impact)?	Staff with skills relating to financial analysis, technical skills to manage budget	Budget plans Activity plans		
13	How efficient and cost effective are its administrative and management structures of the project?		Administrative structure of CCC Primary sources		
Evaluation Criteria: Sustainability					
Evaluation key Question: To what extent are the outcomes of the project likely to be sustainable?					
14	What aspects of the project are sustainable? Why some may be sustainable and others may not?	Finances available vs. required Level of forward planning	Project financial and planning documents	Desk Review and Key informant interviews	Narrative/thematic analysis of secondary Data Consortium capacity analysis Discourse analysis of primary data from KII Financial data analysis Funding trend Analysis
15	How well the benefits of a programme will continue after the project is completed, both organizationally and financially?	Evidence of capacity building Evidence of handover or planning for handover	Project phase out Strategy documents Consortium report		
16	What should happen in the final months to ensure a way forward?	Evidence of national funding	Primary Sources		
17	What is the effectiveness of mechanisms in place to build and ensure sustainability?				
18	To what extent is the project contributing to increased ownership by CCC?				
19	What could have been done differently to ensure greater sustainability?				
20	What are the efforts CCC made to raise fund locally? Have you done				

The provision and strengthening of support for street children, families and communities in Malawi

	analysis of funding landscape and potential donors?				
Evaluation Criteria: Impact					
Key Evaluation Question: What are the long-term effects of the project?					
21	What are the impacts of the project?	Evidence of long term effects of the project	Project reports	Desk review, Key informant interview, FGD with beneficiaries	Narrative/thematic analysis of secondary Data Discourse analysis of primary data from KII and FGD
22	What are the technical, economic, social, cultural effects of the project?		Case Studies		
23	What real difference has the project made to the beneficiaries?	Level of real changes in the life of the project beneficiaries	Household economic survey		
24	What are positive and negative, intended and unintended Impact?	Enrolled beneficiaries vs. phased out	Case files		
25	How many street connected children and their families have been served?		Primary sources		
Evaluation Criteria: Partnership					
Key Evaluation Question: How has the partnership between Retrak and CCC enacted?					
26	How does each partner value the partnership?	Evidence of Capacity building	Reports on capacity building/training/workshop	Desk review, key informant interview with staff and board members	Narrative/thematic analysis of secondary Data Discourse analysis of primary data from KII and FGD Capacity assessment analysis
27	How successful has the partnership been at building capacity at CCC?	Level of partnership between CCC and Retrak	Annual and semi-annual plan and reports		
28	Has the partnership created greater sustainability at CCC?	Evidences of sustainability	Human resource plan		
29	If such a partnership were to be entered in to again, what are the areas for adjustment or improvement?	Evidence on the effectiveness and unintended outcome of the partnership	Primary sources		
30	How the capacity of CCC has changed through this partnership and how this compares with agreed targets?				

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Annex 4: List of Key Stakeholders Consulted

Retrak				
	First name	Surname	Position	Notes
1	Maggie	Crewes	International Programme Operations Director	Skype interview Follow up interview - July
2	Joanna	Wakia	Monitoring & Research Advisor	In person and Skype interviews
3	Priyanka	Zacharias	Head of International Partnerships	Skype interview Follow up interview – July
4	Steve	Thomas	Financial Director	Skype interview - July

Lilongwe

CCC					
No	First name	Surname	Gender	Position	Notes
1	Richard Jackson	Mdyetseni	Male	Acting Executive Director	Follow up Skype interview - July
2	Clement	Silungwe	Male	Director of Programs	
3	Wanangwa	Pasidya	Male	M&E Officer	
4	Ireen	Ngomano	Female	Centre Manager	
5	Humphrey	Longwe	Male	Social worker (Child Protection officer)	
6	Amos	Chibwana	Male	Social worker (Outreach officer)	
7	Abigail	Nthondo	Female	Teacher	
8	Fyness	Botha	Female	Teacher	
9	Thoko	Chibwana	Female	Accounts Assistant	
10	Collins	Kaduya	Male	IT teacher	
Beneficiaries					
11	Monalisa	Female		Reintegrated child	
12	Rebeca	Female		Reintegrated child	
13	Ireen	Female		Reintegrated child	
Partners					
	First name	Surname	Gender	Position	Organisation
14	Malango	Mwasinga	Male	Community policing coordinator	Lilongwe police
15	Steven	Chawinga	Male	Community policing Officer	Lilongwe Police
16	Lisa		Female	Practising Lawyer	Private
18	Worship Boswel	Kamphonda	Male	Child Justice Magistrate	Court
19	Joyce	Ngwira	Female	Deputy head teacher	M'gona primary school

Blantyre

CCC					
No	First name	Surname	Gender	Position	Notes
1	Auspious	Ndamuwa	Male	Centre Manager	Follow up Skype interview - July
2	Lucy	Lowe	Female	Social worker	
3	Owen	Mukhanga	Male	Social worker	
4	Willard	Yambani	Male	Teacher	
Beneficiaries					
5	Rashid		Male	Reintegrated child	
6	Alex		Male	Reintegrated child	
7	Tenda		Female	Reintegrated child	
Partners					
	First name	Surname	Gender	Position	Organisation
8	Hollace	Chabuka	Male	Community policing coordinator	Blantyre police
9	Robert	Munthali	Male	Social worker	Samaritan Trust
10	Chikumbutso	Salifu	Male	Senior Assistant Social Welfare Officer	MGCDWS
11	Worship Joyce	Tizifa	Female	Child Justice Magistrate	Court

Focus Group Discussions:

Lilongwe			
No	Participants	No of participants	Gender
1	Street connected children	13	Male
2	SHG members	10	Female
3	Community Leaders	4	Male
4	SHG members children	5	Male
5	SHG members children	9	Female
		41	19 female / 22 male

Blantyre			
	Participant Type	No of participants	Gender
1	Street connected children	9	Male
2	SHG members	13	Female
3	Community Leaders	2	Male
4	SHG members children	7	Male
5	SHG Members children	7	Female
		38	20 female / 18 male

Annex 5: Sample KII and FGD Questions

Social workers, Nurses, Teachers and Centre Managers

Individual and Group Interview Questions

My name is xxxx. I work with Maestral International. Retrak and CCC commissioned Maestral international to conduct final evaluation on the project *“The Provision and Strengthening of Support for Street Children, Families and Communities project”* in Malawi. The evaluations will assess the performance of the project in terms of: output and outcomes, achievements, and identify good practices, challenges and lessons learned. I am interviewing people inside and outside of the two organizations as part of an information gathering process. You have been selected because you offer valuable insight and knowledge about this project. I am grateful for your time and willingness to participate in this interview. Thank you and I assure you that your responses will be kept confidential and will not be linked to your name and only used in aggregate form.

Please introduce yourselves and your position and role in the project

1. What are the services you provide to the street children in and out of the centre? How does the children’s centre function?
2. How do you establish a relationship with a street child and his family? What are the available out-reach services?
3. How is the process of returning a child to his family? (Child assessment and preparation, family tracing assessment and preparation, placement and support, follow up and support and phase out)
 - How applicable is the family reintegration SOP?
 - How do you determining the best interest of the child?
 - What are the challenges you face during the reintegration process? What are the measures taken to solve these challenges?
4. How do you carry out follow up and support after reintegration?
 - How does the community support your work?
 - How do you link up your work with other CBO/NGO?
 - Are there any reporting mechanisms in place for a child or family member to report back if they encounter problems after reintegration? if yes, please explain.
 - How frequent do you conduct follow up visit?
5. Why and how do you remove a child from his family?
 - What will happen to that child after removal?
 - Are there any examples of this kind and please explain how the cases handled?

6. How do you decide to phase out a child from support?

- Are there any regulations or standards in place?
- How do you do assessment to decide to phase out support for a child or family?
- Are there any challenges in phasing out from support?
- Are there any cases requested to return back after phasing out from support? How do you handle such cases?

7. How do you document cases?

- Are there Standard formants? How simple and easy to complete?
- How frequent the forms have to be completed?
- Do you have any suggestion to improve the formats?

8. Have you been part of any capacity building exercise?

- What kind of training have you taken part so far?
- Please explain how the capacity building exercises facilitating your work?
- What are the capacity gaps you observe in providing care and services to street connected children?

General Question at the end of each KII

- What has been the success of the project?
- What could be promising practice to be replicated?
- What has been the challenge and how to overcome them?
- What are the recommendations?

Self Help Group Members and Community Leaders

Focus Group Guiding Questions

My name is Addishiwot. I work with Maestral International. Retrak commissioned Maestral international to conduct final evaluation on the project supporting you to improve your economic status through SHG. The evaluations will assess the overall performance of the project. I am interviewing people inside and outside of the Chisomo Children Club as part of an information gathering process. You have been selected because you offer valuable insight and knowledge about this project. I am grateful for your time and willingness to participate in this interview. Thank you and I assure you that your responses will be kept confidential and will not be linked to your name and only used in aggregate form.

I will go through the consent form followed by signing the consent form participants

Please introduce yourselves and how, and why you became involved in with the Chisomo Children Club.

1. How do you find out about this project?

- How long have you been part of this project?

- How do you form a group? How many of you are in one group?
- How does the group function?
- What are the benefits of joining the SHG?
- Have you faced any problem working in a group? If yes , what are these problems and how did you solve it?
- What are the skills/knowledge you acquired from taking part in the SHG?

2. What kind of services have you received from this project?

- Economic/financial
- Training/awareness raising

3. How do these services contributed to bring change in your life?

4. What are the most significant changes you have observed in your and your child's life after joining the group?

5. What do you think will happen when you phase out from support? Would you be able to sustain the change you have observed in your family? If yes how?

6. How are you maintaining the change the project brought to your life after phasing out from support? Please tell us the changes you managed to sustain? (for the one graduated from the program)

- Increase of saving
- Still sending children to school
- Food availability in the house
- Protection of children

7. Families with reintegrated children

- How long has it been since your child reintegrated with the family?
- Is your child still living with you? If he has left home already, please explain why he has left?
- How do you see the reintegration process? Please explain the process and how it benefited you and your child?
- Have you observed any behaviour change on your child since he returned back home – what are these changes?
- How is his performance in school – if he is back in school or taking VT?
- What do you do for your child for him to feel he belongs with his family? How do you care for him?

8. Do the centre workers visit you?

- How frequent do they visit you?
- What do they do when they come for a visit?

9. What is your role as a community leader (in their community and in relation to the CCC project)?

10. How do you work with the CCC project?
11. How do you support children returned back to their families?
12. How do you think the CCC project benefited the women taking part in the SHG? Have you observed any change in the life of these women and their children? Please specify.
13. How do you support the SHG members living in your community?
14. How do you think the project has benefited your community?

Street Connected-Children and Reintegrated Children

Focus Group Guiding Questions

To create a trusting atmosphere between the street children and consultant, the FGDs will be started by establishing the ground rules of the FDG with the participants as a warm up. They will create their own nametag and will say something about themselves. The consultant will ensure that a trusting relationship is established between the consultant the children before proceeding to asking the evaluation questions.

Introduction

My name is xxxx. I am here to talk to you as CCC suggested that you can explain to me about the services you receive at children centre and how the CCC support you and your family. I am excited that I met you today. I hope our discussion will help improve your life and make the children centre better place for you.

1. What makes you happy?
2. Do you have brothers and sisters?
3. Where do you live now?
4. Who lives with you?
5. What makes life difficult for you?
6. What do you and your friends worry about?
7. For how long have you been receiving care and services from the children centre?
8. What are the services you receive from the CCC centre? (Commuters of the Centre)
 - How did you hear about the services provided in the children centre?
 - What was the first thing you did when you came to the centre?
 - Do you have a good relationship with the people working in the centre? If yes Why? If no why?
9. What are the things you stopped doing or taking since you joined the children centre?
 - How do you feel about yourself right now?
 - How do you feel about your family, friends and neighbours?

- If your friends ask you for advice, what will be the one thing you will advise them? It could be about anything.

10. Are you attending school? If yes, how is your school performance?

- What are the exciting and challenging issues about returning to school?
- How do teachers and your peers treat you in your school?
- Does the centre worker visit you at your school? How do they support you in your schooling?
- Are your families supporting you in your schooling? How?
- How do your neighbours, friends, your community leader support you in your schooling?
- If not returned back to school? – Why not? Do you have any plan to return to school soon?
- Have you told to CCC social workers that you are willing to go back to school?
- What was their response?

11. How is your relationship with your family? (Re-integrated children)

- What were the reasons pushed you to leave home? Why did you decide to return back to your family?
 - o Do you feel safe at home? Do you feel you belong there?
 - o Do they appreciate the change you have made in your life?
 - o Do they support you in your schooling? If yes how?
- How do you support your family and community?
- What are the changes you have observed on your family since return back home?

12. How do you found out that your family is willing to take you back?

- How did the centre workers find your family members?
- How long did it take to find your family members?
- How did the centre workers prepare you for the first family meeting?
- What happened after the first meeting?
- How did the first meeting go with your family members?
- Who were present at the first meeting?
- Are you still with your family, if no why?
- How frequently does the centre worker visit you at home?
- What do the social workers do when they come for a visit?
- How helpful is the follow up visit?
- How do you report back when you face a problem at home?
- Do you have any recommendation for the improvement of the reintegration process?

13. What are your future plans?

Annex 6: Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool

Domain	Key Areas	Assessment Items
A. Governance	Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The board provides overall policy direction and oversight. ○ The board is capable of carrying out key roles such as policy formulation for CCC, fundraising, public relations, financial oversight and lobbying. ○ The board is composed of committed members who represent the varied interests of the stakeholders. ○ At least 70% of board members attend all meetings. ○ The board has clearly documented terms of reference and tenure of office
	Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. CCC is able to identify key stakeholders. b. The results of stakeholder needs assessments are integrated into the planning process. c. Stakeholders are involved in the review of the CCC's mission and strategies.
	Leadership and Organizational Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The leadership style is participatory. b. The management has the skills, knowledge and experience to carry out their roles effectively c. The management is accountable to key stakeholders. d. The management encourages mutual respect among the staff/volunteers. e. Information is shared freely among the members.
B. Management Practice	Organizational Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Organisational structure with clearly defined lines of authority and responsibilities. b. Organisational structure is well designed and relevant to the mission/goal. c. The positions within the organisational structure are filled. d. Regular assessments of the organisational structure are carried out and relevant updates made.
	Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Inputs from appropriate stakeholders are taken into account during planning. b. Implementation plans reflect a strategic plan. c. Implementation plans are reviewed regularly and updated when necessary. d. Resources are planned for and allocated properly. e. Flexibility exists to adjust plans as a result of the monitoring process.
C. Monitoring & Evaluation	Data collection and Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Systems exist to collect, analyse and report data and information. b. Trained personnel are in place to analyse data. c. Systems are used to process, disseminate and solicit feedback of information. d. Organisation has the ability to produce appropriate reports. e. Organisation regularly prepares activity reports. f. Organisation regularly prepares evaluation reports. g. Organisation publishes and disseminates information on its operations to appropriate stakeholders.
	M&E Plan	
	M&E systems management	

	Performance/ quality monitoring.	
D. Human Resources	Humana resource Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Recruitment process for staff is clearly defined, transparent and competitive. b. Job descriptions are clearly defined, adhered to and updated. c. Staff/board board meetings are held regularly. d. A simple and accessible Human Resource Manual exists and is followed (including procedures for the board, volunteers and staff). a. Work of staff/volunteers is regularly internally monitored and evaluated and feedback given. b. Grievances and conflict resolution procedures are documented well. c. Grievances and conflict resolution procedures are understood well by the staff/volunteers and are used when necessary. d. The workplace environment is appropriate in terms of health and safety.
E. External Relations	Stakeholder relation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Organisation is seen as credible by the stakeholders. b. Organisation is seen as a valuable resource by the stakeholders. c. Organisation regards its stakeholders as full partners. d. Organisation has relations with the private sector for technical expertise, material and human resources.
	Government Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Organisation has mechanisms in place to influence relevant government policies. b. Organisation has contacts with government decision-makers. c. Organisation is able to engage policy-makers in dialogue. d. Organisation activities and recommendations are integrated into government development plans.

F. Sustainability	Programme Beneficiary sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The project is supported by those being served. b. There is sense of ownership of benefits by the beneficiaries. c. Organisation ensures that local level skills transfer takes place.
	Organisational sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Organisation has a shared vision of its role in society. b. Organisation is a member of key NGO networks c. Organisation reviews its structures in response to organisational development needs. d. Organisation has linkages with international NGOs, educational institutions, government entities, research institutes, civil institutions and the private sector
	Financial sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Organisation has the ability to access diversified resources to contribute to its activities. b. Organisation has more than one funder. c. Funds for short-term expenses are available. d. Organisation has a long-term business/funding/resource development plan for the needed finances. e. Organisation has an immediate fundraising strategy. f. Organisation has the capacity to implement the fundraising strategy. g. Local fundraising opportunities have been identified. h. Organisation has the capacity to write proposals and win tenders.