

Mid-Term Review (MTR) Report for the Family
Strengthening Programme (FSP)
SOS Malawi

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SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGES MALAWI

**FAMILY STRENGTHENING PROGRAM
2020-2024**

MID-TERM REVIEW

FINAL REPORT

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Executive Summary

Introduction

With funding from the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), SOS Children's Villages Malawi (SOS CVM), in partnership with SOS Norway, is implementing a five-year program (2020-2024) known as Family Strengthening Program (FSP) with an overarching objective of ensuring that "Children and young people deprived of parental care have an equal chance to succeed in life." For this goal to be attained, the program aims at ensuring that (a) families provide adequate care and protection for vulnerable children; (b) children and young people have improved learning outcomes; (c) young people have access to Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR); and (d) government prioritizes the implementation of UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children. The program responds to NORAD's development commitments to Malawi as well as to both global and local commitments including, for example, SDGs, UNGACC, CEDAW, NYP, MGDS III, NEA, NPAGBV, CCPJA, just to name a few. From the Theory of Change, it is clear that SOS CVM endeavours to attain these changes by means of creating resilience among the targeted communities and beneficiaries through empowerment as well as ownership of the means and processes to their own socio-economic liberation. The organization, thus, employs a catalytic approach that only seeks to push-start the engine of growth and resilience with a hope that the communities themselves would maintain the rev.

Purpose of evaluation

At this mid-point, this MTR was commissioned to establish whether the program is on track towards its 2024 goals. Specifically, the review sought to:

- assess the mid-term impact of the project, with a special emphasis on the impact the project has had on children, young people, their families, women, girls, and people with disabilities.
- examine the results framework and indicators and to provide mid-term project figures along with a narrative explaining the reasons for under/over performance achievement.
- provide an analysis of the challenges faced in programme implementation, good practices, and lessons learnt.
- draw conclusions and make recommendations/suggestions for improvements for the remainder of the project implementation period.
- review the extent to which recommendations of the final evaluation of the previous framework project have been taken on in this new frame.

Evaluation Approach and Methodology

Supported by Contribution Analysis, the MTR adopted a qualitative inquiry in order to provide in-depth explanation of the gains made so far as reflected on the Results Framework. This approach also helped in obtaining deeper information in responding to 36 evaluation questions under relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, inclusion, validity of design, management and coordination, and human resources. Insights were obtained from a purposively sampled population of participants with optimum knowledge about the project. These included program beneficiaries, SOS CVM staff, staff from implementing partner organizations, community (traditional/local) leaders and government officials. These participants were subjected to Focus Group Discussions, in-depth interviews, and semi-structured interviews. Considering that the program is concerned with deeply vulnerable

people, ethical concerns were given due attention. Notable limitations included failure by some study participants to turn up for the interviews even after repeated requests to have their views recorded. This affected the triangulation of results to some extent. Again, the majority of participants especially in program locations expected to receive an allowance after each sitting. This created uneasiness among the researchers who had to ensure that they released the participants after shorter encounters. Further to this, the study has been unable to generate unintended results as participants could not effectively identify them. Some responses by beneficiaries were understandably affected by social desirability bias. The possibility that participants reported more positive outcomes to demonstrate progress cannot be ruled out. As a mitigation measure, the research team had to assure them confidentiality and also that the evaluation results would not affect current or future benefits. Finally, the unavailability of the evaluation report of SOS CVM's previous intervention prevented the review of how recommendations had been taken in this current frame.

Major findings

Program's relevance

There is ample evidence regarding the program's focus on the target group i.e., children most at risk of losing care of their family. Importantly, the program also employs sufficient transparency and participatory approaches in beneficiary identification and recruitment. This is apparent in SOS CVM's or any single entity's inconspicuousness in the process. Instead, grassroot communities form representative committees to undertake the process. The program's relevance is further apparent in how it has conformed to a number of benchmarks including SOS Norway's development cooperation for Malawi, national development priorities, and priorities and needs of the beneficiaries. It is, therefore, important to ensure that the program sustains its present trajectory for continued relevance.

Program's effectiveness

With regards to effectiveness, the broader indication is affirmative. The gains made so far in the majority of the program's results, indicators and targets have been good with others being quite impressive. This beckons optimism regarding the likelihood that at the close of the program in 2024, the majority of the results would be achieved at least in the current rationale of the design. Only about 5 indicators and targets may not be achieved by 2024. In the same vein, the likelihood that families will attain self-reliance is bleak. The prescriptive approach for exiting a family and an apparently seemingly lack of regard for the recognition of a multidimensional context of realities associated with self-reliance remain key impediments. Nevertheless, the program has vastly facilitated the improvement of quality of care and parenting skills for families. In the same vein, the program's strategies particularly joint recruitment of beneficiaries, non-prescriptive approach to beneficiary interventions, and collaboration with other stakeholders have been important in driving gains for the majority of the indicators. Some of the good practices and lessons learnt in this first half of the program include the power of collaboration with other development partners, which has facilitated much of the progress. Again, the program has a focus on the creation of empowerment and resilience through many avenues. However, the Covid-19 pandemic, climate variabilities, and prevailing economic hurdles have been and could as well constitute the barriers to the attainment of most targets in 2024. In this regard, it is recommended that some targets, particularly those on the attainment of self-reliance by families be revised downwards. This would be important for providing realistic targets and also to ensure sustainability.

Program's efficiency

The Covid-19 pandemic, prevailing economic challenges, and climate variabilities have in one way or the other delayed or affected the implementation of certain activities. Nevertheless, this has not necessarily constricted the quantity of outputs and activities gained. As stated earlier, only about five indicators have not gained much. Yet with regards to quality, the evaluation makes a mixed revelation. The engagement of or collaboration with professional partners in specific areas has enhanced quality as well as cost-efficiency. It is in this vein that the evaluation reveals that the program's collaboration with national and district government officials, traditional leaders, CBO partners and other development partners has been outstanding. On the other hand, however, the evident desire to rapidly realize higher targets with unclear regard for sustainability compromises the quality of certain outcomes and activities. In terms of timelines, the implementation of the majority of activities has been timely.

Program's inclusion

With regards to inclusion, the evaluation has found that gender and disability mainstreaming has been adequately considered in the program. In particular, the program has not exuded propensity to a particular gender in its targeted interventions. For example, the choice of caregivers is not dictated by the tradition that has always made caregiving the preserve of women. With regards to disability, both children and caregivers are adequately supported in the program. The regard for gender and disability has been particularly apparent in significant budget investments, which have included, for example, provision of gender awareness trainings; skills development; mobility aids such as clutches and wheelchairs; contact glasses; and structural alterations to, for example, toilet designs and access routes.

Program's sustainability

The evaluation has shown a terrain with a mixed results regarding the program's sustainability. For instance, an apparently mechanistic approach employed when exiting a family and also the use of 'haphazard' (unplanned) approaches in imparting SRHR knowledge on the youth with no regard for a follow up challenge the sustainability of the gains. Yet various capacities such as skills and knowledge gained by CBOs and beneficiaries will likely go a long way. The CBOs together with government duty bearers, particularly the office of the DSWO have been pivotal in driving the program's interventions. This, thus, provides a significant prop to the program. Moreover, the program has engaged government through TPI to develop guidelines in line with the UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children in addition to pressing for social protection interventions such as bursaries for needy students. The sustainability of the program is further anchored by viable exit plans for a proper handover to CBO or government in the aftermath of the program.

Validity of the program's design

The evaluation has confirmed that the program has sound objectives, outcomes, indicators and clear targets. Importantly, the majority of them are feasible, which means their results will likely be attained by 2024. This is, to a considerable extent, owed to the validity and appropriateness of the design of the program as coherently elaborated by its Theory of Change. The ability by CBOs and other development partners to follow the program's logic with apparent ease and consistency demonstrates the complementary and integrated nature of the program's activities. Moreover, in addition to the program's consideration of gender issues in its design, it also has a clear exit and sustainability plan. The program design, thus, lacks no glaring weaknesses. As such the program can subsist in its current design.

Program's management and coordination

The program uses the program document and the results framework, among others, to facilitate the implementation of the activities. To enhance quality implementation, reporting and monitoring of the program are done regularly. In the same vein, all spending on program activities is regularly tracked to ensure efficient budget utilization. This is mainly a result of coherent management and coordination in place. SOS CVI, SOS Norway, and SOS CVM play complementary roles in the management of the program. Additionally, the evaluation confirms the appropriateness of the program's communication strategy, monitoring and evaluation as well as financial management systems. Further to this, the program has endeavored to adhere to work plans and budgets through its development of annual plans and budgets in line with the overall program plan and annual funding frame.

Program's human resources

At this point, the evaluation has found that the program has adequate staff that is also knowledgeable about its roles. There is sound complementarity between staff at the national office and that in program locations. Additionally, relationship between program staff and CBO partners and volunteers is cordial, which enhances the program's progress. The program has also invested in capacity building training of staff, CBO partners and volunteers. This has been in a number of areas including, for example, gender awareness, Results Based Management, monitoring and evaluation, community empowerment, youth related issues, emergency responses, financial management, resource mobilization, childcare and parenting and child and family development and advocacy. Importantly, there is no collision between staff and CBO partners in the execution of their duties. The evaluation reveals that the CBOs are entrusted with leading the implementation of activities while program staff perform supporting roles such as monitoring so as to ensure quality.

Key lessons learnt

- Commitment and dedication to implementing the program among program officers, CBO staff, and all relevant stakeholders even amidst adversity (Covid-19, climatic variabilities, and economic instability) has resulted into the acquisition of significant gains. This entails that the implementing staff has been observant and attentive to details, including Covid-19 prevention protocols. The first half of the program, thus, provides optimism regarding the possibility of implementing a program even in difficult times.
- The program's approach in ensuring empowerment of the communities is important for creating resilience as well as sustainability of program results.
- The program's focus on CBOs as a link between the community and SOS CVM has been key in ensuring orderly and organized implementation of the program. Moreover, the CBOs have helped to preserve SOS CVM's inobtrusive presence in the program. This is important for the creation and sustenance of feelings of ownership of the interventions by the communities.
- Regular interactions between peer educators and families not only ensure compliance but also enhances internalization of the interventions by the beneficiaries, which can ultimately facilitate sustainability. In the same vein, the use of local facilitators including peer educators on positive parenting enhances good understanding of issues among the participants. This is due to the facilitators' use of indigenous knowledge and the social trust, which the communities have in the them. This contrasts with the use of external facilitators, most of whom are field officers and are, hence, not mostly in

touch with these families. The use of local facilitators has been seen to encourage participation, ownership and sustainability of programme activities.

- The consideration of the male component in the program is important in ensuring involvement, especially in parenting which is most often considered the preserve of women. Additionally, it puts boys in the frame following increased attention on girls in most interventions. For instance, the pertinence of SRHR issues also mean that the boys are equally affected and need to also benefit so as to facilitate the cultivation of informed choice among them.
- Community networks have been helpful in strengthening community capacities in protection. This is vital in both reducing and creating awareness of child abuse cases.
- The training of young people in vocational skills has proven to be an effective approach towards the attainment of self-reliance in families given the energy among the young people that can enable them to drive family economic achievements, especially in families where caregiving responsibilities are entrusted to grandparents.
- This program has extensively benefitted from collaboration with other stakeholders who complement and supplement SOS CVM's capacity. Partnerships are, thus, important in sustaining community interventions for continued benefits. This is so because these structures are always there and are more aware of the needs and responses to these needs in their respective communities.

Major conclusions and key recommendations

Conclusions	Recommendations
<i>Relevance</i>	
<p>The program has shown relevance in the way it has consistently placed at its core children at risk of losing parental care. Further to this, the program has also aligned itself fittingly with important national and global aspirations for the protection of the wellbeing of vulnerable people including women, girls, children, people with disability, and the youth. Again, the program has ensured that the processes of beneficiary identification and recruitment have been done in transparent and participatory manners, thereby enhancing community empowerment, ownership, and resilience. Importantly, the program also conforms to SOS Norway's development cooperation for Malawi, which enhances the relevance of the rationale of its partnership with SOS CVM. Equally important is how the program is responding to national development priorities including those embedded in, for example, MGDS III, the Child Care, Protection and Justice Act 2010, the National Education Act, the National Youth Policy, the National Plan of Action on GBV in Malawi</p>	<p>The program should continue being more focused on responding to the various forms of priorities at various policy levels.</p> <p>It is also important that field officers should continuously remind, particularly the CBOs of the program's alignment to national and global aspirations. This could be critical in promoting their recognition of the program's wider impact as well as its contribution to national development. Consequently, it could inspire a hardworking spirit among the leaderships and memberships of the CBOs.</p>

Effectiveness	
<p>Overall, the program is on track. There is high likelihood that the majority of results, indicators, and targets will be achieved. In fact, evidence exists regarding improvements in quality of care and parenting skills among caregivers. This progress is owed to sound strategies that the program has used.</p> <p>Yet, the attainment of self-reliance by families will not be achieved as planned. While some families may attain it, there is strong likelihood that the attained self-reliance may not be sustainable because of the prescriptive approach to self-reliance as presented by the family exit plan. In other words, the family's self-reliance is tied to a set standard, which may be against the consideration of a multifaceted elements necessary for self-reliance.</p> <p>Climate variabilities, particularly floods in Ngabu, drought in the other locations but also economic challenges being experienced at the moment have in one way or the other affected the implementation of the program. They are also expected to have negative influence on the interventions in the remaining part of the program.</p>	<p>The program should continue to be more focused so as to jealously guard against causing unnecessary slips from the gains made thus far. This entails the preservation of the existing coordination fabric descending from the main partners (SOS Norway and SOS CVM), to the national office, to the program locations, to the local implementors (CBOs). Similarly, it is imperative that SOS CVM continues to nurture the ongoing collaboration with other implementing partners for the realization of maximum results. This, thus, presupposes that, particularly program locations, through peer interaction with the partners, need to maintain the professional comradery they have been acknowledge and hailed for.</p> <p>While this is admirable, the apparent rapidity in obtaining some of the results has to be commensurate with sustainability. It may be of less impact to simply show a quantitatively huge progress without any guarantees of sustainability. For instance, the attainment of self-reliance requires assurances of sustainability. Similarly, the impact with regards to the extraordinarily rapid gains in SRHR cannot not be ascertained. In particular, nearly "uncountable" youth as opposed to target are said to have acquired knowledge in SRHR and yet there are no reliable means to ascertain this. In order to account for the impact, there is need to devise a mechanism that can be used for follow ups.</p> <p>To ensure that families attain self-reliance sustainably, there is need to revise downward to 600 from 1750. Since the current achievement is at 399, the suggested target could be logical if the families are to attain self-reliance sustainably. In other words, it will ensure that fewer families are receiving appropriate support and are intensively monitored by both the CBOs and the field officers for optimum results. Moreover, it is important to recognize that the attainment of sustainable self-reliance requires a more integrative approach, which could include significant awareness through knowledge production, than narrowing the focus on material gains alone.</p>

	<p>To ensure adequate responses to adversity through environmental and economic calamities, it is important to develop contingency plans including budgets so as to cushion problems caused by such events. This will ensure that the program's timelines are adhered to.</p>
<p><i>Efficiency</i></p>	
<p>Overall, the program has been efficient. Regardless of delayed inception due to the Covid-19 pandemic, for example, but also given the prevailing economic challenges as well as climate variabilities, the program has generally delivered significant quantities within the same apparently disrupted timelines. Moreover, the programs collaboration with other implementing partners (likeminded organizations) as well as national and district government officials and departments, CBO partners, and traditional leaders has helped in achieving results in time and with minimal investments in some instances, particularly in activities that are wholly the designation or core duty of the partner. In this regard, it is apparent that the program has benefited extensively from collaboration with other development partners. This has resulted into accrual of not only significant quantitative gains but also quality through their expertise.</p>	<p>The program should continue to collaborate with development partners while ensuring that SOS CVM takes a leading role in management and coordination for optimum realization of the outcomes.</p>
<p><i>Inclusion</i></p>	
<p>Gender and disability mainstreaming has been adequately supported throughout the process. This is critical as it creates both feelings and realities among these categories of the often-marginalized groups of people that they are being given a recognition and that they are able to partake in community activities and also share the program's benefits.</p>	<p>The program should continue paying attention to gender and disability mainstreaming. However, it can do much better if implementers (officers) also recognize or remember that gender and disability cut across nearly all the activities in the program. In other words, the wearing of gender lenses throughout the program's cycle can enhance gender and disability mainstreaming. Again, the evaluation has noted that little has been done with regards to people with albinism.</p> <p>While realizing that this may not be a core preoccupation under gender and disability mainstreaming, there is need to also pay attention to people (caregivers and children) with albinism. This is because albinism is associated with various</p>

	forms of disabilities including sight deficiencies and skin diseases including cancer.
<i>Sustainability</i>	
<p>With regards to sustainability, some of the benefits like capacity trainings and various skills development enterprises including vocational, business, and cognitive (such as parenting skills) are likely to go a long way even after the close of the program in 2024. Evidence exists regarding how the beneficiaries are utilizing the skills and how they acknowledge their impact. Moreover, CBOs are able to drive most of the program interventions. Importantly the program does have plans in place to ensure orderly and effective exit by families from the program, although this latter element could have been more effective if avoided being applied mechanistically considering that a family's exit from the program requires a multidimensional fulfillment.</p>	<p>The program should continue to create empowerment interventions among the beneficiaries. The implementors (field officers) need to constantly ensure that activities are being done meaningfully and according to plan. Their constant visibility needs to be understood as an inspiration of confidence among the beneficiaries. Moreover, their frequent engagement with the communities could be vital for providing constant reminders and advisory cues to the local implementors.</p>
<i>Validity of design</i>	
<p>The program is framed within an appropriate design, which, to a large extent, has been the main reason for the significant gains made thus far. In particular, the program's Theory of Change is sound and coherent. This, thus, enhances the feasibility of the activities and outcomes. Moreover, the program possesses exit and sustainable plans, which complements its design.</p> <p>Further to this, the program design gives room for flexibility in empowerment ventures. In particular, the program refrains from prescribing sets of skills or business ventures to its beneficiaries. This is critical in enhancing both empowerment and sustainability.</p> <p>The program draws its relevance through its approach of seeking to enhance empowerment and resilience among the communities it supports. This is seen in many ways including, for example, SOS CVM's inconspicuousness in beneficiary identification and recruitment, the capacities it gives to the local community through</p>	<p>The program should continue in its current frame.</p> <p>To ensure sustainability of business ventures chosen by the beneficiaries, an orientation session on different kinds of business ventures could help to widen their base of knowledge. This is necessary for making informed choices.</p> <p>The program should continue to be focused on providing more capacity building ventures including, for example, capacity, parenting, vocational and entrepreneurship trainings in order to increase empowerment and resilience.</p>

<p>the CBOs, the organization's recognition of the significance of collaboration and partnerships, the strengthening of the families through different skills.</p>	
<p><i>Management and coordination</i></p>	
<p>Overall, the program has appropriate management and coordination structures with apparent harmony among SOS Norway, SOS International Office, SOS CVM to program locations and the CBOs. The program is monitored and evaluated according to plan, quarterly narrative and financial reports made periodically, and annual reports being made to SOS Norway. Further to this, the program adheres to work plans and budgets and there is evident involvement of local partners in the management and coordination of the program, which, importantly, has not adversely affected its quality.</p>	<p>The program should continue being focused for optimum results. In particular, SOS CVM's national office should continue to ensure that that the program is managed and coordinated in the way it has done. More importantly, it should continue rendering unwavering support to the program locations so as to ensure continued commitment among the implementing officers.</p>
<p><i>Human resources</i></p>	
<p>Overall, the human resource is adequate and competent. While the CBO staff may need more capacity building trainings, it has, nonetheless, shown that it understands its roles and is knowledgeable about the program's Theory of Change. The CBO staff's knowledgeability is, importantly, enhanced by sound cordiality with SOS CVM staff. This is further seen in clear division of roles and responsibilities, thereby preventing collisions or overlaps in the execution of duties. However, there appears to be overload of Monitoring and Evaluation responsibilities among field officers, which subsist outside their primary roles. At the same time, the national M&E personnel appears overwhelmed too, as he serves for multiple programs. These two observations can affect the program quality and overall performance.</p>	<p>The program should continue to provide capacity building trainings to both staff and CBO personnel for optimum results. This may also include refresher courses, particularly to the field officers who require motivation from time to time.</p> <p>The program may also consider recruiting M&E personnel in program locations on short tenure so as to manage the program data base and other attendant issues. If full employment cannot be considered, incorporating experienced interns with M&E knowledge or background can also be an option. This could help to lessen the load on the field officers who could, in turn, concentrate on their advisory roles.</p>

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ABLE	Act together for a Better Long-Term Education
ADC	Area Development Committee
CBO	Community Based Organizations
CBPs	Community Based Partners
CCPJA	Child Care, Protection and Justice Act 2010
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)
DEM	District Education Manager
DSWO	District Social Welfare Officer
FDP	Family Development Plan
FSP	Family Strengthening Program
FSP Manual	Family Strengthening Program manual
IGA	Income Generating Activity
MACOHA	Malawi Council for the Handicapped
MGDS III	Malawi Growth Development Strategy III
MTR	Mid-Term Review
NAPHAM	National Association for People Living with HIV/Aids in Malawi
NEA	National Education Act
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
NPAGBA	National Plan of Action on Gender Based Violence in Malawi
NYP	National Youth Policy
OECD/DAC	Organization for Economic Cooperation for Development/ Development Assistance Committee
PEA	Primary Education Advisor
PSI	Population Services International
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SMEDI	Small and Medium Enterprises Development Institute
SRHR	Sexual Reproductive Health Rights
SOS CVM	SOS Children's Villages Malawi
SOS Norway	SOS Children's Villages Norway
TEVETA	Technical, Entrepreneurial and Vocational Education Authority
ToC	Theory of Change
TPI	Tracking Progress Initiative
UN	United Nations
UNGACC	United Nations Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children
VSL	Village Savings and Loan

I. Brief program background

With funding from the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), SOS Children's Villages Malawi (SOS CVM), through partnership with SOS Norway, is implementing a five-year program known as Family Strengthening Program (FSP) from 2020 to 2024. The overarching objective of the program is to ensure that "Children and young people deprived of parental care have an equal chance to succeed in life" (FSP Program Document 2020-2024, undated). This falls within the program's continued focus on the provision of care and support for children who have lost, or who are at risk of losing, the care of their biological family (FSP Manual, 2007). Accordingly, the program operationalizes Strategy 2030 of SOS Children's Villages International, which recognizes family strengthening as one of the seven strategic initiatives to reach the 2030 goals (Terms of Reference, 2022). By targeting children and young people deprived of parental care, caregivers, community-based partners (CBPs) and government (FSP Program Document 2020-2024, undated), the current program's Theory of Change points to the following outcomes:

- a. families provide adequate care and protection for vulnerable children;
- b. children and young people have improved learning outcomes;
- c. young people have access to Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR);
- d. government prioritizes the implementation of UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children.

The significance of these outcomes is reflected by their resonance to NORAD's development commitments to Malawi as well as numerous other global and local commitments to socioeconomic interventions that deliberately focus on certain categories of people including children, women, and people with disability who are often tossed onto the margins of the society. At the global level, the program responds to, among others, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), United Nations Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children, and the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Nationally, the program responds to the National Youth Policy (NYP), Malawi Growth Development Strategy (MGDS) III, National Education Act (NEA), National Plan of Action on Gender Based Violence in Malawi, and Child Care, Protection and Justice Act 2010, just to name a few. Importantly, SOS CVM is, in this current program, endeavoring to promote these commitments by means of creating resilience among the targeted beneficiaries and communities through both empowerment and ownership of the means and processes to their own socio-economic liberation. As a catalyst, SOS CVM, thus, seeks to push-start the engine of growth and resilience with a hope that the beneficiaries and communities themselves would maintain the rev.

2. Purpose of evaluation

Since inception in 2020, the year 2022 constitutes the program's mid-point. This mid-term evaluation was, thus, commissioned to "establish an overview of whether the ...program is on track towards its 2024 goals..." (MTR Terms of Reference, 2022). Specifically, the evaluation sought to:

- assess the mid-term impact of the project, with a special emphasis on the impact the project has had on children, young people, their families, women, girls, and people with disabilities.
- examine the results framework and indicators and to provide mid-term project figures along with a narrative explaining the reasons for under/over performance achievement.
- provide an analysis of the challenges faced in programme implementation, good practices, and lessons learnt.
- draw conclusions and make recommendations/suggestions for improvements for the remainder of the project implementation period.
- review the extent to which recommendations of the final evaluation of the previous framework project have been taken on in this new frame.

To attain the desired results, the evaluation focused on the Results Framework, which provides indications to the achievement or non-achievement of the four outcomes. The OECD/DAC evaluation criteria focusing on the program's relevance; effectiveness; efficiency; sustainability; plus inclusion; design validity; management and coordination; and human resources also provided a useful basis for the understanding of the program's progress at this mid-point.

3. Evaluation approach and methodology

3.1. Approach

3.1.1. Contribution Analysis

Contribution Analysis (CA) provided the analytical framework of this MTR. Its relevance was underpinned by a recognition of the presence of multiple factors in the program such as, many different steps between activities and eventual desired changes; external and unforeseeable factors, which often influence the changes brought about through development interventions; and the possibility that many different development interventions by different agents within SOS CVM's four Program Locations (Blantyre, Lilongwe, Mzuzu, Ngabu) can contribute to a single (similar) change. Furthermore, the apparent coherence and soundness of the program's Theory of Change with regards to the evidently agreed and plausible assumptions that explain how the program seeks to bring out the desired changes enhanced the consideration of the appropriateness of this approach. Moreover, data from the Results Framework as well as submissions by Program Locations prior to the field work, provided evidence regarding progress in the implementation of program activities. This, thus, implies that change is occurring at least at each level of the program's Theory of Change. As such, relative contributions of both internal and external factors and other development interventions could be demonstrated. Through this approach, therefore, the underlying assumption was to generate credible and evidence-based narratives of FSP's contribution to changes in the lives of the targeted beneficiaries that people can see, digest, and likely agree with rather than endeavoring to make conclusive proof, especially at this point of the program.

3.2. Methodology

3.2.1. Study design

The MTR adopted a qualitative inquiry so as to generate profound explanations about the status of an intervention as well as general gains or losses of the program thus far. The available documents show that the program relied deeply for its baseline information on, among others, the CBO assessment tool, program data base, and Annual Reports. The information from these tools became useful in providing benchmarks for mid-term indicators in the Results Framework. Critical to this MTR, therefore, included the empirical validation of the accrued figures through interaction with varied and relevant constituencies of stakeholders in order to uncover and synthesize underlining explanations for the program's progress, retrogression, or stagnation.

3.2.2. Evaluation design

The evaluation adopted the standard OECD/DAC criteria regarding relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability. Additionally, the ToRs also required the evaluation to assess questions regarding inclusion, validity of design, management and coordination, and human resources. These eight evaluation areas with corresponding 36 evaluation questions have been embedded in the Evaluation Matrix (Annex 2). The matrix assigned data sources and specific methods of data collection to each evaluation question. This was in order to (a) provide relevance to the eight evaluation areas; (b) provide accurate information and mitigate information gaps and limitations; (c) ensure impartiality and evade biases by reflecting a diversity of perspectives of key stakeholders, including the vulnerable beneficiaries; and (d) document innovative approaches, as well as the barriers and bottlenecks impeding on the success of FSP's overarching goal.

3.2.3. Data sources, data collection techniques and tools

Data was generated from oral and documentary sources. With regards to oral information, data was collected through in-depth interviews, semi-structured interviews, and focus group discussions (FGDs). The table below shows a sampling frame and the number of actual respondents under each demographic category. A number of documents were also used including, among others, the 2020-2024 Program Document, Results Framework, Theory of Change, FSP Manual 2007, the UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children, Program Budget Document, National Budget Statements, and other relevant documentary resources stated in the References section.

3.2.4. Sampling technique and sample size

Participants in this MTR were purposively sampled. The identification of appropriate participants followed acquisition of profiles of relevant stakeholders and their count for every program location. This, then, provided a sampling frame from which a sample size was generated. Considering that the program is being implemented in four program locations (Lilongwe, Blantyre, Mzuzu and Ngabu) without analogous socio-economic and environmental characteristics, any generalization of the results required consistency in both sample type and size. Annex 4 provides a profile of a sample, which had to be made pliable to allow customization in response to prevailing circumstances in the program locations. With children’s identities excluded, only participants who waived their right for a concealed identity have been included in the participant list provided under Annex 5.

Table I: Demographic characteristics of the sample

Where?	Children (0-17years)	Youth (18+ years)	Care givers	CBO Mem bers	People with disability	Head maste r	PEA	DEM	Police	NGO	DSWO
BT Machilinjiri	F-3 M-5	F-4 M-8	F-15 M-1	F-9 M-7	M-1	M-1		M-1		M-2	M-1
BT Kunthemb we	F-5 M-4	F-6 M-9	F-16 M-4	F-12 M-8		M-1	M-1				
Ngabu	F-4 M-5	F-6 M-10	F-12 M-6	F-11 M-7	F-2						M-1
Lilongwe	F-6 M-2	M-6	F-11	F-9 M-9	F-1	M-2			M-1	M-2	F-1
Mzuzu Choma	F-8 M-12	F-13 M-16	F-13 M-3	F-10 M-7	F-2 M-4 Child-4	M-2	M-1			F-1 M-1	F-1
Mzuzu City	F-8 M-12	F-10 M-7	F-12 M-2	F-12 M-8	F-1	F-1 M-1				M-2	

KEY: *F* denotes Female and *M* denotes Male. The number after the hyphen denotes the number of participants under that gender category.

3.2.5. Data collection process

This consisted of an in-depth documentary review, which included reviewing key program documents such as those stated above. This was helpful in providing primary information and also in substantiating the findings. Field work was also undertaken to collect primary data from

key stakeholders based on the research instruments developed in the inception phase and improved after a brief pilot study in Lilongwe's Chadza area. Field trips were also made to Mzuzu, Blantyre and Ngabu where FSP is being implemented. Interviews (both physical and virtual) and focus group discussions constituted the main ways of acquiring primary data.

3.2.6. Data analysis

The Evaluation Matrix grouped the 36 evaluation questions around the eight evaluation criteria and specified sources of information and data collection methods for each criterion, the forms of triangulation between them being made clear. Correspondingly, the evaluation instruments were customized for each key stakeholder. Triangulation of data was intensely used in order to ensure data accuracy and robustness of findings. Being important aspects of the evaluation, the evaluation mainstreamed gender and human rights considerations throughout the entire process. The analysis was elaborated according to the notes taken from interviews, focus group discussions, and the data collected through documentary review.

3.3. Ethical considerations

Dealing with vulnerable and marginalized subjects requires a carefully considered ethical approach. Appropriate steps were, thus, taken to ensure acceptable conduct whilst carrying out the study. Prior to field work, a team of 9 researchers familiarized themselves with the Child Protection Policy so as to generate and deepen their awareness regarding the centrality of child protection and rights in SOS CVM's programming. This was followed by a requirement for each researcher to profess their commitment by appending a signature onto a generic form provided by SOS CVM. Annex 3 shows the signed document.

Considering prevailing cultural tendencies that promote disregard and neglect of sensitivities around child rights, it was deemed important to emphasize the essentiality of not only recognizing but also of adhering to best practices during interactions and dealings with children. In this regard, the research team committed itself to:

- a. avoiding engaging with children in inappropriate manners including, for example, showing unnecessary anger whatever the circumstance;
- b. enhancing their comfort and openness by avoiding consulting with the children in secluded places;
- c. insisting on meeting with the children in the company of their parents/guardians;
- d. avoiding soliciting responses cunningly or deceptively;
- e. seeking of consent from the parent/guardian to have their child interviewed;
- f. using the information provided by anyone concerning children only for the purposes of this evaluation;
- g. observing best practices learned through field work training on how to engage or deal with children so as to ensure consciously respectful interactions with them;
- h. avoiding misrepresentation of any information provided by the children;

Further steps were taken, including

- i. ensuring full consciousness and respect during interactions with people with disability;
- j. avoidance of stereotypical generalizations when dealing with women and girls;
- k. paying courtesy call to program location offices and local leaderships for a grant of entry into their locality;
- l. adequately briefing study participants regarding the purpose of the study so as obtain consent.

3.4. Limitations

During the evaluation, a number of limitations emerged. These include:

- a. Failure by some study participants to turn up for interviews even after repeated requests to have their views recorded. This affected the triangulation of results to some extent.
- b. The majority of participants, particularly program beneficiaries in program locations expected to receive an allowance after each sitting. This created uneasiness among the researchers who had to ensure that they released the participants after shorter encounters.
- c. The study has not been able to generate unintended results as participants could not effectively identify them.
- d. Some responses by beneficiaries were understandably affected by social desirability bias. The possibility that participants reported more positive outcomes to demonstrate progress cannot be ruled out. As a mitigation measure, the research team had to assure them confidentiality and also that that the evaluation results would not affect current or future benefits.
- e. The unavailability of the evaluation report of SOS CVM's preceding intervention prevented the review of how its recommendations had been taken in this current frame.

4. Findings

The findings of this MTR are presented in three sets. The first set discusses the mid-term impact of the program in reflection to the eight evaluation areas and the attendant 36 questions. The information sought and acquired has necessitated a two-pronged division of the set into program formulation and program implementation sub-sections. The second set focuses on the impact of the program from the perspective of the Results Framework. A final set has been named “Emerging Issues” and takes care of challenges, good practices and lessons learnt, and possible revisions that the program may require in its second half.

4.1. Mid-term impact of the program

4.1.1. Program formulation

4.1.1.1. Evaluation Area: Relevance

Under relevance, which seeks to establish whether the intervention is doing the right thing or not, the evaluation addressed three areas of inquiry. These are presented and discussed below.

a. The extent to which the program focuses on the target group i.e., children most at risk of losing care of their family.

The evaluation has established that the program is entirely focused on supporting vulnerable children who, in this case, include those at risk of losing the care of their family. During the consultations, it was noted that some of the children were actually orphans who lived under the care of a relation. It became clearly noticed that all the steps to change illuminated by the ToC have been designed to ultimately result into improved wellbeing of the vulnerable children. In particular, efforts on sharpening parenting skills; creation of resilience in homes through various forms of empowerment; both direct and indirect support for children’s education; generation of skills among the youth and caregivers for self-reliant homes; promotion of SRHR among the youth so as to protect them against unexpected pregnancies and diseases; and engagements with the government so that it places children at the center of social protection interventions put the children at the center of focus. This was duly acknowledged by the children themselves. One girl child beneficiary in Mzuzu, for example, stated that “amatipatsa ma school uniform, school fees, komanso amawathandiza makolo athu pazambiri” (the program provides us with school essentials such as uniforms, fees and also support our caregivers in various ways.”

“It is very clear this program is interested in children. Timawona mmene SOS [Malawi] imachitira, kuthandiza ana mmakomo komanso mu ma sukulu. Actually, even the skills given to achinyamata awa, it is all what SOS [Malawi] is doing to support ana ovutika (vulnerable children)”

PEA-Kunthembwe, Blantyre

b. The extent to which there is participation and transparency in the beneficiary recruitment process

Following the evaluation, it has been noticed that beneficiary recruitment in this current program is participatory and transparent. The single most important finding includes SOS CVM’s strategic inconspicuousness in this process. Similarly, no any single entity assumes a more prominent role than others in beneficiary identification and recruitment. In Blantyre’s Machinjiri area, for example, one caregiver commended the inclusive approach to beneficiary identification and recruitment and remarked “Eeeeh, chikhala kuti adasiyira mafumu okha kuti adzisankha anawa, sitikadaziwona ife izi” (If the task were only entrusted to the chiefs, none of us could have benefitted) (Caregiver, Machinjiri-Blantyre). Indeed, “pachikhala kuti panalibe

ndondomeko zoyenera, aaaa!, bwenzi titantutana tokhatokha” (if the program had not instituted clear procedures, we could have just recruited friends and family members) (CBO member, FGD-Chadza). These sentiments are not only indicative, but importantly, also confirmative of segregative tendencies entrenched at various tiers of authority, which the design of this FSP has adequately addressed and managed. This was complimented by a traditional authority in Mzuzu: *“program iyi ndiyopanda chinyengo. A ma CBO amapereka ma form kumakomo ovutikitsitsa, kenaka nkuchitidwa kauniuni wamphamvu. Ife ntchito yathu ndikungovomereza basi sinanga anthuwa ndi amdera mwathu, ndiye timawadziwa bwino ndi ife.”* (the program is corruption free. When the CBOs issue forms to vulnerable households and the forms get filled and scrutinized, our role is simply to make approvals given our considerable knowledge of the beneficiaries through community membership).

Accordingly, a varied profile of stakeholders jointly undertakes the recruitment within a preexisting formal structure called Child Case Conferencing Committee. The members of the committee may include, for example, child protection workers, CBO representatives, local government officials, traditional leaders, just to name a few. While in Chikwawa, for example, families are given a chance to select the most vulnerable amongst themselves, the process is never complete without the involvement of CBOs and traditional leaderships in rendering verification and monitoring. It has also been established that the recruitment of beneficiaries is not haphazard. It is managed by a Vulnerability Criteria jointly created by the committee stated above so as to facilitate orderly and easy identification and recruitment of appropriate beneficiaries. Furthermore, the process is subjected to enormous and, often, repeated scrutiny by specially designated entities so as to ascertain the beneficiaries’ eligibility and vulnerability status. The responsible committee is Child Protection Case Management Committee.

- c. *The extent to which FSP-Malawi has conformed to SOS Norway’s development cooperation strategy for Malawi, national development priorities of Malawi, and priorities and needs of beneficiaries/communities.*

The evaluation has established that this program appropriately conforms to SOS Norway’s development cooperation strategy for Malawi. This is evidenced by how the program promotes innovative child-care approaches; commits to improving children’s lives through sound, mutual, and lasting relationships among donors, co-workers, and communities; and the strive for the achievement of value for money (Interview with SOS Norway Grants Manager; SOS Norway-SOS CVM Partnership Agreement, 2019). Similarly, the program aptly responds to Malawi’s development priorities, particularly those concerned with social protection of vulnerable groups. This is evident across the majority of this current program’s activities including, for example, community empowerment; economic wellbeing and resilience; education wellbeing of children, good health care, and increased awareness of the rights of children, particularly by the immediate family and the hosting communities. These priorities, which are also a reflection of the program’s deep focus on the priorities of the poor, are embedded in various national policies including, for example, MGDS III, the Child Care, Protection and Justice Act 2010, the National Education Act, the National Youth Policy and the National Plan of Action on GBV in Malawi. The extent to which these priorities have been responded to is shown in Section 4.2. where the Results Framework is presented and discussed.

4.1.1.2. Evaluation Area: Effectiveness

The literal meaning of Effectiveness is “successful in producing a desired or intended result” (Online Oxford Languages Dictionary, 2022). The evaluation, therefore, sought to establish whether the intervention is meeting its objectives or not. From the evaluation results, the broader indication is affirmative. However, specific questions under this evaluation area remain key in establishing the extent to which the program has been effective thus far. It is important to note that this evaluation area was assigned nine questions. However, due to apparent inadequacy and lack of clarity of responses, the question on unexpected results has not been addressed. Again, in a bid to achieve logical flow of the report, responses to four of the nine questions focusing on major challenges; major barriers to 2024; possible revisions; good practices and lessons learnt have been relocated to Section 4.3. named “Emerging Issues.”

d. The extent to which program results, indicators, and targets have been achieved or will likely be achieved

Until this point, the outlook of the program is generally promising. The gains made so far in the majority of program results, indicators and targets have been good with others being quite impressive. This beckons optimism regarding the likelihood that at the close of the program in 2024, some of the results, particularly on Outcome 3 would be totally achieved at least in the current rationale of the design. Similarly, the majority of indicators and targets will also have been achieved by then. Such optimism is largely buoyed by an apparently steady momentum driving the program. While this optimism largely applies to nationally cumulative gains, some individual program locations seem to struggle to meet certain projected targets (see Annex 3). Explanations for such retrogression are provided in Section 4.2. For the larger part, however, the gains made thus far denote progress. Evidence from the Results Framework shows only less than 5 indicators and targets that may not be achieved by 2024 (see section 4.2). Below is a tabulated summary of the indicators that show minimal gains:

Indicator	2024 Target	Gain at 2022
Number of targeted families phased out upon achieved self-reliance	1750	399
Number of toilets constructed or rehabilitated	300	29
Percentage of children and young people who have at least one legal identity document available	90%	29%
Number of child rights networks where SOS CVM promotes the implementation of the UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Childre	8	2
Number of child rights networks tracking the progress of UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children in dialogue with governments	8	2

e. The extent to which families have achieved or will likely achieve self-reliance (and exited the program).

Self-reliance entails reliance on one’s own powers and resources rather than those of others. Outcome I of the program focuses on ensuring that families have attained self-reliance and exited the program. At this stage, it means that the family (a) has access to essential services, (b) its caregiver has attained capacity to care for the children, and (c) has amassed household resources to support the development needs of the children. Accordingly, a number of interventions have been made in support of this indicator. Evidence from the program locations shows that some families have received livestock such as pigs, goats, cattle, chickens;

water pumps to facilitate production of cash crops and food security through irrigation; vocational trainings in, for example, carpentry, masonry, plumbing, welding and metal fabrication, tin smithing, tailoring accompanied by sewing machines, bakery, and owning and managing beauty salons; business management training; child protection trainings; and houses. At least two youths, one a mason in Chadza and another one an electrician in Machinjiri had been withdrawn from work to participate in the consultation process, which, thus, underscores the impact of the vocational trainings, for example. In the words of GVH Chikundula of Mzuzu, “*ntchito za maluso izo zathandiza mabanja kuti adzipeza ndalama tsiku ndi tsiku, komanso kudzera mu business management training, mabanja akukwanitsa kudziyimira pawokha pankhani yazachuma. Komanso tikuwona anthu akupeza chakudya, ma school fees, zonsezi zikuwonetsa kuti anthu akudziyimira pawokha*” (Following vocational trainings, families do have daily cash. Similarly, business management trainings have facilitated the families’ financial wellbeing and food nutrition, provision of school fees-children are educated and stand on their own).

The foregoing, thus, promotes a positive impression regarding the achievement of self-reliance among families. Yet, a number of issues emerged, which not only threaten the attainment of self-reliance among many families, but also underline the reason behind the slow approach to the 2024 target. For example, other beneficiaries claimed that they had not received enough trainings in various trades mainly due to a generally short window of training. This, thus, lessens the impact of the knowledge gained. In the same vein, the elevated competitiveness of markets entails the need for production of quality materials. This was lamented by caregivers with disability in Mzuzu who pointed to substandard cloth work as having less competitive value at the markets. This, thus, underlines the need for more sufficient time in training so as to enhance the acquisition of more experience and skills. Currently, however, out of the targeted 1750 families in 2024, only 399 have been recorded to have attained self-reliance and exited the program. This is a strong indication that many families will not attain self-reliance by 2024. However, this can be attributed to an interplay of a number of factors. First, the scourge of Covid-19 delayed the inception of the program, which entailed fewer families getting enrolled. Again, the attainment of the target has been under a mechanistic approach, which requires every family to undergo in order to register change. Yet, change cannot be attained unilaterally and prescriptively. This, in other words, is to say that change requires the integration of different capacities including progressive knowledge, which the majority of beneficiaries lack. In this vein, it was not surprising to record experiences by some beneficiaries who indicated a relapse into vulnerability after “attaining” self-reliance. However, those that attained self-reliance exuded good care for their families, showed some household property such as utensils, farm implements, a house itself, hospital records (verbal and books), and knowledge of where to get some essential services.

f. The extent to which the program has facilitated the improvement of quality of care and parenting skills for families

The evaluation has revealed important improvements with regards to quality of care and parental skills for families. Unlike in the past when instances of parental neglect seemed prevalent, the program has cultivated and imparted significant awareness of appropriate and desirable parenting on caregivers. One significant finding in this regard includes the increasing bonding between caregivers and those under their care. Both children and caregivers commend a changed approach to parenting. For instance, the children, particularly those that are older and, thus, able to hold an opinion appreciated the apparently increased attention that their caregivers seem to possess “*masiku ano*” (now) (Child participant, Chadza-LL). “*Amandiizuza ndidzidzuka mwachangu kuti ndisachedwe kusukulu. Ndidzisamba bwinobwino*” (she

encourages me to wake up early to avoid being late for classes)- (Child participant, Kunthembe-BT). But again, “*ndimapeza andisungira chakudya pochoka ku sukulu, komanso pano samandigwiritsa ntchito zambiri zapakhomo ngati kale*” (I find food on my return from school, and I no longer do unbearably much house chores)- (Child participant, Choma-Mzuzu). These sentiments are, thus, indicative of the impact of the program on effecting changes on parenting. As outcomes 1 and 2 show in Section 4.2. that many improvements on the children’s lives both at home and at school have been recorded with effective parenting being one of the contributing factors.

g. Examining if, how, and why the strategies contribute to the achievement of expected program results

There are twelve (12) strategies designed for this program. They include (i) improving housing and toilets for families; (ii) mainstreaming gender and disability; (iii) improving young people’s access to SRHR; (iv) CBOs providing support to families; (v) helping families to be able to generate income; (vi) imparting skills on young people so as to enhance their employability; (vii) enhancing protection of girls, boys and women from domestic violence and sexual harassment; (viii) facilitating legal registration of children; (ix) improving parenting skills of caregivers; (x) increasing school enrolment, performance, and retention among the children and the youth; (xi) improving safety and protection of learners in school; and (xii) advancing advocacy with target group participation. The evaluation has found that the strategies have

Broader Strategies

- *Communal or joint recruitment of beneficiaries.*
- *Non-prescriptive approach to beneficiary interventions.*
- *Collaboration with other stakeholders.*

been key in contributing to the achievement of expected results. The extent to which they have done so is shown in Section 4.2. where the Results Framework is discussed. Under this question, however, three broad strategies have been identified as being significantly critical in contributing to the achievement of the majority of the expected program results. First, *the communal or joint approach to beneficiary recruitment* ensures that right beneficiaries are recruited. This, thus, eliminates feelings of biasness and discrimination among community members and, consequently, encourages community support and ownership of the

interventions. Additionally, it also ensures the channeling of support to appropriate categories of vulnerable people. Second, by allowing the beneficiaries to choose their preferred form of intervention through the FDP, it encourages ownership of the intervention, and possibly, its sustainability. Therefore, the non-generic presentation of an intervention has been a commendable strategy. Third, collaboration with other stakeholders has been vital in promoting the achievement of most results. For example, the SRHR outcome is mostly, if not wholly, implemented by partners including, for example, Luke International, NAPHAM and PSI due to SOS CVM’s lack of capacity in that area. The same applies to SOS CVM’s engagement of professional institutions such as TEVETA and SMEDI, which, respectively, support vocational and entrepreneurship skills to the beneficiaries.

4.1.1.3. Evaluation Area: Efficiency

Efficiency focuses on how well the program has been using the resources. In other words, this implies the extent to which the intervention delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way. The following questions were addressed.

- h. The extent to which the program has been efficient, specifically with regards to the delivery of outputs and activities in terms of quality, quantity, timelines, cost efficiency.*

The first consideration has to be the realization that the program began implementing its activities in a difficult time. The Covid-19 pandemic posed significant challenges to implementation. The pandemic did not just cause a delay but also affected various activities that were being implemented at the time. In Ngabu, for example, young people under vocational trainings had to be sent back home because of the pandemic. In addition to the pandemic, prevailing economic challenges boldly characterized by increasing inflation rates present stumbling blocks to the realization of efficiency.

Quantity

Regardless of the foregoing context, the quantity of the outputs and activities has been generally progressive. In other words, many planned activities and outputs are being fulfilled impressively. In particular, each of the 12 outputs is being implemented thereby helping to realize considerable gains. Similarly, the evaluation has revealed that all the 15 planned activities are being implemented with the majority of them making good progress. The Results Framework (Annex 3) validates this observation. This can be attributed to a number of factors including, for example, commitment of the communities themselves, their being receptive to the interventions, the availability of supportive SOS CVM and CBO staff, and good collaboration/partnerships forged with other likeminded organizations including, for example, PSI, Luke International, NAPHAM, Plan Malawi, Save the Children, World Vision, Act together for a Better Long-Term Education (ABLE), TEVETA, SMEDI, MACOHA, the ABC Family, and the Light House.

Quality

With regards to quality, the evaluation makes a mixed revelation. While quality has generally been dominant across the program's outputs and activities, the evaluation results have somewhat been a mixed. For instance, the engagement of and/or collaboration with professional partners in SRHR (e.g., PSI and Health Centres), education (DEMs, PEAs, Heads), vocational and entrepreneurship skills (TEVETA and SMEDI), has ensured the imparting of appropriate knowledge on the beneficiaries. This may enhance sustainability due to the pertinence, originality and credibility of the knowledge gained. On the other hand, however, the evident desire to rapidly realize higher targets with unclear regard for sustainability compromises the quality of certain outcomes and activities. Therefore, there appears to be less regard for quality with increasing attention being on quantity.

Timelines

The Covid-19 pandemic constituted the biggest disruption to the program's schedule. Again, climate variabilities, particularly floods in Ngabu, entailed halting of the program's activities for some time. However, in the aftermath of these crises, the evaluation has established good progress being made with regards to timelines. Significant quantities gained thus far as shown by the Results Framework (Annex 3) evidence this. It is expected that in the second half of the program, and following this evaluation, the four program locations will efficiently plan to normalize the timelines.

Cost-efficiency

The evaluation has shown that the program has been cost-efficient. This has been mainly due collaboration with partners such as those stated under the Quantity parameter. Thus, the FSP has taken advantage of the likeminded partners implementing similar interventions within the same catchment areas. This has not only helped in facilitating timely implementation of certain

activities but has also helped in freeing up resources at times. For example, not all people with disability identified through the program receive support from SOS CVM. Partners such as MACOHA also play a role. Similarly in Mzuzu, for example, toilet construction in schools has also been undertaken by many other organizations including ABLE, for example. In the same vein, a health Centre and a community radio (Chivomerezi) in Chikwawa, for example, have been pivotal in promoting SRHR on behalf of SOS CVM.

- i. *The program's collaboration with national and district level government officials, traditional leaders, CBO partners, and other development partners.*

Collaboration constitutes an important ingredient for the success of a project. It enables those involved to work together throughout the entire process. Importantly, it allows them to be more productive and more aware of each other's perspectives, needs, and timelines. Through this evaluation, it has been established that collaboration has been critical to the program. This has been apparent in the following ways:

Collaboration with national and district level government officials

National and district level partners and government ministries possess technical capacity, which is critical in providing specialised services to the program. In the same vein, district level government officials are key in operationalizing decentralization, which is important in ensuring services are adequately and appropriately delivered to the local people. To begin with, the District and Social Welfare Office (DSWO) has been the primary local government office, which provides space to SOS CVM's interventions in all the program locations. As such, the office has been central to FSP's interventions in all the locations. It is under this office that other local government entities such as the Area Development Committee (ADC), Police and many others derive their pertinence to participate in program activities. In the same vein, offices of the District Education Manager have also been critical in providing liaison functions to the program. It is under these offices that PEAs and school Heads derive their authority to take part in the program. Importantly, they have generally shown knowledge and involvement through their recognition of various interventions targeting the children beneficiaries.

The evaluation has also revealed activities such as peer education (the Card) are done in accordance to government policy. While the delivery is spearheaded by the program, the content and design originate from the government. Similarly, whenever there is a need to design a policy to guide their administration, the district office is involved in order to ensure that it fits with the Government policies. Importantly, every intervention intended for the communities is registered at the district office, which not only signifies adherence to protocol but, importantly, constructs an important basis for program sustainability through ownership by government.

The program has also collaborated with national government officials in various ways. Notably, SOS CVM officials have lobbied with government officials for increment of social protection. Notably, it has lobbied Parliament on the need to increase funding towards various social protection programs for vulnerable families, children and young people. The program has also supported government to develop Child Care, Protection and Justice Foster care regulations as a way of domesticating the UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children. In this way, the program acquires its visibility, sustainability and national relevance.

CBO partners

Community based partners, as representatives of communities in which they subsist, are important in driving and delivering their own development. Given that these entities were

created by the locals themselves, there is likelihood that they could subsist beyond the lifetime of the program. The evaluation has shown that the program's collaboration with CBO partners is enormous. In the first place, CBOs constitute the program's primary focal point. It is the CBO that coordinates the program's activities by serving as a link between SOS CVM and the community. This has been enabled through various forms of support including capacity building trainings which SOS CVM has endowed them with to facilitate the implementation of activities. In addition to serving on the front line on behalf of SOS CVM, some CBOs have developed capacities that they implement some activities from their own resources. In Blantyre's Machinjiri area, for example, Chikondi Cholinga CBO has managed to send children to school, thereby helping in increasing the number of school-going children. Such an intervention by the CBO helps in enhancing quality life to children, thereby contributing significantly to FSP's goals.

Traditional/local leaders

Traditional/local authorities have also been pivotal to FSP's progress. In the first place, all traditional leaders present during consultation expressed deep knowledge of the program. Further to this, evidence exists regarding continuous engagements, consultations, and updates with regards to FSP's progress. The majority of them have social norms, which help in protecting children and have provisions for disciplining perpetrators of child abuse and other forms of gender-based violence. These have been realized through their involvement in the FSP. Such interventions, thus, help in ensuring that the goals of FSP like protecting children and access to SRHR are achieved. In Mzuzu, Group Village Head (GVH) Chikundula stated that *"amatiyitana ku misonkhano yawo, ma phunziro, kuzionetsero, amadzatiyendera kuti awone kuti program ikuyenda bwanji, komanso anatipatsa njinga"* (We attend their meetings, trainings, open days, they visit us for programme follow up, they provided us bicycles). In Ngabu, similar sentiments were heard: *"timagwiran nawo bwino ntchito a SOS makamaka azilangiziwa...timawatenga ngati ana athu, timayesetsa kuti asamazingwe, timawalangiza kuti akuyendera kusamala ndi kulemekeza chikhalidwe chamdera mwathu, komanso pasakhale ziphuphu zilizonse"* (We work hand in hand, especially the field officers..., we regard them as our children, we create a good environment for them, we advise them to respect the community ...and we make sure there should not be any corruption).

"SOS [Malawi] yathandiza kwambiri kudera kwathu kuno. Timayamika ndipo timayesetsa kuthandizananawo mundondomeko zosiyanasiyana"

(We are thankful to SOS CVM's commendably positive interventions in our area. We endeavor to cooperate with them for more better results.)
Senior GVH, Ngabu

Other development partners

As stated elsewhere, a significant contribution to FSP's progress is owed to extensive collaboration with other development partners. These have included, for example, PSI, NAPHAM, Luke International, African Bag, Plan Malawi, Save the Children, World Vision, Act together for a Better Long-Term Education (ABLE), TEVETA, SMEDI, MACOHA, the ABC Family, and the Light House. Indeed, they have been key in providing necessary expertise to many interventions, which SOS CVM could not have effectively delivered on its own. The most notable and desirable outcome of the evaluation, which needs to be sustained, is SOS CVM's realization and acknowledgement of the working relationship with these development

"SOS communicates to SMEDI on time when there is need for a training. As well as they give adequate information to allow SMEDI to prepare well for the trainings. There is also coordination on supervision of progress of a training and on completion, the two parties are able to do it together and have a conclusive report."
SMEDI official, Lilongwe

partners, especially with regards to their critically complementary roles. Interestingly, all the consulted representatives of various entities expressed satisfaction with the manner in which SOS CVM manages their collaboration especially when it comes to teamwork and responsiveness to critical demands.

4.1.1.4. Evaluation Area: Inclusion

In seeking to establish inclusion, the evaluation focused on gender and disability mainstreaming and also sought to appreciate the extent to which the budget has been invested in support for the gender and disability causes. The evaluation has established considerable satisfaction among the program's stakeholders with regards to how the FSP has managed inclusion. Thus, the program has endeavored to reach out to everyone (within gender and disability aspects) with no evident discrimination.

j. *The extent to which the program mainstreamed gender and disability in its interventions*

The evaluation has established that gender and disability mainstreaming has been adequately considered in the program. Indeed *“palibe kusalana tsopano. Aliyense akuwone kufunika. A SOS amapereka thandizo posayang'anira chibadidwe chamunthu ndipo anthu a ulumali amapatsidwa zinthu monga njinga kuti zidziwathandiza mayendedwe. Amayi ndi abambo onse amaphunzitsidwa ntchito zofanana monga zowotcherera angakhalenso zosoka”* (There is no discrimination, everyone is regarded as important. SOS CVM provides support equally regardless of a person's physical state and people with disabilities received wheelchairs. Both men and women went through the vocational trainings such as tailoring, welding (CBO Member, FDG-Machinjiri). With regards to disability issues, a traditional leader in Mzuzu observed that *“Isanabwere SOS ndinkhani zauneneri, anthu a maulumali osiyanasiyana anali kusolidwa, kutchulidwa mayina monga wopunduka mmalo mwa aulumali, ndipo anali kunyogodoledwa kuti palibe angachite chaphindu mu moyo. Ana a ulumali sanali kupita u sukulu chifukwa asambizi bakatondekanga kuwachita handle, zimene zimapangitsa makolo kuti asatumize ana awo kusukulu”* (Before SOS CVM's arrival with advocacy, people with disability were discriminated, called derogatory names such as wopunduka instead of aulumali and dismissed their capabilities, which is now history. Children with disability were not going school because teachers were not able to handle them hence parents were reluctant which is not the case now).

Indeed, a number of ways are indicative of how the program has mainstreamed gender and disability. First, the program's choice of a primary caregiver has not been predisposed towards a particular gender. Through the initial steps undertaken in beneficiary identification and recruitment, a rightful caregiver is identified and bestowed with responsibilities. In this spirit, the program has incorporated a male component, whereby male caregivers are recognized and supported for quality care of their families. This presents a sharp departure from a prejudiced assumption that made caregiving the preserve of women. The program, thus, challenges tradition by recognizing and supporting capability and not the norm. In the same vein, trainings for economic empowerment are provided to any family members identified as primary caregivers regardless of gender. Indeed, *“both men and women receive vocational skills such as welding, tailoring, bricklaying, tin smithing, salon, bakery, carpentry and business management”* (In-depth interview with DSWO, Lilongwe). This is significant because tailoring, bricklaying, carpentry, and welding, for example, have always been regarded as men's work. Again, much as girls appear to be mostly targeted in the SRHR outcome, boys are also empowered by being given important knowledge for healthy reproductive lives. This is important since, as it takes two people to tango, SRHR gains accrued by girls only would be meaningless if the boys are shunned in the process. With regards to disability, the program has made significant strides in ensuring that both children and caregivers are supported in the

program. In addition to being supported with mobility and vision aids, for example, there is also evidence regarding structural alterations to buildings, which have included, for example, the designing of disability friendly entrances with slopes instead of steps and disability friendly toilets with a seat and handles. Further indications of gender and disability mainstreaming have included, for example, the opening of CBO's executive and non-executive positions to all people regardless of gender and disability. The foregoing context aside, a critical observation has been made regarding an evident proclivity by officers to stall their focus on targeted interventions. Going forward, therefore, there is need for constant intra-organisational reminders regarding the prevalence of gender across the entire program's logic. This would help in diffusing unilateral concentration on gender targeted activities so as to meaningfully enhance gender mainstreaming.

k. The extent to which the program budget has been invested in gender and disability interventions

One of the critical outputs of this program includes gender and disability mainstreaming. To ensure this is met, the evaluation sought to establish the extent to which the budget responded to this intervention. Following the evaluation, it has been noted that gender and disability mainstreaming have been prevalent across all the four outcomes. This implies almost every aspect of the program had to in one way or the other, and whether consciously or unconsciously, streamline gender and disability. In this way, it can be said that gender and disability interventions have been covered at every level of the program. However, targeted interventions that have shown clear investments of budget in gender, for example, include gender awareness training, skills development, gender mainstreaming and economic empowerment of primary caregivers among others. With regards to disability, the evaluation has noted that the budget has been invested in a number of ways including in supporting mobility where walking aids such as crutches and wheel chairs have been provided to beneficiaries. Further to this, children with vision problems have also been provided with contact lenses. The structural designs of certain amenities such as toilets and access routes, for example, have also reflected considerable regard for disability mainstreaming. However, what has lacked pronouncement is the inclusion of people with albinism the majority of who are visually impaired and seem prone to skin diseases such cancer. In subsequent planning, this also ought to be considered as an important area of concern.

4.1.1.5. Evaluation Area: Sustainability

Will the benefits last? This constitutes the main concern with regards to a program's sustainability. The criticality of this evaluation area is elevated when one considers whether the gains made thus far are only being propped up by the ongoing program's support or that they would continue to subsist beyond the program's lifetime. To establish the sustainability of the interventions, four questions of concern have been addressed.

l. The extent to which the benefits of the program are likely to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn.

The evaluation has shown the program's terrain with mixed results. This implies that some benefits would be sustainable while others may or will not be sustainable at all. For instance, there is no guarantee that 399 families that have attained self-reliance may not relapse into vulnerability. This is mainly owed to the mechanistic approach which is employed when exiting a family. During the evaluation, caregivers in Chikwawa, for example, mentioned at some point that they were offered an IGA just to facilitate their exit. Again, without persistent monitoring past the exit stage, families may become less motivated and, eventually, lose the gains. With regards to Outcome 3, for example, the impact of SRHR knowledge acquired by the youth

through largely 'haphazard' (not planned) approaches cannot be ascertained. While the messages may reverberate across a significant constituency of the youth, the absence of mechanisms for follow ups challenges the sustainability of the knowledge gained.

On the other hand, however, capacities gained by the CBOs will likely be sustained as they keep on working with the people. This is helped by the fact that although lacking relevant capacities at the time, the CBOs already existed before FSPs interventions. The program has, thus, been beneficial to them mainly for unlocking their potential to meaningfully serve the communities they represent. In the same vein, benefits such as good health and sanitary habits, nutritious diets, parenting skills and entrepreneurship skills will likely continue to subsist even beyond the program. Furthermore, the trainings that have been done so far have ensured that caregivers have gained skills, which they can utilize for income generation in their families. Accordingly, the knowledge acquired has helped them to think out of the box and engage in business. In the same vein, lessons to caregivers on how to care for children have changed their mindset, which raises the optimism that they will continue to provide good care for their children in many years to come. With persistent monitoring and supervision in the second half of the program, material benefits such as houses, irrigation pumps, and livestock may also be bound to last. Similarly, the sustainability of most gains in activities under outcome 2 require intensified monitoring and commitment both by SOS CVM and its implementing partners.

m. The extent to which the capacity of partner CBOs has been built/strengthened to independently manage and implement activities and to prepare for sustainability at project closing?

The evaluation has established that the CBOs involved in the implementation of this current program underwent capacity assessment exercises with an aim of identifying capacity cavities needing appropriate refills. For instance, lack of knowledge in financial management; proposal development; child rights, protection and development; absence of IGAs and offices included some of the many capacities that the majority of the CBOs lacked. Following the evaluation, the general outlook is dichotomous. First, some CBOs are relatively new in their partnership with SOS CVM, with others showing lack of these capacities as late as May 2021. For instance, the CBOs in Mzuzu's Choma and Blantyre's Kunthembwe areas require SOS CVM's concerted and rapid investment in their capacitation in the remaining program period. Unlike older CBOs in Mzuzu city, Blantyre's Machinjiri and Lilongwe's Chadza areas, various forms of capacities they have acquired should help them implement the activities beyond the program's closure in 2024. For example, Bright Vision CBO in Chadza has been able to acquire donor funding through a proposal it had developed by itself (In-depth interview, SOS CVM FSP National Coordinator). Similarly, in Blantyre's Machinjiri area, Chikondi Cholinga has been able to send children to school on its own account (CBO member, FDG Machinjiri). Additionally, some of these older CBOs maintain a properly constructed office, which, in addition to motivating the members and sanitizing office work, also promotes prominence and legitimacy of the CBOs within the communities. With regards to capacity trainings, however, the majority of the CBOs have professed that they have acquired significant benefits, which should last beyond 2024 when the program closes. For instance, trainings in child rights, protection and development; proposal development; financial management; risk and disaster management among others, constitute valuable skills that will last beyond the lifetime of the program. The capacities of CBOs were acknowledged by Mzuzu DSWO who stated that "CBOs verify sites before a house is built just as they verify the beneficially if is really eligible for this program. They educate parents on how to take good care of their children... [And they act as a]

bridge between families and SOS [CVM] of which they work well in achieving the goal of the programme.”

n. *The extent to which CBO partners and government duty bearers have driven program interventions*

The evaluation has established that both CBO partners and government, mainly through the office of the DSWO, have been central to FSP's impact. Thus far, the central government has been remotely present, with a notably direct engagement being SOS CVM's assistance in the development of Child Care, Protection and Justice Foster care regulations as a way of domesticating the UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children. The offices of the DSWO have also been pivotal in leading FSP's implementation. To a large extent, the majority of trainings are provided by this office. They also serve as an important link among various partners complementing the program. With regards to the CBOs, however, they have been the main link between SOS CVM and the beneficiaries within the communities they represent. In fact, they constitute the point of contact and reference for any FSP related matters. Their visibility alone has been an important manifestation of FSP within the communities. Some of the many activities done by the CBOs include ensuring that children are in school, ensuring that peer educators write and present reports, verifying the eligibility of beneficiaries, and educating parents on best parenting skills. In a nutshell, CBOs provide all the groundwork in their respective communities. It is, therefore, evident that the CBOs and government duty bearers have been key in leading the program, which is important for sustainability at the end of the program.

“CBOs are in the lead when it comes to project implementation on the ground. The CBO has become a bridge between the community and SOS. There has been great improvement in most areas due to the work the CBOs do with help from SOS. Each and every intervention is done through the CBO.”

DSWO, Mzuzu

o. *The extent to which the program has contributed to increasing government accountability and resources vis-à-vis UN guidelines of Alternative Care of Children*

Following the evaluation, it has been established that the program has, through the Tracking Progress (TPI), supported government to develop Child Care, Protection and Justice Foster care regulations as a way of domesticating the UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children. This entails that all institutions providing alternative care will have to follow the guidelines. Although these have not been adopted yet, revelations have been made that SOS CVM constantly engages government to ensure that the guidelines have passed and are in operation. In promoting social protection, FSP has also equipped government officers with requisite knowledge regarding specific needs or priorities of the program participants and has also helped government to trickle-down responsibilities and resources to various extension workers. In the same vein, FSP has earmarked the issue of bursaries and it has embarked on extensive lobbying, particularly with local government entities to ensure that more vulnerable children access secondary education.

p. *Existence of exit plans for a proper handover to CBO or government after the program ends*

An exit strategy or plan includes a planned approach in which the implementing organization, responsible local government bodies and the community or target group plan for the handing over of the project management after completion. This should be jointly planned and agreed upon to clarify how the project will end or transform (e.g., once goals have been achieved, or at the end of the project or funding cycle), how the implementing organization will withdraw

and who will take over to sustain project outcomes and how. Considering the significance of the exit plan, especially its ability to increase responsibility and ownership, it is important that the program makes the plan more elaborate and acceptable among the communities. To ensure an efficient exit plan, some of the desirable steps include identification of a handover partner, choice of a management option, support to the community to select and register a committee, and holding of a meeting with the community to present the project, plan and agree on exit plan. Accordingly, the evaluation has shown that the program has an exit plan that satisfied desirable practices such as those listed above in its development. Evidence from the evaluation as provided by FSP coordinator (Mzuzu), field officers (Blantyre and Ngabu) and corroborated by CBO leaderships (Lilongwe, Blantyre, Mzuzu) indicates that the available exit plan was documented upon agreement by all relevant stakeholders. These include representatives of different entities such as Community Case Management Committee, Area Executive Committees, Area Development Committees, Child Protection Committees, Victim Support Unit, CBOs, government agencies, Civil Society Organizations. The representation is also drawn from constituencies of youths, religious leaders, and caregivers.

q. Effectiveness of exit plans for families and communities

A family is expected to be in the program within a maximum of 5 years. However, it can be exited earlier (after 2 or 3 years) depending on the improvement of its level of vulnerability. The evaluation has found that the program has put in place exit plans for families. It is a 6-step strategy, namely:

1. Core assessment review by field officer
2. Referral of selected families for exit to the Case Management Committee (previously known as Community Task Force) by CBO
3. A completed exit form by field officer part of documents referred to Case Management Committee
4. Case Management Committee approves or disapproves the family exit
5. Approved exit forms sent to National Office for final approval by the FSP manager
6. Effecting exits in the PDB after FS manager signing.

In its own right and with proper implementation of the intervention, the plan lays down appropriately feasible steps for a family's exit from the program after the attainment of self-reliance. Moreover, its development is participatory. The Chairperson signs the printed copy of this criteria and then it is read out to all caregivers during admission day. Caregivers are also reminded about this exit strategy during formulation of the family's development plan (FDP). A family and the field officer design together a plan for the family's road map to self-reliance. This is where a plan for exit from the program is clearly stipulated. At this point of the program, however, the evaluation has found that the plan appears inflexible, which promotes a family's mechanistic exit from the program. Thus, the plan appears not accommodative to other avenues for self-reliance. In other words, the plan is orthodox and appears not permitting to emerging issues or changes. For instance, evidence from the evaluation has shown that some families have been rushed into exiting the program in the absence of own certainty regarding the attainment of self-reliance. In Ngabu, for example, it was learnt that some families were literally asked to choose between a machine or livestock just to facilitate their exit. At times, it also appears that the beneficiaries possess limited knowledge about the exit plans. In Mzuzu, for example, some caregivers expressed ignorance of the steps taken when unrolling beneficiaries, most of whom said exited before they had attained self-reliance.

The evaluation has also established that community exit plans also exist. This involves CBO capacity assessments followed by capacity development plans, which the CBOs developed following their partnership with SOS CVM. All the CBOs consulted acknowledged to have gone through this process at the beginning of their partnership with SOS CVM. In particular, capacity development plans seek to ensure that the CBOs attain the desired capacities to continue with the interventions targeting vulnerable children and their families when SOS CVM exits the communities. These constitute an effective weapon as they take aim of CBO empowerment rather than the propensity to parasitic relationship characterized by donor dependence culture.

4.1.2. Program implementation

4.1.2.1. Evaluation Area: Validity of design

Validity entails the quality of being logically or factually sound. This section, therefore, focuses on the validity of FSP design by responding to five attendant questions.

- r. Are the program objectives, outcomes, indicators and targets clear, practical and feasible within the remaining program timeframe?*

The evaluation confirms that the program has sound, clear and feasible objectives, outcomes, indicators given the rapid gains made thus far. The Results Framework shows that the majority of them have already exceeded half of the 2024 targets thereby creating and sustaining optimism regarding their feasibility. But as stated elsewhere, the feasibility of one specific indicator on self-reliance by families cannot be ascertained because of the slow pace to the target. In this regard, a downward revision of the target for this indicator could accord a realistic meaning to the program design.

- s. Is the FSP-Malawi program design valid and appropriate? Are the program activities complementary and integrated?*

Following the evaluation, it has been established that the FSP-Malawi program design is valid, appropriate and that the programs are complementary and integrated. The program's ToC is elaborate with a clearly progressive logic to the attainment of the desired impact. In particular, the outcomes and outputs are appropriately supported by the risk factors identified. During the evaluation, evidence prevailed regarding how CBOs, for example, are able to easily follow and implement the program. In the same vein, the apparent harmony of many stakeholders including collaborating partners is an indication of the complementary and integrated nature of the program activities. Further to this, the program design is valid and appropriate because it does not prescribe activities, such acquisition of skills to beneficiaries. In other words, the program does not offer a specific skill to beneficiaries but instead allows them to make their own choice, which is important for attaining ownership and sustainability. Moreover, the program's design seeks to create empowerment and resilience amongst communities, which is the most desirable approach rather than direct engagement with the communities.

- t. Does the program design have exit and sustainable plans in place?*

The current program has well-elaborate exits and sustainable plans premised on financial and economic, institutional, policy level, and environmental sustainability. With regards to financial and economic sustainability, the program has an element of capacity building for SOS CVM and grass-root organizations in proposal development and fundraising. SOS commits to source funds from other institutional partners, local fundraising campaigns, and income generating activities. The program further promotes family and community economic empowerment interventions such as vocational skills and entrepreneurship. The program also promotes VSLs

and financial cooperatives. On Institutional sustainability, the program formalizes partnerships with grass-roots organizations, supporting them with capacity building in good governance, accountability and programming. Further capacities are also built through sub-granting to them to enhance their programming, administrative and financial capabilities in handling resources from donors and other stakeholders. The operations of community volunteers are also reviewed on a regular basis to avoid eroding volunteerism and to still encourage it. As for policy level sustainability, the program endeavours to align itself to existing legislation and regulatory environment to ensure relevance and legitimacy. With regards to environmental sustainability, the program is built on the assumption that the vocational skills development program will contribute to resilience building amongst targeted families by getting income from other sources other than farming. This is because in Malawi, as the overreliance on agriculture gets affected by drought and floods, which, thus, impacts negatively on people's livelihoods. Furthermore, the program promotes capacity building of area and village civil protection committees on disaster preparedness and response. Families are also sensitized on the need to build strong houses with improved resistance to floods. The programme also supports environmentally friendly construction projects, like making use of cement blocks as opposed to wood cured bricks.

u. The extent to which relevant gender issues were integrated in the program design.

The program promotes gender issues by instituting an obligation among the cooperating and implementing partners to promote gender mainstreaming by ensuring that gender equality objectives and results are incorporated into all program monitoring and implementation. This also applies to the promotion of gender equality within the employment as well as during the implementation of activities while guarding against practices such as sexual harassment or abuse. These also trickle down to beneficiaries who are at every stage of implementation reminded or made aware of the essentiality of gender issues.

v. Does the design need to be modified for the remaining period of implementation?

The current program design does not have glaring weakness. The activities are being implemented well, which, thus, indicates its appropriateness. As such, the program can subsist in its current design.

4.1.2.2. Evaluation Area: Management and coordination

A properly managed and coordinated project promotes a good quality output and a more productive workflow. This evaluation area, therefore, sought to establish how the program has been managed and coordinated, thus far.

w. How has the role of the program management ensured quality implementation and budget utilization?

SOS CVM uses the program document and the existing Results Framework to guide the implementation of the program. This, thus, ensures that the activities of the program are performed according to plan and desired quality. Regular reporting and monitoring of the program also constitute important contributors to quality implementation. This is done in accordance with the existing Monitoring and Evaluation Framework while using a baseline study as one of the important reference materials during monitoring and reporting of the program. In the same vein, SOS CVM endeavors to track all spending on project activities in the country and providing proof of all expenditures for the duration of the program. This ensures that the budget is being implemented in accordance to plan with any adjustments communicated in time.

- x. *The extent to which the program did have appropriate management and coordination structures?*

The program makes clear roles and responsibilities of the partners involved i.e. SOS Norway, SOS CVM, and SOS International Office Region. For SOS Norway, it is the link between SOS CVM and Norad, with all administrative responsibilities including distribution of grant reporting to Norad. It also supports the planning, budgeting, implementing, monitoring and reporting of the program. In the same vein, it is responsible for the provision of funds in a timely manner according to agreed budget. With regards to SOS CVM, it constitutes the proprietor of the program. It is responsible for a number of activities including, reporting and monitoring of the program activities, ensuring appropriate budget utilization, and ensuring that all activities are carried out in conformity with national laws and regulations. SOS's International Office Region responsibility is to serve as a General Secretariat, thereby supporting the partners with shared services in the area of accounting, controlling, governance and capacity development. Appropriate management and coordination structures are also visible on the ground mainly characterised by harmony and complementarity between SOS CVM's national office and the Program Locations.

- y. *The extent to which the program is supported by*

Appropriate monitoring and evaluation system.

The current program collects data on the indicators in the Results Framework to measure performance against targets and to provide updates to management and key stakeholders on the progress of the ongoing project interventions. This process is undertaken regularly and field officers and CBO volunteers use the child and family assessment forms to collect beneficiary information. Information collected is documented and stored in the Program Data Base (PDB). The M&E office has also developed separate tools based on Excel sheet to capture other results that occur outside the design and frame of the PDB2. Family Development Plans (FDPs) are also developed and reviewed together with the beneficiaries to track the path to self-reliance. Follow up actions agreed by the children, young people, caregivers, partners and implementing staff as outlined in the FDP are implemented. To ensure the field officers' aptness in carrying out monitoring duties, they are provided with relevant training, at least once a year. However, to encourage commitment among the field officers performing such an 'extra' role, SOS CVM could consider introducing a remuneration notch to their regular wages.

Financial management systems

The desirable approach is for SOS CVM to recruit personnel specifically for this Norad Grant so as to ensure efficient management of the funds. At the moment, however, the Norad funds are being managed through SOS CVM's Finance Office, with finance offices within Program Locations also managing specific funds in-line with their budgetary requirements. SOS CVM is also responsible for tracking all spending on project activities in the country and providing proof of all expenditures for the duration of the program. The evaluation reveals that, so far, this approach is working with financial reports, receipting, and auditing being done regularly.

Communication strategy

The program has an efficient reporting and communication strategy in place. As an implementing partner, SOS CVM regularly provides reports to SOS Norway using reporting procedures in line with the Norad activity calendar. At this point of the program, SOS Norway

exudes satisfaction with regards to timely and efficient provision of annual plans and budgets, financial quarterly reports, and annual progress reports by SOS CVM.

z. The extent to which the program adhered to work plans and budgets?

The evaluation has shown that the program has adhered to work plans and budgets mainly through its development of annual plans and budget in line with the overall project plan and the annual funding frame. It also makes quarterly and annual progress reports to provide status of the progress towards achieving the outcomes. With regards to how the program has adhered to budgets, financial quarterly reports are made to SOS Norway. The same is replicated in Malawi between the national office and program locations.

aa. Other local implementing partners involved in the process of management and coordination of the program and how this affected quality of implementation.

At the local level, CBO partners have been pivotal in management and coordination of the program. In the first place, they constitute the hub of the program's implementation with various forms of intervention from other development partners being coordinated through them. The office of the DSWO, alongside the CBO, is also key in management and coordination of the program. Thus, the CBOs are the drivers of their own development while the local government entity is responsible for ensuring the realization of development initiatives within the decentralization framework. Following the evaluation, there has been a revelation regarding the complementarity among SOS CVM and these two institutions. Importantly, their adherence to the Results Framework enhances the alignment of their involvement and interventions to the program's Theory of Change.

"Timatsatila ndondomeko yoyenera pochita zithu. Anati phunzitsa kuti program iyi ikufuna zinthu ziti, ndiye ife timapanga zomwezo"

(The SOS CVM program team clearly defined the objectives and activities of the program. That is how we operate.)

CBO member, Chadza

4.1.2.3. Evaluation Area: Human resources

bb. The extent to which the program did have adequate human resource?

For a program to succeed, the sufficiency of human resource with relevant skills and competence is imperative. The evaluation has found that the FSP has adequate staff that is knowledgeable about their roles. At the national level where the program is coordinated, for example, staff from various offices such as Programming, FSP, Gender, Communication, Monitoring and Evaluation, and Finance are complemented by staff in the program location including the Program Coordinator, FSP Coordinator, Finance, and Field Officers who work directly with the communities. The evaluation further confirms that the staff is knowledgeable about their roles. This is helped by appropriate segregation of duties. The competence of the staff is further seen by how they are able to perform tasks that are beyond the scope of their actual roles. With regard to the field officers, for instance, in addition to having a CBO under their care, they are also able to manage programs within the outcomes. Thus, each one has been given an extra mandate of ensuring that a specific issue within the outcomes, for example, skills development, SRHR, or entrepreneurship, is adequately coordinated. The generally progressive outlook of the Results Framework confirms the ability of the staff to deliver the outputs. The competence is also enhanced by skills training they receive such as gender, M&E, just to name a few

cc. *How is the relationship between staff and CBO partners (including volunteers)?*

CBO partners and volunteers constitute an integral component of FSP. They provide the agency for SOS CVM's realization of the program's goals. But since both the CBOs and the volunteers are not salaried, they could feel lowly motivated, especially in the presence of the salaried program staff. The presence of these volunteer entities could breed some lack of respect among program staff. Questions may arise regarding their commitments and contributions to scheduled programs such as this FSP. Indeed, the volunteers may be seen as only "passing through" because of their relatively short time involvement, or may be seen as

"A SOS timagwira nawo bwino ntchito kwambiri, palibe vuto lilonse. Amatithandiza muzambiri, makamaka kunkhani za maphunziro."

(We have a good working relationship with SOS CVM. It is very helpful, particularly when it comes to how the organization promotes education).

CBO member, Chadza, Lilongwe

"I would say our relations are good. So far we collaborate well on the ground"

FSP Coordinator, Blantyre

being "marginally" committed because of their limited time schedules thereby fueling a disconnect between the program staff and these volunteer bodies. However, these feeling may not necessarily be the result of an inherent or intentional dislike of the volunteers. They happen because it is difficult to integrate volunteers into the day-to-day social fabric of the organization. But contrary to the foregoing, the evaluation has found that there is cordial relationship between program staff and the CBOs and volunteers. All the CBO partners consulted expressed satisfaction with their engagements with program staff. Their availability, sense of humor, and provision of various forms of useful skills (upangiri) among the CBO partners and volunteers provide evidence regarding the cordiality among them.

dd. *The extent to which the program provided capacity building training to staff, CBO partners, and volunteers*

The provision of capacity building training to staff, CBO partners, and volunteers is important for improving their knowledge, skills, understanding, values, attitude, motivation, and capability necessary to perform well in their assigned roles. In so doing, they develop competencies and skills that can make them more effective and sustainable, thus increasing the potential for the organization to enrich lives and solve the communities' most intractable problems. In line with the foregoing, evidence abounds that the program provided capacity building training to its staff, CBO partner staff, and volunteers. For instance, program staff underwent trainings on gender awareness, how to use the program database (M&E related), community empowerment, youth related issues, emergency responses among others. In addition to some of these, CBOs and volunteers have also received training in financial management, resource mobilization, child and family development, childcare and parenting, and training of trainers. These have, thus, been critical in ensuring that relevant skills and competencies are developed and used in delivering program objectives.

ee. *The extent to which there was a clear division of roles and responsibilities between the program staff and its CBO partners.*

Having a clear division of roles and responsibilities is important for increasing production and making it more efficient. It is one important way of avoiding confusion and resentment later. With regards to FSP's approach, which endeavors to make the interventions locally-driven staff-driven, CBO partners constitute the drivers of the program. As such, it is important to delineate volunteer versus staff roles and responsibilities to ensure effective and efficient

delivery of the program goals. Following the evaluation, it has been established that roles and responsibilities between staff and CBO partners are clearly defined. Precisely, CBO partners are entrusted with leading the implementation of activities while program staff perform monitoring functions in order to ensure appropriateness of implementation and quality. This approach has been deemed pertinent because it empowers the CBOs and gives the feeling of ownership of the interventions. It has also been important for ensuring the sustainability of the interventions beyond the program's life time.

4.2. Progress towards results achievement

This section explains the progress of the project with regards to the planned results. A total of 15 activities and 36 associated indicators were planned and distributed as follows: 5 activities and 12 indicators for outcome 1; 4 activities and 12 indicators for outcome 2; 2 activities and 5 indicators for outcome 3; and 4 activities and 7 indicators for outcome 4. The corresponding narrative to each indicator makes the interpretation of the current progress.

4.2.1. Assessing progress towards achievement of outcome I

Outcome: Families provide quality care and protection for vulnerable children

Indicator	Baseline	Target	Gain	Remarks
# Of targeted families phased out upon achieved self-reliance	0	1769	399	<p>To be self-reliant, a family must have access to essential services, capacity in caregiving responsibilities, and household/family resources. But as the gain indicates, there are huge miles to cover to attain the target. Indeed, the project target for 2022 is 750 families, which implies that 351 families have actually failed to attain the self-reliance status at this point of the project. It further means that 1351 families will have to be aggressively supported if the desired target at 2024 is to be met.</p> <p>Despite this sluggish progress, this indicator can be rated as moderately satisfactory mainly because attaining self-reliance implies significant changes on a person's or family's life. It, thus, requires a generally conducive environment if any positive effects are to be realized. However, the Covid-19 pandemic, which peaked in the initial stages of the program, disrupted the effecting of many interventions. Consequently, the disturbance to the time frame entailed fewer families were enrolled and supported. Moreover, the attainment of self-reliance cannot be rapidly affected as it requires ample time and sufficient resources for change to meaningfully occur.</p> <p>Going forward, it would be reasonable if the 2024 target is revised downward to circa 600, which may not even represent half of the target but may be feasible to get to. This will help to ensure that a realistic number of beneficiaries is adequately supported and that their attainment of self-reliance would be sustainable.</p>
# of targeted families who are less vulnerable (compared to baseline /	0	2000	1015	<p>At 1015, the indicator is right on target. The evaluation has uncovered that the program has, in the first half, intensified provision of various forms of capacities to beneficiary families. Knowledge on rights to a healthy reproductive life, improved skills in parenting, attainment of skills in technical and entrepreneurship activities, and better living conditions (housing) have been important in ensuring that families become less vulnerable.</p>

programme entry level)				
# of families with income to meet basic needs for their children and young people	525	1600	824	While some families are given material support and skill sets as a ladder to income acquisition, the program has also helped the majority of families to become more aware of the need to be proactive in fending for children under their care. This has, thus, driven the families to engage in various income generation ventures for economic sustenance. To some extent, this has been helped by the fact that some families under CBOs in Mzuzu City and Blantyre's Machinjiri have larger populations in their vicinity, which entails more economic opportunities in terms of business and market choices. The cities also provide opportunities for various forms of informal labour including piece works, which most families in the project engage in.
# of families with at least fairly adequate house not hazardous to human health.	1700	2000	1458	A number of families have benefited from SOS CVM's intervention that focuses on providing shelter to families that provide care to children. Again, some families are able or have become able to improve their own housing conditions. This can be attributed to the program's insistence on ensuring safe living spaces for children, which has driven the families to develop a sense of responsibility and become more aware of the need to improve their living conditions. Yet, such a positive outlook is somehow compromised by losses that had been incurred through harsh climatic conditions, which affected the physical wellbeing of the house, particularly in Ngabu, Blantyre, and Mzuzu.
# of children with at least 2 nutritious meals per day	2765	6443	5087	This considerable progress is largely owed to intensive peer education at household level, which has created enormous awareness among parents to support children's dietary needs. The CBOs indicated that families are encouraged to locate nutritious food within their own surrounding rather than beyond their means. Consequently, most families now understand that the acquisition of nutritious food does not necessarily entail the development of heavy budgets to cover for items such as meat or fresh fish as is traditionally regarded by the Malawian society. This realization has inspired most families to now invest in home or backyard gardens, which has been helpful in either providing or supplementing nutritious dietary requirements.

# of children with access to improved toilets	1680	5600	4189	The numbers attained thus far look impressive. Certainly, the indicator is on track. This is owed to SOS CVM's intervention in facilitating the construction of toilets by means of providing slabbing to cover the pit and also the families' own realization through peer education and other family empowerment trainings to ensure improved toilet facilities in their homes. Harsh climate conditions (floods), particularly in Ngabu have resulted into significant reduction in the number of improved toilets.
# of children who are included or at least consulted in decision-making affecting their own lives	3270	7198	4476	The program has been able to show this feat mainly due to improved knowledge and practices among not only caregivers but also the community as a whole. The increasing awareness of the need to respect and safeguard children's rights has helped in breaking cultural or traditional norms that have always blinded communities to overlook the children.
# of families who are affected by domestic violence (incl. against children)	850	500	8	In comparison to the baseline indication of 850 families, the attainment of 8 at this point constitutes a significant feat. This is mainly attributed to the program's creation of increased awareness of GBV issues among the communities. Moreover, the program ensures that strong networks concerned with managing GBV issues exists in communities across the four program areas. In particular, Child Protection Committees, the office of the DSWO, Police's Victim Support Unit, public health centres, and traditional/local leaderships constitute a network that coalesces efforts to ensure that GBV issues are widely and correctly known, perpetrators reprimanded and punished, and victims appropriately and adequately supported.
# of families receiving support from community-based partners	275	1500	1846	CBOs constitute the principal link between SOS CVM and the communities. As such FSP has invested in capacitating CBOs so as to enhance their effectiveness and visibility. Evidence from traditional/local leaders, caregivers, and the youth indicate that the CBOs are active and regularly interact with families on issues under this program. Therefore, the CBOs in general, their leadership, peer educators, and volunteers have been pivotal in reaching out to the families in providing education and guidance.
# of SOS supported community-based	13	21	20	The evaluation confirmed this steady progress by inquiring and verifying how they undergo planning, management, and development of programs. Documents (books) were made available and planned activities were seen. During the evaluation, evidence prevailed that the CBOs are

partners able to plan, manage and develop program implementation				already implementing a number of programs including some which have been indicated in the immediately preceding indicator. Thus, FSP has been able through capacity trainings to impart requisite knowledge on the CBOs with regards to planning, managing, and developing program implementation.
# of children and young people with disabilities receiving assistance	455	490	647	The gains for this indicator have exceeded the target by far. This implies that the program has satisfied its commitment to supporting the beneficiary children with disability. Moreover, by supporting any school going children regardless of whether they are enrolled in the program or not the program has had impact onto a large section of children and young people with disability. Contact lenses, wheel chairs, clutches, and structural designs and/or alterations to toilets and passages to elevated points constitute some forms of the support/assistance rendered to them.
# of caregivers with disabilities receiving assistance	221	290	308	For this indicator, the achievements have also exceeded the target. Through partnerships with likeminded organizations including, for example MACOHA, the program has been able to reach to many caregivers with disability. The caregivers have benefitted from items such as crutches and wheelchairs. Structural designs and/or alterations to toilets and passages to elevated points also constitute some forms of the support rendered to them. They have also benefited from trainings in different fields including, for example, production of door mats. While this has generally been commendable, the beneficiaries have lamented that the products have often lacked quality, which, thus, decreases their value at the markets. It is, therefore, important that deliberate efforts be employed in doormat making skills so as to enhance their market value.
Generally contributory factors to the achievements				<p>A number of factors can be recognized to have contributed to the achievements. The evaluation picked the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsiveness to the interventions by the target groups. • Commitment by the implementing partners, particularly the CBOs, which serve as the link between the communities and SOS CVM. • Willingness of the targeted beneficiaries and community members to benefit. Considering high levels of vulnerability in their communities, they feel motivated to seize the opportunity created by the interventions.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Despite operating amidst multiple adversities, the success that the program has registered so far is also a result of commitment and timely organizational support at every level of SOS CVM's hierarchy. • Feelings of ownership of the program by the community mainly helped by SOS CVM's approach of seeking to promote community empowerment and resilience is also a factor.
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4.2.2. Assessing progress towards achievement of outcome 2

Outcome: children and young people have improved learning outcomes

Indicator	Baseline	Target	Gain	Remarks
% of students in targeted educational institutions achieving minimum proficiency level in reading in grade 4 (Norad 2.1)	59%	75%	64%	At this point, the progress of this indicator can be rated as being satisfactory. This is owed to increased interest and desire among the children and their families to embrace schooling. Again, the program has enhanced motivation among schools, which, eventually, helps in nurturing good responses to education needs of the children. In the first place all PEAs and Head Teachers consulted expressed optimal knowledge of the program, which entails their recognition of the program's expected gains. SOS CVM's enhancement of quality improvements in schools, consultations with school authorities to effect appropriate interventions, has both helped raising motivation and also ensured that the interventions are not haphazard.
% of targeted young people with employable skills	48%	71%	55%	At this rate, the achievements under this target will likely exceed the 2024 target. This is mainly because two program areas have done extremely well under this indicator. So far, for example, Lilongwe program is the best with a score of 87% at midterm, thereby beating the endpoint target of 71%. Similarly, Blantyre, too, is only an inch to the 2024 target. Its mid-term gain is 70%, just 1% short of the endpoint target (71%). The outlook is different for Mzuzu and Ngabu, though. For Mzuzu's Choma CBOs, for example, the support for skills has just begun due to the novelty of the CBOs' cooperation with SOS CVM. Moreso, only few youths under CBOs in the city underwent skills development training due to inadequacy of learning materials. Climate catastrophes in

				the lower Shire also affected consistent provision of skills training to the youth, thereby delaying their attainment of desired levels of employable skills.
% of students in supported educational institutions who complete primary education (Norad I.1)	60%	80%	76%	There are significant gains against this indicator. This is owed to the program's creation of chances and motivation among the children to set their goals at completing primary school. The program's provision of support in the form of school fees at both secondary and tertiary levels, for example, has been one of the huge factors. During an FGD with CBOs in Chadza, sentiments arose that in addition to tuition fees, the program had also at some point, supported examination fees. In the absence of assurances regarding availability of support such as school fees at the end of primary school, therefore, many children and parents see no reasons for progressing to the final level of primary school. Thus, the assurances have been useful because without them, there could be no hope among the school going program participants. Additionally, provision of learning materials and uniforms to learners has also been a factor.
% of targeted children enrolled in educational institutions (Norad Ci1)	73%	91%	95%	The enrollment has risen exponentially because in addition to the reasons stated in the immediately preceding indicator, the program encourages children including those that dropped out of school to make a return to school. Moreover, families and communities have been empowered in an effort to ensure that children receive necessary care including shaping and nurturing their education interests. The enormous support that the program provides to families such as parenting skills, vocational skills, entrepreneurship skills, and awareness on children rights have also been important in raising and sustaining the will by both the families and the communities at large to see children in school.
% of students enrolled in all grades in supported learning institutions that remain in school the following year (Norad I.2)	70%	95%	94%	The immediately preceding explanations apply to this indicator as well. Additionally, such a significant feat is also supported by a plummet in number/percentages of pregnancies in schools prevalent across all the four program locations.
# of out of school children and young	612	1675	925	Explanations for the significant gains under this indicator mirror those made under the immediately preceding three indicators. Additionally, the change of traditional norms, which has empowered communities through the

people supported to enroll into educational institutions (Norad 1.1.1)				traditional leaderships to reprimand an/or punish families that show no interest in supporting their children's education, has been a factor as well.
# of out of school Children with Disabilities supported to enroll into educational institutions	50	175	127	The program's focus on ensuring that students attain education and considerably underlined by its commitment to support children with disabilities has been key in facilitating the placement of children into education institutions. Knowledge by communities and families regarding availability of support for children with disabilities has also been a motivating factor.
% of young people who complete vocational training programme (Norad 3.2)	24%	95%	60%	While Mzuzu and Lilongwe have done well registering 76% and 86% respectively, the sluggish showing by Blantyre and Chikwawa is largely due to the novelty of the CBOs (Kunthembwe), which have not enrolled and graduated and also catastrophic floods in Chikwawa, which disrupted the program. The Covid-19 pandemic also caused disturbances as some youth had to be sent back home before they had completed the training.
# of toilets constructed or rehabilitated (Norad 1.2.1)	0	300	29	For the past two years, the program has not done well on this indicator with just only 29 toilets out of the targeted 300 constructed or rehabilitated. While Mzuzu program did not budget for this activity for the first half of the program, their intended implementation in the second half could raise the figures towards their targeted 75 toilets by 2024. The same explanation also applies for Blantyre. However, the sight of some of the existing toilets, particularly in education institutions was less appealing (see Annex 6) as some toilets stand in very bad conditions. The program can, thus, boost the numbers if it budgets for the rehabilitation of these toilets. In the same vein, the program ought to rapidly respond to the toilet needs once approached by relevant authorities. It can also take advantage of similar interventions by other development partners.
# of educational institutions with new/improved access to clean and safe drinking water (Norad 1.2.3)	21	35	53	At this point of the program, the 2024 target for this indicator has been surpassed. Collaboration with other organizations such as DFID, Plan Malawi and ABLE, for example, has been critical in enhancing the gains.

# of local supported schools with active child protection reporting system	46	60	68	<p>The gains for this indicator have also surpassed the 2024 targets. The evaluation has established that all the FSP's locally supported schools have mechanisms that provide active child protection reporting system. While the majority of the supported schools had these mechanisms already in place, the current program's contribution has been invigorating some of their aspects including the aspect of mother groups. Most schools use mother groups as one mechanism for active child protection reporting system. These helps a lot in the programme to deal with any problems to do with child abuse. In other schools, such as at Chadza CDSS, for example, they also use the PTA, they have board of governors which are two parents per class. Over 50% of the child protection cases were responded to at the school. Training in child protection was provided by SOS CVM, Community Policing Committee and DSWO. The presence of the active child reporting system was emphasized by a Deputy Head Teacher in Choma (Mzuzu) that "we have a child protection committee which is well trained by SOS; the child protection committee follows the cases of child abuse. Child abuse cases such as violation of children's rights to education, rape cases and many more. Sometimes children are given jobs over their size and use of offensive words that can affect their development."</p>
% of child protection cases responded to by local supported schools	21%	100%	71%	<p>There have also been impressive gains so far under this indicator. In particular, Lilongwe has a 100% score, entailing that it has already attained its 2024 target. Nonetheless, the national picture for this indicator is promising at this point of the program. The progress attained thus far is largely attributed to significant awareness of the right procedures and channels in handling abuses against children. Moreso, there is optimal coalescence of efforts by various entities/structures involved in child protection in the catchment areas.</p>
Generally contributory factors to the achievements	<p>A number of factors can be recognized to have contributed to the achievements. The evaluation picked the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good working relationship between SOS CVM and the local community led by respective CBOs with education authorities. • Both children and the authorities at various education institutions including, for example, Heads, PEAs, teachers, PTAs, feel motivated due to the program's concerted emphasis on the education wellbeing of the children. This manifests in various tokens of encouragement to the children as well as the authorities. These include, for example, capacity trainings in school management and governance, resource mobilization, child safeguarding and protection; provision of teaching and learning materials; refresher courses for teachers; career talks to young people especially girls by professionals. 			

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration between SOS CVM and other likeminded organizations also operating in in the same catchment areas. This includes, for example, Africa Bag, Plan Malawi, Save the Children, World Vision, Act together for a Better Long-Term Education (ABLE), and TEVETA. • The official reopening of schools following a significant decrease in Covid-19 cases. • Provision of teaching and learning materials to schools by FSP. The items have included, for example, school fees, school uniforms, desks, academic books, beds and mattresses to certain schools including Choma Community Day Secondary School.
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4.2.3. Assessing progress towards achievement of outcome 3

Outcome: Young people have access to Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)

Indicator	Baseline	Target	Gain	Rating	Remarks
% of young people accessing safe and affordable contraceptives	56%	80%	77%		At 77%, the program has achieved significant gains at this mid-point of the program. The rapid rise towards the target is owed to particular factors. First, the access to safe and affordable contraceptives is open to every youth within the community and not only those being supported by the program. Second, access to the contraceptives is made available at various points including at specially designated places and as well as in public spaces such as health centres. More gains could be attained and likely sustained if more youth are encouraged rather than be discouraged by their families to take up contraception services. In Chikwawa, for example, the evaluation has revealed that some families discourage young people from using contraceptives, arguing that they would affect them in future.
% of pregnancies amongst learners in supported primary and secondary schools	23%	15%	2%		At 2% the 2022 gains under this indicator can be said to be very satisfactory especially considering that at baseline, the number of pregnancies stood at 23%. Increased knowledge on the dangers of early pregnancies and whilst in school has helped contain and reduce the figures. Moreover, increased levels of awareness among communities and families regarding children’s rights have helped prevent both boys and girls from engaging in sexual activities that would result into early pregnancies.

# of young people who have knowledge on sexual reproductive health and rights	851	1296	78004	The count of 78004 youths in 2022 out 1296 beneficiaries in 2024 represents a very big leap. This is largely due to the approach that is used in information dissemination. First, the targeted audience transcends that under the project. Second, the dissemination of information is not only restricted to in-person trainings. Mobile broadcasting (vans mounted with megaphones or chimkuzamawu in Chichewa), specially organized campaigns, youth clubs, sensitization campaigns by the local leadership, and a community radio (Chivomerezi community radio in Chikwawa) constitute avenues that are used to reach to many youths. The multiplicity of these channels of information dissemination entails the presence of multiple stakeholders involved in the process. The program, thus, benefits from existing collaborations among partners in the program areas. Regardless of this significant feat, the impact of such approaches to message consumption cannot be ascertained. Moreover, not every recipient of the message can be traced.
# Group Village Heads with Social Norms (by-laws) against child marriages and practicing of harmful cultural practices	62	134	84	The steady rising of the gains is owed to the fact that traditional leaders have developed social norms (by-laws), some of which the evaluation team could verify. Only for Mzuzu, the progress appears to be slow (5/40). Two reasons account for this sluggish attainment of the targets. First, while the process of developing the by-laws was completed, they have not been adopted yet. The indication is that traditional leaders who do not have the by-laws will adopt them in the second half of the program. Second, block leaders in Mzuzu City appear reluctant to adopt the by-laws due to the fear that the enforcement of some codes, particularly those that appear sensitive, could cost their prospects of retaining the office. Accordingly, SOS CVM could engage the local leadership in awareness campaigns so as to accept the by-laws. It could also push this through the city's local council leadership.
% of survivors of sexual harassment and violence provided with psychosocial support	27%	85%	84%	This target has also accrued significant gains at this point of the program. The evaluation has uncovered that the program has benefitted much from good networks involved in psychosocial support that exist within the local government area or in the actual catchment area of the program. The program has been supportive to most institutions through endowment of resources for efficient functioning. This, thus, props up the enthusiasm among the entities that provide psychosocial support. More importantly, the offices of the DSWO have been critical in providing the psychosocial support as well as training others on how to go about psychosocial support to victims of sexual harassment and violence.
Generally contributory factors to the achievements	<p>A number of factors can be recognized to have contributed to the achievements. The evaluation picked the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efficient information dissemination approaches. • The program's ability to link the youth to centres where they can get SRHR support/assistance. • Revision/revamping of social norms and the strengthening of the local by-laws. 			

- Recognition of the existence of social protection systems in schools and communities.

4.2.4. Assessing progress towards achievement of outcome 4

Outcome: Government prioritizes implementation of the UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children

Indicator	Baseline	Target	Gain	Remarks
% increase in resource allocation to social protection of vulnerable families and children at national level	0.96%	1.00%	0.80%	At this point, the gain indicates a retrogression. Such a status underestimates SOS CVM's recommendations to government regarding the need to support vulnerable families and children. The recommendation emerged from a Social Protection study, which SOS CVM has used to lobby government for support of vulnerable people alongside likeminded organizations namely UNICEF and Save the Children. An inspection into three successive national budgets (2020/2021, 2021/2022, and 2023/2023), however, shows government's commitment to social protection only through social cash transfer programs. Notably, vulnerable families have benefitted from Covid-19 relief funds which had been randomly disbursed across the country. Apart from this intervention, however, there is less emphasis on other forms of resources that could benefit the poor. More lobbying and advocacy are, thus, needed to inspire more government support for vulnerable families.
# of vulnerable families receiving support from the government	899	1000	1357	The accrued gains have exceeded the target by far. This is owed to increased advocacy for assistance by SOS CVM. There is, thus, is response from government, which as shown in the preceding indicator, has been satisfied through the social cash transfer program. Records at district level offices also show significant numbers of people receiving various forms of support from government such as farm input subsidies, mtukula pakhomu and the social cash transfer.
# of advocacy plans developed by local community structures.	0	18	20	At 20, the number of advocacy plans exceed the 2024 target. CBO leaders and other representatives from other attendant structures such as mother groups, children protection committees, just to name a few received advocacy training. Mzuzu program isolated bursary provision as a social protection issue and is currently engaging with Mbelwa District Council to lobby for the same. This aside, the evaluation has uncovered that most CBOs generally lack capacity to interact at upper level due to limited maneuvering knowledge and capabilities. It is,

				therefore, necessary that in the next half of the program, the CBOs need to be trained appropriately on how to be able to engage at district level and package their message well.
# of local community structures advocating for government support to vulnerable families	0	18	24	The gains for this indicator have surpassed the 2024 target largely because more local structures have been incorporated into the program and that the majority of CBOs under the program as well as other entities have been equipped with advocacy skills to lobby for government support. But as stated above, the challenge has been their lack of capacity to appropriately package their messages for impactful advocacy.
% of children and young people who have at least one legal identity document available	27%	90%	29%	The modest gains under this indicator are explained by the evaluation's findings that the Covid-19 pandemic affected the registration exercise. Accessing the National Registration Bureau (NRB) by beneficiaries, especially those under CBOs from remote areas has proven costly. While the program has engaged NRB to offer the services right in the beneficiaries' vicinities, not many exercises have been carried out. It is, thus, important that the program ought to intensify their engagement with NRB to ensure that, particularly birth certificates, are issued to children.
# of child rights networks where SOS CV promotes the implementation of the UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children	8	8	2	The gain made at this point is lower than the desired target by 2024. This was verified during the evaluation, although the number has been more at national level (3). Yet even with this gain, the evidently good collaboration between SOS CVM and other institutions within the network raises the effectiveness of the collaboration. The gain can, thus, be said to be low in number and not in effectiveness, thereby necessitating the revision of this target to a maximum of three. Parenting Network; NGO Coalition and Childrights; Network,; Joining Forces Network (SOS current chair)
# of child rights networks tracking the progress of UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of	8	8	2	For this indicator, the explanation for the immediately preceding indicator applies. Some of the organizations in the networks include World Vision, Plan Malawi, Joshua Foundation, Aqua Aid, , District Youth Office, Police victim Support Unit, Rafik Upendo, Crisis, You Are Not Alone (Yana).

<p>Children in dialogue with governments</p>				
<p>Generally contributory factors to the achievements</p>	<p>A number of factors can be recognized to have contributed to the achievements. The evaluation picked the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration between SOS CVM and other likeminded organizations also operating in in the same catchment areas. 			

4.3. Emerging issues

4.3.1. Effectiveness: good practices and Lessons Learnt

The evaluation has identified the following as good practices exuded by the program:

- Commitment and dedication to implementing the program among program officers, CBO staff, and all relevant stakeholders even amidst adversity (Covid-19, climatic variabilities, and economic instability) has resulted into the acquisition of significant gains. This, thus, entails that is possible to implement a program even in difficult times.
- The program's approach of ensuring empowerment of the communities is important for creating resilience as well as sustainability of program results.
- The program's focus on CBOs as a link between the community and SOS CVM has been key in ensuring orderly and organized implementation of the program. Moreover, the CBOs have helped to preserve SOS CVM's unobtrusiveness in the program. This is important for creating and sustaining feelings of ownership of the interventions by the communities.
- Regular interactions between peer educators and families not only ensures compliance but also enhances internalization of the interventions by the beneficiaries, which can ultimately facilitate sustainability. In the same vein, the use of local facilitators including peer educators on positive parenting enhances good understanding of issues among the participants. This is due to the facilitators' use of indigenous knowledge and the social trust, which the communities have in the them. This contrasts with the use of external facilitators, most of whom are field officers and are, hence, not mostly in touch with these families. The use of local facilitators has been seen to encourage participation, ownership and sustainability of programme activities.
- The consideration of the male component in the program is important in ensuring involvement, especially in parenting which is most often considered the preserve of women. Additionally, it puts boys in the frame following increased attention on girls in most interventions. For instance, the pertinence of SRHR issues also mean that boys are equally affected and need to also benefit so as to facilitate the cultivation of informed choice among them.
- Community networks have been helpful in strengthening community capacities in child protection. This is vital in both reducing and creating awareness of child abuse cases.
- The training of young people in vocational skills is an effective approach towards the attainment of self-reliance in families given the energy among the young people that can enable them to drive family economic achievements, especially in families where caregiving responsibilities are entrusted to grandparents.
- This program has extensively benefitted from collaboration with other stakeholders who complement and supplement SOS CVM's capacity. Partnerships are important in sustaining community interventions for continued benefits. This is so because these structures are always there and are more aware of the needs and responses to these needs in their respective communities.

4.3.2. Effectiveness: Major challenges that impeded the progress of the program

The evaluation has found the following to have challenged the implementation of the program:

- The Covid-19 pandemic, which caused massive socio-economic disruptions, heightened at a time when the program had just started. This entailed halting program

activities, thereby causing significant delays and greatly affecting program schedule. This resulted into failure to attain certain targets in time, especially those that need significant amount of time to show tangible results. For example, the attainment of self-reliance by a family requires some significant amount of time.

- The persisting economic uncertainty mainly characterized by high levels of inflation has affected budget implementation, thereby preventing the delivery of some outputs.
- Climate variabilities, which frequently lead to draught and severe flooding, particularly in Ngabu affected program timelines. This affected progress with regards to the attainment of some targets.
- Feelings of entitlement by families, which mostly expect SOS CVM to provide handout has also, in some way, resulted into some families not working hard to complement the program's interventions.
- Slow attainment of self-reliance by families due to increased illiteracy levels among them. This implies limited knowledge and inability to consume and interpret the knowledge shared by trainers.

4.3.3. Effectiveness: Barriers to 2024 and how to overcome them

The evaluation has registered the following as barriers to 2024

- Considering that the pandemic has not been declared over yet, any violent resurgence will likely disrupt the programing of the interventions for the remaining years of the program. As such, it is important to make timely plans and ensure that the interventions are not unnecessarily delayed (they are implemented according to plan).
- The persisting economic uncertainty mainly characterized by high levels of inflation will likely affect budget implementation, thereby preventing the delivery of some outputs. This, thus, necessitates a contingency budget to be drafted.
- Climate variabilities, which frequently lead to drought and severe flooding, particularly in Chikwawa and, sometimes in Mzuzu's Masasa area, could likely impact on program timelines. This could, thus, delay the attainment of certain targets by 2024. This can be addressed by ensuring timely implementation of activities.
- Continued absence of clear IGAs among CBOs could render them less effective, thereby affecting the attainment of certain targets. The CBOs should, thus, be encouraged to come up with manageable IGAs, which they can build on for bigger investments in future.
- Feelings of entitlement by families, which mostly expect SOS CVM to provide handout will also, in some way, result into some families not working hard to complement the program's interventions. Therefore, it is important for the program to continue reminding the beneficiaries regarding the need to develop the spirit of self-reliance so as to enhance resilience.

4.3.4. Effectiveness: Required Revisions of the program

For more effectiveness and sustainability, it would be important to consider the following revisions:

- Revise downwards the targets for indicator I of outcome number one concerning the attainment of self-reliance by families. According to the design, a family needs to subsist in the program for a period of not less than two years in and never to exceed five years to meaningfully achieve self-reliance. Considering the currently retarded progress of this indicator, it is highly unlikely that the projected figures for 2024 would be met. Attempts to force augmentation of the targets would result into mechanistic and false yields of the desired change. Moreover, it would contradict the expected

achievement of sustainability of the attained self-reliance. A target of 600 families by the end of 2024 would be more realistic.

- Revise the curriculum and methodology for parent trainings/education. There have been concerns by peer educators that the current approach is too prescriptive, thereby obliterating room for creativity. There is need to, thus, revise the curriculum so as to expand the room for the educators' creativity.
- While the design of the project remains permissive especially with regards to allowing the beneficiaries to choose a preferred trade, experience by trainers has revealed instances of lack of interest among some trainees, which, thus, threatens the effectiveness and sustainability of the intervention. As such, it could be commendable if the contracted trainers begin by giving an orientation session to the selected beneficiaries so as to expose them to pros and cons of various trades under offer. This could enhance their understanding of different businesses resulting into reshaping and/or reinforcement of their initial preferences.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

The evaluations make the following conclusions based on the findings produced by this report. They are presented in line or in reflection to the eight evaluation areas.

Conclusions	Recommendations
<i>Relevance</i>	
<p>The program has shown relevance in the way it has consistently placed at its core children at risk of losing parental care. Further to this, the program has also aligned itself fittingly with important national and global aspirations for the protection of the wellbeing of vulnerable people including women, girls, children, people with disability, and the youth. Again, the program has ensured that the processes of beneficiary identification and recruitment have been done in transparent and participatory manners, thereby enhancing community empowerment, ownership, and resilience. Importantly, the program also conforms to SOS Norway's development cooperation for Malawi, which enhances the relevance of the rationale of its partnership with SOS CVM. Equally important is how the program is responding to national development priorities including those embedded in, for example, MGDS III, the Child Care, Protection and Justice Act 2010, the National Education Act, the National Youth Policy, the National Plan of Action on GBV in Malawi.</p>	<p>The program should continue being more focused on responding to the various forms of priorities at various policy levels.</p> <p>It is also important that field officers should continuously remind, particularly the CBOs of the program's alignment to national and global aspirations. This could be critical in promoting their recognition of the program's wider impact as well as its contribution to national development. Consequently, it could inspire a hardworking spirit among the leaderships and memberships of the CBOs.</p>
<i>Effectiveness</i>	
<p>Overall, the program is on track. There is high likelihood that the majority of results, indicators, and targets will be achieved. In fact, evidence exists regarding improvements in quality of care and parenting skills among caregivers. This progress is owed to sound strategies that the program has used.</p> <p>Yet, the attainment of self-reliance by families will not be achieved as planned. While some families may attain it, there is strong likelihood that the attained self-reliance may not be sustainable because of the prescriptive approach to self-reliance as presented by the family exit plan. In other words, the family's self-reliance is tied to a set standard, which may be against the</p>	<p>The program should continue to be more focused so as to jealously guard against causing unnecessary slips from the gains made thus far. This entails the preservation of the existing coordination fabric descending from the main partners (SOS Norway and SOS CVM), to the national office, to the program locations, to the local implementors (CBOs). Similarly, it is imperative that SOS CVM continues to nurture the ongoing collaboration with other implementing partners for the realization of maximum results. This, thus, presupposes that, particularly program locations, through peer interaction with the partners, need to maintain the professional comradery they have been acknowledge and hailed for.</p>

<p>consideration of a multifaceted elements necessary for self-reliance.</p> <p>Climate variabilities, particularly floods in Ngabu, drought in the other locations but also economic challenges being experienced at the moment have in one way or the other affected the implementation of the program. They are also expected to have negative influence on the interventions in the remaining part of the program.</p>	<p>While this is admirable, the apparent rapidity in obtaining some of the results has to be commensurate with sustainability. It may be of less impact to simply show a quantitatively huge progress without any guarantees of sustainability. For instance, the attainment of self-reliance requires assurances of sustainability. Similarly, the impact with regards to the extraordinarily rapid gains in SRHR cannot not be ascertained. In particular, nearly “uncountable” youth as opposed to target are said to have acquired knowledge in SRHR and yet there are no reliable means to ascertain this. In order to account for the impact, there is need to devise a mechanism that can be used for follow ups.</p> <p>To ensure that families attain self-reliance sustainably, there is need to revise downward to 600 from 1750. Since the current achievement is at 399, the suggested target could be logical if the families are to attain self-reliance sustainably. In other words, it will ensure that fewer families are receiving appropriate support and are intensively monitored by both the CBOs and the field officers for optimum results. Moreover, it is important to recognize that the attainment of sustainable self-reliance requires a more integrative approach, which could include significant awareness through knowledge production, than narrowing the focus on material gains alone.</p> <p>To ensure adequate responses to adversity through environmental and economic calamities, it is important to develop contingency plans including budgets so as to cushion problems caused by such events. This will ensure that the program’s timelines are adhered to.</p>
<p><i>Efficiency</i></p>	
<p>Overall, the program has been efficient. Regardless of delayed inception due to the Covid-19 pandemic, for example, but also given the prevailing economic challenges as well as climate variabilities, the program has generally delivered significant quantities within the same apparently disrupted timelines. Moreover, the programs collaboration with other implementing partners (likeminded organizations) as well as national and district government officials and departments, CBO partners, and traditional leaders has helped</p>	<p>The program should continue to collaborate with development partners while ensuring that SOS CVM takes a leading role in management and coordination for optimum realization of the outcomes.</p>

<p>in achieving results in time and with minimal investments in some instances, particularly in activities that are wholly the designation or core duty of the partner. In this regard, it is apparent that the program has benefited extensively from collaboration with other development partners. This has resulted into accrual of not only significant quantitative gains but also quality through their expertise.</p>	
<p><i>Inclusion</i></p>	
<p>Gender and disability mainstreaming has been adequately supported throughout the process. This is critical as it creates both feelings and realities among these categories of the often-marginalized groups of people that they are being given a recognition and that they are able to partake in community activities and also share the program's benefits.</p>	<p>The program should continue paying attention to gender and disability mainstreaming. However, it can do much better if implementers (officers) also recognize or remember that gender and disability cut across nearly all the activities in the program. In other words, the wearing of gender lenses throughout the program's cycle can enhance gender and disability mainstreaming. Again, the evaluation has noted that little has been done with regards to people with albinism.</p> <p>While realizing that this may not be a core preoccupation under gender and disability mainstreaming, there is need to also pay attention to people (caregivers and children) with albinism. This is because albinism is associated with various forms of disabilities including sight deficiencies and skin diseases including cancer.</p>
<p><i>Sustainability</i></p>	
<p>With regards to sustainability, some of the benefits like capacity trainings and various skills development enterprises including vocational, business, and cognitive (such as parenting skills) are likely to go a long way even after the close of the program in 2024. Evidence exists regarding how the beneficiaries are utilizing the skills and how they acknowledge their impact. Moreover, CBOs are able to drive most of the program interventions. Importantly the program does have plans in place to ensure orderly and effective exit by families from the program, although this latter element could have been more effective if avoided being applied mechanistically considering that a family's exit from the program requires a multidimensional fulfillment.</p>	<p>The program should continue to create empowerment interventions among the beneficiaries. The implementors (field officers) need to constantly ensure that activities are being done meaningfully and according to plan. Their constant visibility needs to be understood as an inspiration of confidence among the beneficiaries. Moreover, their frequent engagement with the communities could be vital for providing constant reminders and advisory cues to the local implementors.</p>

<i>Validity of design</i>	
<p>The program is framed within an appropriate design, which, to a large extent, has been the main reason for the significant gains made thus far. In particular, the program's Theory of Change is sound and coherent. This, thus, enhances the feasibility of the activities and outcomes. Moreover, the program possesses exit and sustainable plans, which complements its design.</p> <p>Further to this, the program design gives room for flexibility in empowerment ventures. In particular, the program refrains from prescribing sets of skills or business ventures to its beneficiaries. This is critical in enhancing both empowerment and sustainability.</p> <p>The program draws its relevance through its approach of seeking to enhance empowerment and resilience among the communities it supports. This is seen in many ways including, for example, SOS CVM's inconspicuousness in beneficiary identification and recruitment, the capacities it gives to the local community through the CBOs, the organization's recognition of the significance of collaboration and partnerships, the strengthening of the families through different skills.</p>	<p>The program should continue in its current frame.</p> <p>To ensure sustainability of business ventures chosen by the beneficiaries, an orientation session on different kinds of business ventures could help to widen their base of knowledge. This is necessary for making informed choices.</p> <p>The program should continue to be focused on providing more capacity building ventures including, for example, capacity, parenting, vocational and entrepreneurship trainings in order to increase empowerment and resilience.</p>
<i>Management and coordination</i>	
<p>Overall, the program has appropriate management and coordination structures with apparent harmony among SOS Norway, SOS International Office, SOS CVM to program locations and the CBOs. The program is monitored and evaluated according to plan, quarterly narrative and financial reports made periodically, and annual reports being made to SOS Norway. Further to this, the program adheres to work plans and budgets and there is evident involvement of local partners in the management and coordination of the program, which, importantly, has not adversely affected its quality.</p>	<p>The program should continue being focused for optimum results. In particular, SOS CVM's national office should continue to ensure that that the program is managed and coordinated in the way it has done. More importantly, it should continue rendering unwavering support to the program locations so as to ensure continued commitment among the implementing officers.</p>
<i>Human resources</i>	
<p>Overall, the human resource is adequate and competent. While the CBO staff may need more</p>	<p>The program should continue to provide capacity building trainings to both staff and CBO personnel</p>

capacity building trainings, it has, nonetheless, shown that it understands its roles and is knowledgeable about the program's Theory of Change. The CBO staff's knowledgeability is, importantly, enhanced by sound cordiality with SOS CVM staff. This is further seen in clear division of roles and responsibilities, thereby preventing collisions or overlaps in the execution of duties. However, there appears to be overload of Monitoring and Evaluation responsibilities among field officers, which subsist outside their primary roles. At the same time, the national M&E personnel appears overwhelmed too, as he serves for multiple programs. These two observations can affect the program quality and overall performance.

for optimum results. This may also include refresher courses, particularly to the field officers who require motivation from time to time.

The program may also consider recruiting M&E personnel in program locations on short tenure so as to manage the program data base and other attendant issues. If full employment cannot be considered, incorporating experienced interns with M&E knowledge or background can also be an option. This could help to lessen the load on the field officers who could, in turn, concentrate on their advisory roles.

Annex I: Terms of References

FAMILY STRENGTHENING PROGRAM MID-TERM REVIEW SOS Children's Villages Malawi

SOS Norway, the General Secretariat of SOS Children's Villages International (GSI) and SOS Children's Villages in Malawi entered into a formal partnership in 2020. The basis for the partnership was the signing of a five-year agreement (2020-2024) between SOS Norway and The Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad). This partnership is a continuation of support for the SOS Family Strengthening Programmes (FSP) since 2009. This agreement currently entails funding for the FSP in Malawi. The programme focuses on strengthening families' ability to provide quality care and protection, improving learning outcomes for children, increasing access to sexual and reproductive health for young people, and advocating government to implement the UN Guidelines for Alternative Care.

1.2 Project Overview

From the roots of the organisation, SOS Children's Villages pioneered family-based child care for children who had already lost the care of their own family, through the development of the SOS family childcare model. Since the 1980s, we have been developing programme responses to prevent the need for alternative care by strengthening the capacity of families to effectively protect and care for their children. This prevention work has taken shape in the development of FSP, which aim to prevent children from losing the care of their biological families. In SOS Children's Villages International Strategy 2030, family strengthening was recognised as one of seven strategic initiatives to reach the 2030 goals.

This multi-year programme aims to achieve the following:

Impact: Children and young people deprived of parental care have an equal chance to succeed in life.

Outcome 1: Families provide quality care and protection for vulnerable children

Outcome 2: Children and young people have improved learning outcomes

Outcome 3: Young people have access to Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)

Outcome 4: Governments prioritise the enforcement of the UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE REVIEW

2.1 Overall Objective

The overall objective of this MTR is to establish an overview of whether the five-year programme is on track towards its 2024 goals and to create a basis for corrective actions and planning for the final 2 years of implementation. The review will form the basis for a mid-term review and planning meeting that will be conducted by August 2022.

2.2 Specific Objectives

The review shall assess the achievements of the programme from 2020 to date and analyse the current status of the goals and indicators set out in the five-year results framework in Malawi, while ensuring that gender equality is mainstreamed throughout the MTR process. The MTR shall focus on the FSP's achieved results against its four expected outcomes (see above) and assess the following aspects of the programme interventions:

I. Relevance

- To what extent is the programme focused on our target group – i.e., the children most at risk of losing the care of their family?
- To what extent is the beneficiary recruitment participatory and transparent (involvement of community-based partners, CSOs and government institutions, etc.)?
- To what extent has FSP-Malawi conformed to SOS Norway's development cooperation strategy for Malawi, national development priorities of Malawi, and to the priorities and needs of the target beneficiaries/communities?

2. Effectiveness

- To what extent are the programme's results, indicators and targets being achieved/likely to be achieved?
- To what extent have families achieved/likely to achieve self-reliance and exited the programme?
- To what extent has the quality of care and parental skills improved for families in the programme?
- Determine if there are any specific revisions required for the remaining period.
- Examine if, how, and why the strategies contribute to the achievement of expected programme results.
- What were the major challenges which have impeded the progress of programme implementation in this programme period?
- What are the major barriers to expect in reaching our 2024 goals, and how can we prepare to overcome these?
- What good practices and lessons learned were identified? How can we build on them to achieve the 2024 goals?
- What (if any) significant unexpected results of the programme (whether beneficial or detrimental) have been identified?

3. Efficiency

- To what extent is the programme efficient? Specifically, the delivery of outputs and activities in terms of quality, quantity, timeliness, and cost efficiency.
- How was the programme's collaboration with national and district level government authorities, traditional leaders, CBO partners, other development partners?
- To what extent has the capacity of partner CBOs been built/strengthened to independently manage and implement activities, and to prepare for sustainability at project closing?

Inclusion

- To what extent has the programme mainstreamed gender and disability in its interventions?
- To what extent has the programme budget been invested in gender and disability interventions, respectively?

Sustainability

- To what extent are the benefits of the programme likely to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn? [my evaluation, beneficiaries]
 - To what extent has the capacity of partner CBOs been built/strengthened to independently manage and implement activities, and to prepare for sustainability at project closing?
 - To what extent have the programme interventions been driven by the CBO partners and government duty bearers?
 - To what extent has the programme contributed to increasing government accountability and resources to fulfil their obligations towards the UN Guidelines on Alternative Care?
 - Has the programme prepared for an exit plan to ensure a proper hand-over to the local government and/or CBOs after the programme ends? If not, what needs to be done/capacities built in the remaining project period.
 - How effective have the programme exit plans for families and communities been?

Validity of design

- Are the programme objectives, outcomes, indicators, and targets clear, practical, and feasible within the remaining programme time frame?
- Is the FSP-Malawi programme design valid and appropriate? Are the programme activities complementary and integrated?
- Does the programme design have exit and sustainability plans in place?
- To what extent were relevant gender issues integrated in the programme design?
- Does the design need to be modified for the remaining period of implementation? If so, recommend areas for improvement in programme design.

Management & Coordination

- How has the role of the programme management ensured quality implementation and budget utilization?
 - To what extent did the programme have appropriate management and coordination structures?
 - To what extent is the programme supported by an appropriate monitoring and evaluation system, financial management system, and communication strategy?
 - To what extent did the programme adhere to work plans and budgets?
 - Which other local implementing partners were involved in the process of management and coordination and how did this affect the quality of implementation?
- Human Resources:

- To what extent did the programme have adequate human resources in programme? Did programme staff competences align with programme's interventions? If not, where/how where the challenges and how can it be improved in future programming?
- How is the relationship between staff and CBO partners (including volunteers)?
- To what extent did the programme provide capacity building of staff, CBO partner staff, and volunteers? Are there any remaining training needs?
- To what extent was there a clear division of roles and responsibilities between the staff and its CBO partners?

2.3 Desired Results

The desired results of the review are:

- To assess the mid-term impact of the project, with a special emphasis on the impact the project has had on children, young people, their families, women, girls, and people with disabilities.
- To examine the results framework and indicators and to provide mid-term project figures along with a narrative explaining the reasons for under/over performance achievement.
- To provide an analysis of the challenges faced in programme implementation, good practices, and lessons learnt.
- To draw conclusions and make recommendations/suggestions for improvements for the remainder of the project implementation period.
- To review the extent to which recommendations of the final evaluation of the previous framework project have been taken on in this new frame.

3. METHODOLOGY¹

The methodology guiding this mid-term review includes the following: desk study, semi-structured interviews, and focus group discussions. The purpose of employing several methods to gather data (triangulation) is to ascertain whether the different sets of data complement or contradict each other, and hence provides a deeper understanding of the programme, its activities, impact, and challenges.

The consultant(s) will undertake a *desk study* analysing all documents regarding the operation, context, and partners involved in the implementation of the project as well as reviewing relevant international and national policy frameworks in the country.

In-depth Interviews will be the main tool for collecting data. Interviews will be conducted with the following stakeholders: parents/caregivers, children, and young people benefitting from the programme; staff working within the FSP, including those from CBO partners; community leaders; representatives from local government; stakeholders from child rights networks; NGO cluster coordination, and representatives from SOS-Norway (Norad coordinator) and SOS-Malawi (National FSP Manager and M&E Advisor). Interview guides will be drafted according to the different responsibilities and expected knowledge of each stakeholder-category.

Since children can only be interviewed with the consent of an adult, trusted community adults chosen by the children, should be part of the one-on-one interviews.

Focus group discussions is another methodological tool that will be employed. A group possesses the capacity to become more than the sum of its parts, and a focus group discussion may therefore provide another type of data than individual interviews. This method has also proven to be a valuable, effective and fun method in research with children and young people. As the discussion evolves through successive statements building upon each other, it is a fruitful way to make new ideas and interesting recommendations emerge. The review will conduct separate focus groups with parents/caregivers/legal guardians, children, and young people in the programme areas.

3.1. Ethical considerations

The consultant(s) must demonstrate a commitment to strictly adhere to SOS's Child Protection Policy, Code of Conduct, and protocols related to data protection, confidentiality, and anonymity. It is the responsibility of SOS-Malawi to ensure that all persons hired, used, or otherwise consulted for this exercise, are made familiar with the policies and are in agreement with and abide by them before their services are agreed to.

¹ This suggested methodology is subject to further improvement/proposals by the bidders.

Anonymity, confidentiality, and integrity of data will be secured through the study. Important ethical aspects include ensuring that the respondents obtain comprehensive information on the aim of the review, on the possibility to refuse to participate, refuse to answer particular questions, and prematurely end the interview if desired. The consultant(s) will obtain an oral consent on respondents' willingness to participate in the project, from adults as well as children.

4. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

SOS Children's Villages Malawi represented by the M&E Advisor and FSP Manager will be your main point of contact. SOS Children's Villages Norway represented by the Norad Grant Manager and SOS International Office ESAF Region Grant Advisor will support the process and be members of the SOS Coordination Team. The consultant(s) is expected to lead the external review exercise, involving project staff and other key stakeholders where appropriate:

Plan Review design in coordination with SOS Coordination Team	Review Project documentation and other sources of information	
	Plan, design, and coordinate the data collection process	Identification of Project stakeholders to be interviewed
		Agreeing on information to be collected in an inception report
	Data Collection & Analysis	
	Preparation of draft report and presentation of key findings for SOS Coordination Team feedback	
	Final Report, incorporating received feedback from SOS Coordination Team	

5. EXPECTED DELIVERABLES

Activity	Deliverable	Time allocated
Review design, methodology and detailed work plan	Inception report	2 days
Inception Meeting Initial briefing		
Desk review and stakeholder consultations	Draft report	30 days
Field Visits		
Data analysis, debriefing and presentation of draft Review Report		
Finalization of Mid-Term Review Report incorporating additions and comments provided by SOS Coordination Team	Final evaluation report	5 days

The following deliverables are expected:

Inception Report: The consultant(s) will prepare an inception report which details the consultant(s) understanding of the evaluation and how the evaluation questions will be addressed. This is to ensure that evaluator and the SOS Coordination Team have a shared understanding of the evaluation. The inception report will include the evaluation design, methodology, evaluation questions, and detailed work plan. The inception report will be discussed and agreed upon with the SOS Coordination Team.

Draft Mid-term Review Report- The consultant(s) will prepare a draft report, cognizant of the proposed format of the report and the report will be submitted to the SOS Coordination Team for review and comments. Review and comments will be provided within 15 days after the reception of the Draft Report. The report will be reviewed to ensure that the evaluation meets the required quality criteria. The report will be produced in English.

The Final Mid-term Review Report along with all raw data: This will include comments from the SOS Coordination Team.

The findings of the mid-term review shall be a written report, of approximately 25-35 pages, excluding annexes, following the proposed outline:

- Cover Page
- Executive Summary- not more than 4 pages. Concisely states the most important findings, conclusion, and recommendations of the evaluation, and it should be read and understood as a stand-alone document.
- Brief background on the project
- Purpose and scope of the evaluation
- Methodology
- Review of project implementation
- Presentation of findings. Key findings on aspects of the specific objectives and assessment of each of the 4 key outcome areas outlined in the results framework.
- Conclusion
- Recommendations
- Lessons learned
- Annexes

Annex 2: Evaluation matrix

Evaluation criteria	Evaluation questions	Data sources	Methods
Relevance	To what extent is the programme focused on our target group – i.e., the children most at risk of losing the care of their family?	-Caregivers; DSWO; children; CBPs; peer educators, Program documents	FGDs; semi-structured interviews; in-depth interviews Documentary review
	To what extent is the beneficiary recruitment participatory and transparent (involvement of community-based partners, CSOs and government institutions, etc.)?	-FSP national coordinator; program FSP coordinators; DSWO; peer educators	In-depth interviews;
	To what extent has FSP-Malawi conformed to SOS Norway's development cooperation strategy for Malawi, national development priorities of Malawi, and to the priorities and needs of the target beneficiaries/communities?	-SOS Norway; SOS CVM DCD; SOS CVM Deputy Country Director; CBPs. SOS Norway-SOS CVM Partnership Agreement, National Policies	In-depth interviews; FGDs.
Effectiveness	To what extent are the programme's results, indicators and targets being achieved/likely to be achieved?	-FSP National coordinator; program FSP coordinators; CBPs	In-depth interviews; FGDs.
	To what extent have families achieved/likely to achieve self-reliance and exited the programme?	-Program FSP coordinators; peer educators; caregivers	In-depth interviews; FGDs.
	To what extent has the quality of care and parental skills improved for families in the programme	-Program FSP coordinators; peer educators; caregivers; children	In-depth interviews; FGDs; semi-structured interviews
	Determine if there are any specific revisions required for the remaining period.	-consultant's determination	Interpretation of data
	Examine if, how, and why the strategies contribute to the achievement of expected programme results.	-consultant's determination	Interpretation of data
	What were the major challenges which have impeded the progress of programme implementation in this programme period?	-SOS CVM DCD; FSP national coordinator; program FSP coordinators; CBPs;	In-depth interviews; FGDs.
	What are the major barriers to expect in reaching our 2024 goals, and how can we prepare to overcome these?	-FSP national coordinator; program FSP coordinators; CBPs	In-depth interviews; FGDs.
	What good practices and lessons learned were identified? How can we build on them to achieve the 2024 goals?	-FSP national coordinator; program FSP coordinators; CBPs	In-depth interviews; FGDs.
	What (if any) significant unexpected results of the programme (whether beneficial or detrimental) have been identified?	-consultant's determination	Interpretation of data

Efficiency	To what extent is the programme efficient? Specifically, the delivery of outputs and activities in terms of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • quality, • quantity, • timeliness, and • cost efficiency. 	-consultant's determination	Interpretation of data
	How was the programme's collaboration with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • national and district level government authorities, • traditional leaders, • CBO partners, • other development partners? 	-DSWO; traditional/local leaders; CBPs; program FSP coordinators; SMEDI; TEVETA; PSI; and other development partners to be identified in the course of field work.	FGDs; in-depth interviews
Inclusion	To what extent has the programme mainstreamed gender and disability in its interventions?	national gender coordinator	In-depth interviews
	To what extent has the programme budget been invested in gender and disability interventions, respectively?	national gender coordinator	In-depth interviews
Sustainability	To what extent are the benefits of the programme likely to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn?	-Caregivers; youths; CBPs' peer educators;	FGDs; in-depth interviews
	To what extent has the capacity of partner CBOs been built/strengthened to independently manage and implement activities, and to prepare for sustainability at project closing?	-CBPs	FGDs
	To what extent have the programme interventions been driven by the CBO partners and government duty bearers?	-CBPs; program FSP coordinators	FGDs; in-depth interviews
	To what extent has the programme contributed to increasing government accountability and resources to fulfil their obligations towards the UN Guidelines on Alternative Care?	-national communication and advocacy coordinator; DSWO	In-depth interviews
	Has the programme prepared for an exit plan to ensure a proper hand-over to the local government and/or CBOs after the programme ends? If not, what needs to be done/capacities built in the remaining project period.	-program FSP coordinators	In-depth interviews
	How effective have the programme exit plans for families and communities been?	-program FSP coordinators	In-depth interview
Validity of design	Are the programme objectives, outcomes, indicators, and targets clear, practical, and feasible within the remaining programme time frame?.	-SOS CVM DCD; FSP national coordinator; CBPs; Program document Results framework, inception meeting	In-depth interviews; FGDs; Desk research
	Is the FSP-Malawi programme design valid and appropriate? Are the programme activities complementary and integrated?	- SOS CVM DCD; FSP national coordinator; Program document	In-depth interviews; Desk research

	Does the programme design have exit and sustainability plans in place?	-FSP national coordinator; program FSP coordinators; Program document	In-depth interviews Desk research
	To what extent were relevant gender issues integrated in the programme design?	- gender national coordinator; program FSP coordinators; Program document	In-depth interviews Desk research
	Does the design need to be modified in the second half of the project? If yes, how?	-consultant's evaluation	Interpretation of field data
Management and coordination	How has the role of the programme management ensured quality implementation and budget utilization?	- FSP national coordinator; program FSP coordinators. Program document Partnership Agreement document	In-depth interviews Desk research
	To what extent did the programme have appropriate management and coordination structures?	- FSP national coordinator; program FSP coordinators. Program document partnership agreement document	In-depth interviews Desk research
	To what extent is the programme supported by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an appropriate monitoring and evaluation system, • financial management system, and • communication strategy 	- FSP national coordinator; national MEAL coordinator; national Communications and advocacy coordinator. ; Program document	Desk research, in-depth interviews
	To what extent did the programme adhere to work plans and budgets?	-FSP national coordinator; program FSP coordinators; CBPs	In-depth interviews; FGDs
	Which other local implementing partners were involved in the process of management and coordination and how did this affect the quality of implementation?	-program FSP coordinators; CBPs	In-depth interviews; FGDs
Human Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent did the programme have adequate human resources in programme? • Did programme staff competences align with programme's interventions? If not, where/how where the challenges and how can it be improved in future programming? 	- program FSP coordinators; CBPs	In-depth interviews; FGDs.
	How is the relationship between staff and CBO partners (including volunteers)?	- program FSP coordinators; CBPs	In-depth interviews; FGDs.
	To what extent did the programme provide capacity building of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program staff, • CBO partner staff, and • volunteers? • Are there any remaining training needs? 	-FSP national coordinator; program FSP coordinators; CBPs; volunteers	In-depth interviews; FGDs.
	To what extent was there a clear division of roles and responsibilities between the program staff and its CBO partners?	FSP national coordinator; program FSP coordinators; CBPs;	In-depth interviews; FGDs.

Annex 3: Results framework (national)

2020 - 2024 RESULT FRAMEWORK FOR FAMILY STRENGTHENING																																			
Country		Malawi																																	
Programme Location		Lilongwe, Mzuzu, Blantyre and Ngabu																																	
Results Chain	Indicator	Unit of Measure	Baseline			2020			2020 Actuals			2021			2021 Full Year Actuals			2022			2022 Half Year Actuals			2023			2024			Target (end 2024)			Remarks		
			F	M	Total/Average	F	M	Total/Average	F	M	Total/Average	F	M	Total/Average	F	M	Total/Average	F	M	Total/Average	F	M	Total/Average	F	M	Total/Average	F	M	Total/Average						
IMPACT: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF PARENTAL CARE HAVE AN EQUAL CHANCE TO SUCCEED IN LIFE	# of Community partners actively responding to the needs of children deprived of parental care in their own communities	CBO assessment tool Programme Data Base (PDB)	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	0	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	0	0	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	0	0	0	#VALUE!	0	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	18			
			National Primary school completion rates	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	0%	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	#VALUE!	Data Collection: SOS Malawi	
			National Secondary school completion rates	51%	52%	52%	51%	52%	52%	0%	52%	54%	53%	0%	0%	0%	53%	54%	54%	62%	66%	64%	53%	55%	54%	55%	57%	56%	56%	57%	57%	57%	57%	Data Collection: SOS Malawi	
			# of targeted families phased out upon achieved self-reliance			1			1			0			1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.3	0.34	0			1			1			1	Responsible for data collection under Outcome 1: SOS Malawi and CBO partners	
			# of targeted families who are less vulnerable (compared to baseline / programme entry level)			0			185			145			562	0	0	368	0	0	750	281	64	399			1250			1750			1750		
			Output 1.1: 1000 families have income generating activities	# of families with access to meet basic needs for their children and young people			0			347			625			875	0	0	964	0	0	1250	421	76	1015			1600			2000			2000	Basic needs items: food, education fees, medical expenses and clothing.
			Output 1.2: Families have improved shelter, toilets and nutrition	# of families with at least 100% adequate housing not hazardous to human health			525			650			687			850	0	0	755	0	0	1125	372	55	624			1425			1600			1600	
				# of children with at least 2 nutritious meals per day	373	55	428	0	0	0	1087	0	0	1800	1063	122	1572	563	0	1875	585	72	1458	0	0	1855	0	0	2000	0	0	0	0	0	
				# of children with scores to improved toilet			2765			2981			3644			3970	0	0	4683	0	0	5300	2465	2308	5087			6150			6443			6443	
				# of children who are included or at least consulted in 2250 caregivers strengthening their own lives	874	806	1680	1184	1096	2280	2871	1653	1527	3180	1958	2262	4210	2120	1960	4580	1653	1910	4199	2704	2496	5200	2913	2687	5600	2913	2687	5600			5600
	# of families who are affected by domestic violence (incl against children)			3276			3897			3383			4668	0	0	4344	0	0	5239	2099	2334	4478			6319			7198			7198				
Output 1.4: 1000 vulnerable families are supported by community-based partners	# of families receiving support from community based partners			850			810			235			730	0	0	90	0	0	625	167	6	214			550			500			500				
	# of SOS families supported by community-based partners			275			579			1089			1200	0	0	10762	0	0	1305	0	0	1617			1500			1500			1500	16-18 new CBOs Lilongwe: 6 Mzuzu: 6 Blantyre: 5 Ngabu: 4			
Output 1.5: Children & caregivers with illnesses identified and access adequate support	# of children and young people with disabilities receiving assistance	0	0	0	0	0	0	13	0	0	12	0	0	19	5	0	11	0	0	20	0	0	20	0	0	18	0	0	21	0	0	0	Type of assistance: School enrolment, assistive devices, medicines (in some cases), psycho-social support.		
	# of caregivers with disabilities receiving assistance	235	220	455	236	224	460	424	242	228	476	324	299	623	242	228	470	332	315	647	250	240	490	250	240	490	250	240	490	250	240	490	Type of assistance: Financial training, income-generation, assistive devices and/or medicines		

Outcome 2: children and young people have improved learning outcomes	% of students in targeted educational institutions achieving minimum proficiency level in reading in grade 4 (Norad 2.1)	FDP, Annual Reports, School records	57%	60%	59%	58%	60%	59%			57%	65%	68%	67%	62%	62%	62%	70%	71%	71%	65%	63%	64%	72%	74%	73%	73%	76%	75%	73%	76%	75%	Responsible for data collection under Outcome 2: SOS Malawi and CBOs, in consultation with local schools and education authorities.		
	% of targeted young people with employable skills	PDB, Annual Reports	42%	53%	46%	45%	58%	52%			40%	55%	62%	59%	59%	60%	60%	60%	65%	63%	49%	60%	55%	65%	70%	68%	68%	73%	71%	68%	73%	71%		Will include 350 girls and 400 boys with disabilities.	
	% of students in supported educational institutions who complete primary education (Norad 1.1)	Program Database, School Records, Education Information Management System	57%	62%	60%	58%	65%	62%			64%	62%	70%	66%	71%	81%	76%	66%	74%	70%	72%	81%	76%	75%	78%	77%	79%	81%	80%	79%	81%	80%			Only SOS Malawi
Output 2.1: Improved educational enrolment for 5490 targeted children and young people	% of targeted children enrolled in educational institutions (Norad C1)	Program Database, School Records	48%	55%	52%	60%	66%	64%			73%	70%	75%	73%	85%	85%	85%	80%	80%	80%	86%	82%	91%	85%	85%	85%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	Only SOS Malawi		
	% of students enrolled in all grades in supported learning institutions that remain in school the following year (Norad 1.2)	Program Database, School Records	68%	71%	70%	75%	78%	70%			88%	80%	85%	83%	93%	94%	94%	90%	90%	90%	94%	95%	94%	90%	93%	92%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%		Only SOS Malawi	
	# of out of school children and young people supported to enroll into educational institutions (Norad 1.1.1)	Program Database, School Records	346	266	612	429	286	715			679	510	340	850	0	0	809	685	315	1000	473	452	925	870	580	1450	1000	675	1675	1000	675	1675			Only SOS Malawi
	# of out of school Children with Disabilities supported to enroll into educational institutions	Program Database, School Records	32	18	50	42	28	70			119	48	32	80	0	0	117	63	28	91	65	62	127	95	55	150	112	63	175	112	63	175			
Output 2.2: 1200 young people acquire skills necessary for informal and formal employment	% of young people who complete vocational training programme (Norad 3.2)	Program Database, Programme Reports	25%	23%	24%	20%	20%	20%			44%	30%	30%	30%	68%	50%	57%	40%	40%	40%	66%	57%	60%	80%	80%	80%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	Only SOS Malawi		
Output 2.3: Improved school toilets and access to water in public schools	# of toilets constructed or rehabilitated (Norad 1.2.1)	School Records			0		5			12			100	0	0	23	0	0	200	0	0	0	29			300			300		300	Only SOS Malawi			
	# of educational institutions with new/improved access to clean and safe drinking water (Norad 1.2.3)	School Records			21		0			16			10	0	0	37	0	0	17	0	0	0	53			30			35		35			Only SOS Malawi	
Output 2.4: Improved safety and protection for children and young people in 45 primary schools and 15 secondary schools	# of local supported schools with active child protection reporting system	Case Register in Schools			46		50			53			58	0	0	68	0	0	58	0	0	0	68			60			60		60				Approximately 84900 children and young people are reached in the schools
	% of child protection cases responded to by local supported schools	Case Register in Schools			21%		40%			53%			50%	0	0	64%	0	0	60%	0.98	0.94	0.94	71%			100%			100%		100%		Approximately 84900 children and young people are reached in the schools		

Outcome 3: Young people have access to Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)	% of young people accessing safe and affordable contraceptives	Service Provider Reports, Home Visit Reports	50%	62%	56%	57%	63%	60%			60%	65%	70%	68%	72%	65%	68%	65%	75%	70%	63%	66%	77%	71%	78%	75%	76%	84%	80%	76%	84%	80%	Responsible for data collection under Outcome 3: SOS Malawi & CBOs, in consultation with local schools and public health centers
	% of pregnancies amongst learners in supported primary and secondary schools	School Records, Records from Mother Groups	23%	0%	23%	29%	0%	29%			21%	27%	0%	27%	9%	0%	9%	25%	0%	25%	2%	0%	2%	20%	0%	20%	15%	0%	15%	15%	0%	15%	
Output 3.1: 1296 Young beneficiaries (15-24 years) have increased knowledge on sexual and reproductive health and rights	# of young people who have knowledge on sexual reproductive health and rights	AP (Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices) Assessment Survey	431	420	851	532	494	1026			1652	572	528	1100	6218	6767	12985	574	584	1158	46071	31933	78004	608	592	1200	672	624	1296	672	624	1296	The indirect target group reached in cooperation with others is estimated 76400 children and young people.
Output 3.2: 1224 Young people are protected from harmful traditional practices, including child marriages	# Group Village Heads with Social Norms (by-laws) against child marriages and practicing of harmful cultural practices	Copies of by-laws			62		55			45			86	0	0	64	0	0	114	0	0	84			130			134			134	The indirect target group is estimated to be 76400 children and young people.	
	% of survivors of sexual harassment and violence provided with psychosocial support	Service Provider Reports, Home Visit Reports	24%	30%	27%	21%	31%	26%			42.75%	45%	46%	45.63%	75%	28%	66.50%	63%	68%	65.63%	84%	42%	84.00%	78%	81%	79.63%	84%	86%	85.00%	84%	86%	85%	Some of the actors be involved are District Social Welfare Offices, Malawi Police.
Outcome 4: Government prioritises implementation of the UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children.	% increase in resource allocation to social protection of vulnerable families and children at national level	Copies of planned activities and budget of the Plan of Action for Vulnerable Children			0.60%		0.60%			0.90%			0.65%	0	0	0.90%	0	0	0.70%	0%	0%	0.80%			0.80%			1.00%			1.00%		
Output 4.1: Government strengthens parents' ability to care for their children in line with UN Resolution on children without parental care.	# of vulnerable families receiving support from the government	Home Visit Reports, Government Records			899		650			985			750	0	0	1268	0	0	950	0	0	1357			1000			1000			1000	This support include Social Cash Transfer and Public Works Programme	
Output 4.2: 18 local community structures (w/SOS support) advocate for the implementation of UN Resolution on children without parental care by government.	# of advocacy plans developed by local community structures.	Community Assessment Reports			0		0			4			18	0	0	16	0	0	18	0	0	20			18			18			18		
	# of local community structures advocating for government support to vulnerable families	Community Assessment Reports			0		0			9			10	0	0	26	0	0	14	0	0	24			18			18			18		
Output 4.3: SOS advocate for the right of 7200 children and young people to be legally registered (birth certificate or national ID)	% of children and young people who have at least one legal identity document available	Program Database	26%	28%	27%	32%	34%	33%			28%	55%	56%	56%	24%	27%	40%	76%	76%	76%	27%	30%	29%	85%	85%	85%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	
Output 4.4: SOS actively promotes the implementation of UN guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children	# of child rights networks where SOS CV promotes the implementation of the UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children	Annual Reports, Network Meeting Minutes			8		2			2			2	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	2			2			2			2	8	
	# of child rights networks tracking the progress of UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children in dialogue with governments	Tracking Progress Tool, UNCRC Report/Shadow Report			8		2			2			2	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	2			2			2			2	8	

Annex 4: A sampling frame

Area	Sampling frame	Sample Type
Malawi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SOS national office • Norad • SOS local office • Local authority • NGO partners • Government • Education • Technical vocation • Entrepreneurship • Children • Youth • Children/youth with disability • SRHR • Caregivers • Community Based Partners • Peer educators 	Children
		Youth
Lilongwe		Disability
		SRHR
Blantyre		Caregivers
		CBPs
Mzuzu		Peer educators
		Norad
Ngabu		SOS Deputy National Director
		SOS national MEAL officer
		SOS national FSP director
		SOS program areas FS coordinators
		DSWO
		PEA/HEADs
		DEM
		SMEDI
		TEVET
		CSO/NGO partners
		Chiefs
		Police

Annex 5: List of participants

NAME	SEX	DESIGNATION	LOCATION	CONTACT
Alexander Nguwo	M	SOS FSP coordinator	Blantyre	0888885217
Andy Chingwalu	M	SOS Field Officer	Blantyre	999544111
Salome Lekisho Mbew	F	Head Mistress	Blantyre	0999 454 588
Harvey Shuga	M	Chikondi cholinga CBO youth	Blantyre	
Enerst Gama	M	Mwayimbwanda CBO youth	Blantyre	0991 456 293
Mercy Kawiliza	F	Nthunzi wakachere CBO youth	Blantyre	
Grace Lifrex	F	Nthunzi wakachere CBO youth	Blantyre	
Patrick Jonah	M	Chikondi cholinga CBO youth	Blantyre	
Wisdom jeri	M	Chikondi cholinga CBO youth	Blantyre	0999 138 843
GVH Stande Kumbirina	M	Tosweka CBO	Blantyre	0881 155 903
GVH Gwadani	M		Blantyre	0884 480 869
GVH Makunja	M	Tagwirizana CBO	Blantyre	0999 867 624
Chief Mabuleni	M	Namalowe	Blantyre	0887 444 912
Patrick Chapora	M	PEA	Blantyre	0888 630 562
Kumbukani Kamanga		Deputy Head (Kunthembwe)	Blantyre	0998 976 802
Agness Andrason	F	Mtusasweka CBO	Blantyre	0997504153
Mathews Sakaiko	M	Mtuwasweka CBO	Blantyre	
Lydia Ntaja	M	Mtuwasweka CBO	Blantyre	
Gilbert Rodes	M	Mtuwasweka CBO	Blantyre	
Rex Chimbende	M	Mtuwasweka CBO	Blantyre	
Eneles Lungu	F	Mtuwasweka CBO	Blantyre	
Gizimoni Chatambalala	M	Mtuwasweka CBO	Blantyre	
Felix Mpate	M	Mtuwasweka CBO	Blantyre	
Cosmas M Banda	M	Mtuwasweka CBO	Blantyre	
Joyce Golden	F	Namalowe CBO	Blantyre	0997507191
Agness Master	F	Namalowe CBO	Blantyre	0882178528
Lorita Kosimasi	F	Namalowe CBO	Blantyre	0881123201
Ethel Ramusi	F	Tagwirizana CBO	Blantyre	0991982494
Stella Batumeyo	F	Tagwirizana CBO	Blantyre	
Daud Mkwanda	M	Tagwirizana CBO	Blantyre	0882713771
Jine Poya	F	Tagwirizana CBO	Blantyre	0884560056
Mary Raphael	F	Tagwirizana CBO	Blantyre	0884396875
Agness Dzingo	F	Tagwirizana CBO	Blantyre	0880215745
Kacleli Gelson	F	Namalowe CBO	Blantyre	
Gladys Juhus	F		Blantyre	
Alex William	M		Blantyre	
Danken Mustedi	M		Blantyre	
Steve Moyo	M		Blantyre	0994251251
Charles Mthengomwacha	M	FSP Coordinator	Ngabu	0881573349
		Field Officer	Ngabu	
Senior GVH Misongwe	M	Traditional leader Nthandizi CBO	Ngabu	0888 376 513
Senior GVH Msomo	M	Traditional leader Kipenjani CBO	Ngabu	0998 273 830
Calorine Kalimu	F	Children Nthandizi CBO	Ngabu	
Rose Alubeto	F	Children	Ngabu	
Judith Msithani	F	Children	Ngabu	
Willik Daiton	M	Children	Ngabu	
Zekex Vintula	M	Children	Ngabu	
Fatsani Divala	M	Children	Ngabu	
Elijah Thom	M	Children	Ngabu	
Blessings Ntota	M	Children	Ngabu	

Rex Bwemba	M	PEA	Ngabu	0881 864 789
Piston Nsanjama	M	Head Master	Ngabu	0999 600 748
Catherine Tembo	F	Mthandizi CBO	Ngabu	0881227776
Watson Sabao	M	Mthandizi CBO	Ngabu	0884588556
Edina Khambadza	F	Mthandizi CBO	Ngabu	0881368604
Mathews Nkhambala	M	Mthandizi CBO	Ngabu	0885017032
Joseph Thengoliweka	M	Tikondane CBO	Ngabu	0998417260
James Milwano	M	Tikondane CBO	Ngabu	0993540216
Ethel Thayo	F	Tikondane CBO	Ngabu	0997474004
Jenifa George	F	Tikondane CBO	Ngabu	0997884790
Peter Stanya	M	Tiphejane CBO	Ngabu	0884552869
Madalitso Chnkhalamba	M	Tiphejane CBO	Ngabu	0881164006
Loveness Symon	F	Tiphejane CBO	Ngabu	0881058783
Charles Mine Banda	M	Tiphejane CBO	Ngabu	0884124802
Dickson Magaso	M	Umodzi CBO	Ngabu	0886390665
Emmanuel John	M	Umodzi CBO	Ngabu	0888174192
Zaina Mussa	F	Umodzi CBO	Ngabu	0881910047
Francis Bornface	M	Umodzi CBO	Ngabu	0884910041
Andrew Mang'anda	M	FSP Coordinator Mzuzu	Mzuzu	0888700787
Idah banda	F	Chideso CBO	Mzuzu	0990212568
Miriam phiri	F	Chideso CBO	Mzuzu	0881236502
Agness p. Jere	F	Limbikan CBO	Mzuzu	0983722348
Monica gondwe	F	Limbikan CBO	Mzuzu	0880174627
Shallon mughogho	F	Lujeso CBO	Mzuzu	0881644211
Selina jere	F	Lujeso CBO	Mzuzu	0993303443
Tamala chimwaza	F	Lujeso CBO	Mzuzu	0997775993
Webson maseko	F	Lujeso CBO	Mzuzu	0992245989
Costance msiska	F	Lujeso CBO	Mzuzu	
Esnart mbale	F	Tawonga CBO	Mzuzu	0992007573
Monica chirwa	F	Tawonga CBO	Mzuzu	0996542796
Jane moyo	F	Tawonga CBO	Mzuzu	0991508096
Jessie kaunda	F	Tawonga CBO	Mzuzu	0886693046
Lucia nyirenda	F	Tawonga CBO	Mzuzu	0888970428
Brenda nyirenda	F	Tawonga CBO	Mzuzu	0997962175
Mr Chisanga	M	DSWO	Mzuzu	0884444848/0993370001
Stamary Tsonga		PEA	Mzuzu	0881414969
Mrs. Chawinga	F	Head teacher Zolozolo F.P. School	Mzuzu	0888629190
Mrs. M. Mkandwire	F	Deputy head teacher Choma F.P. School	Mzuzu	0889859128
Mr Chukundula	M	GVH	Mzuzu	0884864724/0992654420
Mr.Livingstone Ruyokwa	F	Peer educator	Mzuzu	0882879551
Mrs.Brenda Chawinga	F	Peer educator	Mzuzu	0886086310
Mrs.Emoline Chiumia	F	Peer educator	Mzuzu	0995801921
Mr. Woneka Kita	M	Peer educator	Mzuzu	0999472505
Mrs.Catherine Chavura	F	Peer educator	Mzuzu	0884236317
Mr.Samani Chiumia	M	GVH	Mzuzu	0888639092
Mr.Viweme Chimaliro	M	GVH	Mzuzu	0882650612
Mr. Chigamu Chipeta	M	VH	Mzuzu	0881491498
Mr. Chalika Luhana	M	VH	Mzuzu	0884197408
Mr Chapazamuka	M	VH	Mzuzu	0885003357
Meness Chavula	F	Bingavula CBO	Mzuzu	0884979920
Liness Nkhoma	F	Bingavula CBO	Mzuzu	
Everlyn Phiri	F	Bingavula CBO	Mzuzu	
David Mwale	M	Bingavula CBO	Mzuzu	

Anna Chavula	F	Bingavula CBO	Mzuzu	088081119
Tionge Ngulube	F	Chideso CBO	Mzuzu	0985043122
Moses Gondwe	M	Chilani CBO	Mzuzu	0882158154
Sozyani Mkandawire	M	Chilani CBO	Mzuzu	0881252322
Tiwonge Kayira	F	Choma CBO	Mzuzu	0881490711
Chilale Jimmy	M	Choma CBO	Mzuzu	
Emmanuel Gondwe	M	Choma CBO	Mzuzu	
Victoria Phiri	F	Choma CBO	Mzuzu	0880374975
Faith Mkandawire	F	Choma CBO	Mzuzu	0885636625
Bon Kaira	M	Choma CBO	Mzuzu	0888001077
Maxwell Mpata	M	Choma CBO	Mzuzu	0882037110
Peter Chiumia	M	Takondwa CBO	Mzuzu	
Abgel Kamanga	F	Takondwa CBO	Mzuzu	0881010436
Kondwani Muwezi	M	Takondwa CBO	Mzuzu	0885154224
Hantly Chiumia	M	Takondwa CBO	Mzuzu	0880012611
Innocent Nyirenda	M	Takondwa CBO	Mzuzu	088907142
Emily Chirwa	F	Takondwa CBO	Mzuzu	
Vester Phiri	M	Limbikani CBO	Mzuzu	0985500627
Yohane Kondowe	M	Limbikani CBO	Mzuzu	0985338692
Rose Ngwira	F	Limbikani CBO	Mzuzu	
Anastanzia Chirwa	F	Limbikani CBO	Mzuzu	0995601092
Misheck Ngwira	M	Limbikani CBO	Mzuzu	0997811629
Elizabeth Nyirenda	F	Limbikani CBO	Mzuzu	0994436345
Rexious Huka	M	Lujeso CBO	Mzuzu	0996628361
Joseph Kuwale	M	Lujeso CBO	Mzuzu	0881625503
Patrick Nyirongo	M	Lujeso CBO	Mzuzu	0994286471
Tionge Chavula	F	Lujeso CBO	Mzuzu	00997775933
Esther Chanza	F	Lujeso CBO	Mzuzu	0888422259
Lisa Banda	F	Lujeso CBO	Mzuzu	0882440058
Sydney Kayira	M	Lujeso CBO	Mzuzu	0882628174
Esnert Humba	F	Lujeso CBO	Mzuzu	0991269924
Dorah Mvula	F	Lujeso CBO	Mzuzu	
Moreen Sikawona	F	Lujeso CBO	Mzuzu	
Alfred Phiri	M	Takondwa CBO	Mzuzu	
Malias Singini	F	Vuku	Mzuzu	0881297954
Victor Chimaliro	M	Zawayo CBO	Mzuzu	0884471051
Hestings Chisambi	M	Zawayo CBO	Mzuzu	
Samuel Chimaliro	M	Zawayo CBO	Mzuzu	0887579027
Stellah Msowoya	F	Zawayo CBO	Mzuzu	
Prisca Chimaliro	F	Zawayo CBO	Mzuzu	0881763941
Grace Siyame	F	Zawayo CBO	Mzuzu	0884136316
Tasiyana Msiska	F	Zawayo CBO	Mzuzu	0881764624
Lymon Thundu	M	FSP Coordinaor	Lilongwe	
Elinas Samson	F		Lilongwe	
Leya Maliseni	F	Bright Vision CBO	Lilongwe	0992354775
Judith Ziso	F	Bright Vision CBO	Lilongwe	0991462165
Charity Goshen	F	Bright Vision CBO	Lilongwe	
Cathereni Maziro	F	Bright Vision CBO	Lilongwe	0998082875
Kelvin Bron	M	Bright Vision CBO	Lilongwe	0982891701
Dailless Sumaira	M	Chikhulupiliro CBO	Lilongwe	
Gideon Nkhoma	M	Chikhulupiliro CBO	Lilongwe	0994585404
Chimwemwe Mlunguti	M	Chikhulupiliro CBO	Lilongwe	0981029014
James Bauleni	M	Chikhulupiliro CBO	Lilongwe	0991187986
Jomeson F. Mphanje	M	Msozi F.B.O	Lilongwe	0985749086
Annie Mpokosa	F	Msozi F.B.O	Lilongwe	0984250365
Precious Kayimbe	M	Msozi F.B.O	Lilongwe	0993164617

Shelifa Kalirangwe	M	Msozi F.B.O	Lilongwe	0991352507
Lackson Kamchitsamba	M	Msozi F.B.O	Lilongwe	0997366001
Moses Abraham	M	Msozi F.B.O	Lilongwe	0993684861
Dorothy Kalembo	F	Mthaluso CBO	Lilongwe	0996718902
Esimy Ketulo	F	Mthaluso CBO	Lilongwe	0992986866
Aligesi Tomasi	F	Mthaluso CBO	Lilongwe	
Lucia Kathemba	F	Mthaluso CBO	Lilongwe	0992575951
Mavuto Jamusere	M	Mthaluso CBO	Lilongwe	0994503053
Gulayina Kholowa	F		Lilongwe	
Alinata Godeni	F		Lilongwe	
Chisomo Chisankho	F		Lilongwe	
Juliet Mesa	F		Lilongwe	
Ekilina Chilembwe	F		Lilongwe	
Vickness Mgwegwe	F		Lilongwe	
Jessy Fulati	F		Lilongwe	
Libetina Layison	F		Lilongwe	
Fela Kachimanga	F		Lilongwe	
Anne Zikitala	F		Lilongwe	
Ezileti Labisoni	F		Lilongwe	
Goodson Kachiwaka	F		Lilongwe	
yosofat Tsekulani	F		Lilongwe	
Zione Davide	F		Lilongwe	
Ireen Chapota	F		Lilongwe	
Kafai Chisamba	F		Lilongwe	
Alice Kafamtandala	F		Lilongwe	
Hope Msosa	M	SOS Deputy Director	Lilongwe	0993671332
Ndamyo Msofi		Nat. FSP Coordinator	Lilongwe	0888530893
Andrew Chantonda		SOS MEAL officer	Lilongwe	0995472492
Linda Harawa		SOS Comm. Coordinator	Lilongwe	0999439346
Kimberly Wolf		SOS Norway Grants Manager	Oslo	+4745815880
Carol Banda		SOS Nat. Gender Coordinator	Lilongwe	0991144331

Annex 6: Signed child protection commitment

SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGES MALAWI
SOS CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

1. Naom Mthunzi have read and understood the contents of the SOS Child Protection Policy and will adhere to the contents of the policy.
Signed: [Signature] Date: 16 August 2022
2. RONALD LINDANE have read and understood the contents of the SOS Child Protection Policy and will adhere to the contents of the policy.
Signed: [Signature] Date: 16 August 2022
3. Lawrence Chakanga have read and understood the contents of the SOS Child Protection Policy and will adhere to the contents of the policy.
Signed: [Signature] Date: 16 August 2022
4. Okadwa / him kaoko have read and understood the contents of the SOS Child Protection Policy and will adhere to the contents of the policy.
Signed: [Signature] Date: 16 August 2022
5. Aime Limbe have read and understood the contents of the SOS Child Protection Policy and will adhere to the contents of the policy.
Signed: [Signature] Date: 18/8/22
6. Makas Chima have read and understood the contents of the SOS Child Protection Policy and will adhere to the contents of the policy.
Signed: [Signature] Date: 18-8-22
7. I have read and understood the contents of the SOS Child Protection Policy and will adhere to the contents of the policy.
Signed: Date:

SOS CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

1. APALIMASE ANANDA ANANDU have read and understood the contents of the SOS Child Protection Policy and will adhere to the contents of the policy.
Signed: [Signature] Date: 11 August 2022
2. Naom Mthunzi have read and understood the contents of the SOS Child Protection Policy and will adhere to the contents of the policy.
Signed: [Signature] Date: 11 August 22
3. LAWRENCE D CHAKANGA have read and understood the contents of the SOS Child Protection Policy and will adhere to the contents of the policy.
Signed: [Signature] Date: 11 August 22
4. Fugeni Njema have read and understood the contents of the SOS Child Protection Policy and will adhere to the contents of the policy.
Signed: [Signature] Date: 11 August 2022
5. I have read and understood the contents of the SOS Child Protection Policy and will adhere to the contents of the policy.
Signed: Date:
6. I have read and understood the contents of the SOS Child Protection Policy and will adhere to the contents of the policy.
Signed: Date:
7. I have read and understood the contents of the SOS Child Protection Policy and will adhere to the contents of the policy.
Signed: Date:

SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGES MALAWI
SOS CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

1. Servil Gashi have read and understood the contents of the SOS Child Protection Policy and will adhere to the contents of the policy.
Signed: [Signature] Date: 16/08/2022
2. Baulah Chitula have read and understood the contents of the SOS Child Protection Policy and will adhere to the contents of the policy.
Signed: [Signature] Date: 16-08-22
3. James Zimba have read and understood the contents of the SOS Child Protection Policy and will adhere to the contents of the policy.
Signed: [Signature] Date: 16-08-22
4. Chika Chikani have read and understood the contents of the SOS Child Protection Policy and will adhere to the contents of the policy.
Signed: [Signature] Date: 16-08-22
5. Apalimase A. Nyere have read and understood the contents of the SOS Child Protection Policy and will adhere to the contents of the policy.
Signed: [Signature] Date: 18-08-22
6. I have read and understood the contents of the SOS Child Protection Policy and will adhere to the contents of the policy.
Signed: Date:
7. I have read and understood the contents of the SOS Child Protection Policy and will adhere to the contents of the policy.
Signed: Date:
8. I have read and understood the contents of the SOS Child Protection Policy and will adhere to the contents of the policy.
Signed: Date:
9. I have read and understood the contents of the SOS Child Protection Policy and will adhere to the contents of the policy.
Signed: Date:
10. I have read and understood the contents of the SOS Child Protection Policy and will adhere to the contents of the policy.
Signed: Date:
11. I have read and understood the contents of the SOS Child Protection Policy and will adhere to the contents of the policy.
Signed: Date:
12. I have read and understood the contents of the SOS Child Protection Policy and will adhere to the contents of the policy.
Signed: Date:

1/1 A loving home for every child

Annex 7: Photo album (consultation process)





References

- Family Strengthening Program (FSP) Program Document 2020-2024
- Family Strengthening Program (FSP) Manual 2007
- Family Strengthening Program (FSP) Mid-Term Review Terms of Reference
- Family Strengthening Program (FSP) Program Theory of Change
- Family Strengthening Program (FSP) Results Framework
- Family Strengthening Program (FSP) Budget Document
- Malawi National Budget Statements (2020/2021; 2021/2022; 2022/2023)
- NORAD Grant provision document
- Onne Oxford Languages Dictionary
- SOS Children's Villages Child Protection Policy
- SOS Norway-SOS CVM Partnership Agreement
- United Nations Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children