

Malawi SCT Evaluation

Baseline Qualitative Community Poverty Measures Guide 'Stages of Progress'

Focus Group Discussions

[FACILITATOR: PLEASE START THIS DISCUSSION AFTER OBTAINING INFORMED CONSENT FOR THE INTERVIEW AS WELL AS THE TAPING OF THE DISCUSSION. AFTER DO INTRODUCTIONS IN ORDER TO KNOW THE BACKGROUND OF THE DISCUSSANTS. INCLUDE AGE AND HOUSEHOLD SIZE]

OVERVIEW: The methodology involves a focus group meeting where poverty is collectively and systematically defined by community/village members through the identification of typical stages of material progress that occur at the household level. Community members are asked, for example:

“What does an extremely poor household do when a little bit of money or resources come available to it? What is the first expense to be incurred? As a little more money flows in, what does this household do in the second stage? The third stage?”

This process continues with successive stages of household progress until a 'yardstick' of progress from acute poverty to economic self-reliance is defined.

Discussants then agree on a cut-off line below which they would consider a household poor and above which a household would no longer be considered poor. [Similarly, a prosperity cut-off line is also agreed upon to ensure at least three wellbeing groups; those poor, those in-between and those considered prosperous.] Once the stages are established, the discussants are requested to place households in the community in the stages (and therefore the three wellbeing categories defined by establishing the poverty and prosperity lines). Having placed the households on the various stages, the discussants are requested to place the same households on the same stages when the late President Dr. Binguwa Mutharika took office under the UDF banner. However, before these stages are introduced, break the ice with definition of poverty and characterization of wellbeing categories in the community.

PART ONE: Community profile, livelihoods patterns, poverty and characterization of wellbeing categories in the village

[Note to facilitator: This part is meant to give you an idea of critical factors for the Stages of Progress that is to follow. You may need to refer to what you get from this discussion when trying to break down the stages. The categories here are necessarily broader than the stages. Several stages may form one category]

Thank you very much for participating in this exercise today. We will begin by discussing the community livelihoods profile.

- Zikomokwambiripovomerezakutenganaombalikuhezakwathukulero.
Tiyenitiyambendikambiranazimeneanthuamachitakutiapezechakudya,
ncherendizinazothandiziramakomoawo.

- **Ask about the community livelihoods profile:** Income streams/livelihood strategies; Expenditures and assets; Socioeconomic characteristics (e.g. credit, health status, schooling, HH conditions and other); Gender and labour markets?
 - **Kodinjirazakapezedwekachumamongandalamamderalinondizotani?**
 - **Zithu zimene anthu amagula kwambiri mdera lino ndichani?**
 - **Kodi mdera lino mwayi wopezera ngongole umapezeka?**
 - **Nanga anthuakadwala, zipatalazilipo?** Kodiumoyowaanaulibwanji (kunyozoloka, etc), nangaakulu(matendaameneabweramasikuanowa)?
 - **Nanga sukuluilipo?** Nanga anaamapitabwanjikusukulu? Nanga anaamapilizakusukulu? Atsikaamapita? Nanga anyamata?
 - **Mwayi wantchito kuno umapezeka?** Palikusiyanakulikonsepakati pa amayindiabambo pa kapezedwekantchito?
- **Ask about patterns:** Are there particular household types or distinct social, ethnic or religious groups with different access to resources, information, assets, income and power? Why are the richer groups wealthier?
 - **Mitunduyaanthumderalinoalipoanagati?Nanga zipembezozilipozingati?** Ngatipalichikhilisu,Palimaguluangati? Maguluamenewakamasiyanabwanji, kapezedwekawokachuma, minda, mwayiwopezaulangiziwazaumoyo, zaulimindinkhanizachitukuko? Nanga alindimphamvuzofananakutiangaloweudindo?
 - **Mwinakunokulianthuolemera, kutianthuamenewaafikepolemerachinachitikandi chani?**
- **Ask about trends in the community:** Has the distribution of wealth changed in recent years? If so, how has it changed and why? If not, why not?
 - Kodideralinolikutukukakapenalikulowapansi? Nanga makomoakuchitabwino kapenaakulowapansi? asinhabwanji ? nangandichifukwachani?

From this general discussion let us now move into defining poverty and characterizing wellbeing categories in this community.

- **Tiyambandikukambiranazotikusaukakapenaumphwawitanthauzo lake ndichiyanikuderalino.** Kenakatikambiranammenetingadziwirekutikhomoililirimgululiti?

What is poverty and how are the poor characterized?

- **Kodikunotikatiumphawikapenakusaukatimatanthauzachiyani? Nanga anthuosaukatimawadziwabwanji?**

In this community how many wellbeing categories are there?

- **Nanga makomomderalinoalimmaguluangati?**

What are the defining characteristics of each category?

[Note; During the discussion, probe on the demographic characteristics of the families at the bottom of the ladder, whether they have able-bodied members, lots of young children or orphans, etc.]

[Facilitator: Please probe for differences between adjacent categories]

- Nanga gululirilonselimadziwikabwanji? Nanga maguluawa **[Mention the adjacent groups]** amasiyanabwanji?

PART TWO: Collective definition of stages of progress

Purpose of this study

We are now going to engage in an activity called **Stages of Progress**. The purpose is to understand welfare conditions within this community, using definitions of well-being provided by all of you about what you have observed and perceived happening within your community. We really want to know what it takes to survive in the community and how you, the community, define poverty and well-being.

- Taonakutikunozinthuzimenezimasiyanitsamakomokapenaanthundi **[Please summarize the wellbeing characteristics found in Part One]**.
Tsopanotifunatiyendepang'onopang'onokutitimvetsetsemnenemakomomderamunoamatukuki rakuchokerakukhalaosaukitsitsampakufikakukhalaolemerakapenaochitabwinokwambiri.

Instructions

Right now, I am going to ask you a set of questions to help us construct a "scale" or spectrum of different welfare conditions facing a household. We will try to define every condition that a household has experienced or might have experienced and each of these capabilities will be defined as a "stage of progress." After we construct this scale, we will place households living in this community on the scale. This allows us to understand how households are faring currently, based on the definitions of well-being you will provide. For the purpose of this study, a community is defined as village and a household is a group of persons who eat from the same cooking pot and share resources. Does this sound reasonable?

- ❖ Panotipangemakwerero a maguluamakomokuonetsazomweamakhalanazokapenakuchita pameneakutukukammudziunowa _____ **[Name the village]**.
Tikathakupangamakwererowandiponsozomwezimayenerezakhomokukhala pa sitepiyapamakwererowa, tiyikamakomo a mmudzimuno pa makwereropomolingandimmenekhomolilili.

ESTABLISHING THE SCALE

1. Ultra-poor households

Let's start with the poorest category of households, which you termed _____ [mention the term used for the poorest group]. What is the first or most basic expense that is incurred by an extremely poor family when they are in possession of little bit of money or resources in general?

- ❖ Tiyenitiyambendigululamakomoamenendiosaukitsitsammudzimuno.
Mwanenammenetimakambazomaguluomwealimmudzimunokutienamwamakomoosaukitsistsa waamakhalaalibe _____ **[mention all the stuff that the community mentioned as missing in**

this category]. Tsonoatatiapezakokodichinthuchofunikirakwambirichimeneangafunekukhala nacho koyambachingakhalechiyani?

(Facilitator: Note that this should be a very basic necessity like food necessary for survival. If the discussants mention any of these please probe for quality as well as quantity because the type of food, clothing and shelter will also define the strata of the household. Prompt for a consensus, e.g. "I heard ____, ____ and ____ [Mention what different people mentioned as coming first]. Which one would come first? Do we agree that food comes first?")

- We will define this as Stage 1. Sitepiimeneyiikhalayoyamba, kuthanthauzakutikukhalandi ____ ndiyekutikhomolayambakusunthapango'onopang'onokuchokakukhalalosaukitsitsa. *(Facilitator: Write out each stage number with its description so all community members can see. Continue numbering stages sequentially throughout the entire exercise.)*
Mundilorendilembesitepiimeneyipapepalapakutitonsetidzionandizomwesitepeyoikuimira.

Or, what would a typical household at this level spend this money on? As a little more money flows in, what does this household purchase in their second stage of progress? (Facilitator: Continue prompting until you have completed the scale for the poorest households.)

- Nanga atatikhomolilapezakonso, chinthu china chimenechofunikiraangafunekukhala nacho ndichiyani kuonjezerapo ____ **[Mention what was decided to define the previous stages.]**

[Repeat this until you exhaust the basic stuff the poorest household would want to acquire or have as more and more resources come available. Remember to probe for quality and quantity because some of the items may also appear in other categories. Finally ask the following question:]

Are these the items that would make a poorest move into the next category you termed _____ **[Mention the next wellbeing category from the poorest. If not, repeat the process of defining stages within the poorest category until all things considered basic are exhausted.]**

2. Next stage (use name given by community if applicable, e.g. "poor households")

Now, let's proceed with the next stage. What would a household in this stage purchase when they have a little bit of money?

- Nanga makomoamenealimgululimeneli la _____ **[Mention the group]**
angayambekugulachiyani atatialindikuthekerakotero?

At the next stage, what does this household purchase or do with a little more money?

- Nanga atatiapezanzondalamazina, kuonjezerapoichichingakhalechiyani atatiapezansozina?

At what stage on this scale would you define a household as being poor as opposed to non-poor? *Or, Is the household poor if it is able to meet its [welfare threshold] needs? [Substitute 'poor' for the term used by the community.]*

[Repeat this until you exhaust all the goods and services a household in this category would want to acquire or have as more and more resources come available. Remember to probe for quality

and quantity because some of the items may also appear in other categories. Finally ask the following question]

Are these the items that would make a household in this category move into the next category you termed _____ ***[Mention the next wellbeing category. If not, repeat the process of defining stages within the category until all items for this category are exhausted.]***

3. Other categories

[Repeat the process for all the categories until you exhaust the items the richest households have in the community.]

4. Marking the poverty and prosperity stages

I will go through what we have decided to be the stages of progress in this community. I will start from the poorest to the richest. I will also give what you thought were what would characterize each stage. After I go through the stages we would want to decide the stage where we can say a household is out of poverty. We will also discuss the stage where we can say a household is prosperous.

- Tsopanondikukumbutsanizomwemwagwirizanakutindimasitepeamenekhomoliyenerakudutsam okutilikafike pa saiziyotilikapopakupezabwino.
Pasitepeiliyonsendidzinenazomwemwatindizomwekhomoliliyenerakukhalanazo.
Tikachokaapotithandizane kusankhasitepiyosiyanyitsamakomoosaukitsitsandiena.
Kenakatisankhansositepiyosiyanyitsaanthuopezabwinokwambirindiena.

[Facilitator please repeat the stages]

Let us start. Out of the bottom stages, ***[Mention the stages that belonged to the poorest and some next to them that belonged to the next group]***, which one marks the poverty line?

- Tiyenitiyambe, pasitepiawaoyambirawa ***[Mention the stages that belonged to the poorest and some next to them that belonged to the next group]***
ndisitepeitiimeneimasianitsaosaukitsitsandigululotsatiralo?

What about the top end? There is _____ ***[Mention the stages that belonged to the top most and some stages just below them]***, which one marks the prosperity line?

- Nanga sitepeyosiyanyitsaopezabwinokwambirindienaonse? Pali _____ ***[Mention the stages that belonged to the topmost and some stages just below them]***,
ndisitepeitimungatindiyosiyanyitsaolemerakwambirindienaonse?

Note to Facilitator: At the end of the exercise, scale should look something like this:

Stages of Progress: Uganda

Stage 1	Obtain food for the family		
Stage 2	Obtain some clothes for the family		
Stage 3	Send children to primary school		
Stage 4	Repair the existing shelter	Poverty Cut-Off	↑ Poor
Stage 5	Buy sheep or goat		↓ Non-Poor
Stage 6	Buy a small piece of land		
Stage 7	Buy a bicycle for transportation		
Stage 8	Buy more land	Prosperity Cut-Off	↑ Non-Poor
Stage 9	Build a permanent house		↓ Prosperous
Stage 10	Start operating a small business of a few farm products		
Stage 11	Buy a car or build commercial property		

(From Stages of Progress Field Manual. Krishna, 2005)

PLACING HOUSEHOLDS ON THE SCALE

(Interviewer:)

Now we would like you to place the households in this village in each of these categories, using these beans to represent the households. [Interviewer: Give 100 beans to the group, and have them distribute the beans into the various categories to reflect the proportion of households in each stage.

- Tsopanotiyikemakomoalimmudzimunopamasitepeawatapagangawa. Mwachitsanzotiyerekezakutimmudzimunomulimakomo 100 omweayimiridwandi ____ . Pa makomo 100, ndiangatiomwetingatialisitepeyoyambayi? Nanga yachiwiriya? Nanga inayotsatirayi. ***[Facilitator, continue until you exhaust the 100 households. As you go through, please repeat the characteristics of the stage and probe for the characteristics of the households being placed at the stage]***

PART THREE: Changes in Poverty Over Time

OVERVIEW: The purpose of this component is to understand the distribution of poverty ten years ago and then probe to understand why households moved into or out of poverty. Ideally a well-known event is chosen to demarcate the time period being used in the study. Merely saying ‘10 years ago’ is not clear enough, and it is possible that people might refer to different times while speaking of households' situations in an earlier period. For this reason, a significant event that occurred around the time of each time period is used so that the community group refers to the same time period. For the purpose of this study, ten years ago is 2004 when the late President Dr. Binguwa Mutharika became president on a UDF ticket.

1. Establish the Distribution Ten Years Ago & Today

Using the beans, now ask the group to portray the distribution of households in the village now and in 2004 across the wellbeing categories defined by the poverty and prosperity lines. Then compare the distribution today and ten years ago and confirm that the village in general has gotten richer, poorer or stayed the same.

- Pamasitepeawatapangawa, nanga mu chaka cha 2004 (**remind them Bingu's entry into government on UDF ticket**), pa makoma 100 ndiangatianali pa sitepeyoyambayi? Nanga inayi? Etc.

2. Why or how did individual households move into or out of poverty?

Have the group focus on two groups of households, those that were poor ten years ago and no longer poor (are above the threshold) and those that were not poor ten years ago but became poor. We want the community to identify the factors associated with change in each of the categories. Experience has shown that community groups are indeed able to come up with the major 'driving forces', or reasons, that have led households within their community into – or out of – poverty, provided they are asked respectfully and systematically using a comparative perspective. We have found that there are typically many reasons, which can be very interconnected, for households' movements into and out of poverty.

- Taonandimmenemwanenera, enamapezedweawoanapitapatsogoloenaanaanabwererambuyo. Ameneanachoka mu umphwawi, chinachitikandichiyani? Nanga amaenanabwererambuyowa, chinachitikandichiyani?

[Facilitator: During the discussion, also try and elicit information about any outside interventions or programs (or agencies) that facilitated the movements. This is important for identifying potentially successful policy interventions or other initiatives that might be replicated. Part of the discussion should also touch on programs or interventions that would be useful to the community to help poverty alleviation (i.e. raising households out of poverty, or stabilizing non-poor households).]

Tips for Ascertaining Reasons:

Reasons should be probed as deeply as possible to get at core factors. For example, if the reason given is 'The livestock died of disease', ask 'So the livestock died from disease, but this has happened in other households that have not fallen into poverty; why was this a particularly important factor for this household? What else was relevant to their particular case?'

Similarly, look for more concrete reasons beyond abstract ones. For example, if the reason given is 'God was good to me', ask 'In what specific ways was God good to you?' First probe for all the reasons, then try and establish the chronological order of the reasons. Alternatively, try to probe for the sequence of events that led to the movement in and out of poverty. We have found it problematic to pursue reasons in order of importance ('importance to whom?' is among the issues that arise). Thus a major challenge at this step is identifying these reasons as clearly as possible, and pursuing the sequence of events over the period that led to, say, a particular household's upward or downward progress.