



Civil Society Social Protection Network Advocacy Strategy

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Context and Overview

The Social protection is a fundamental human right, which is enshrined in United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and often reinforced and reflected in national legislation. Around the world, social protection is increasingly being seen as an investment in society with real, tangible social and economic returns.

Poverty in Malawi is both widespread and severe, with over 50 per cent of Malawians living below the national poverty line. The Government of Malawi has identified social protection as a key instrument in addressing poverty and vulnerability. The Malawi Social Support Policy (MSSP) and Malawi National Social Support Programme (MNSSP) set the building blocks of the country's strategy on social protection. The Malawi National Social Support Programme II is the most updated policy instrument being used in the sector. Other national legislative and policy frameworks reinforcing the social protection include the Malawi Constitution article IV, Malawi 2063 enabler 5 identifies Human Capital Development as one of the key enablers for an inclusively wealth and self-reliant nation National Resilience Strategy, National Disaster Management Policy, and Decentralization Policy among others. Social protection systems have the potential to assist in the realization of a host of human rights, including the right to an adequate standard of living, the right to adequate food, housing, education, and the right to the highest attainable standard of health. Besides providing essential income guarantees and allowing beneficiaries to meet basic needs, social protection programmes provide an opportunity for greater human capital development contributing to improving productivity and national development.

While there are a number of instruments to guide implementation of social protection programs in Malawi, there are several challenges being faced, and these include; low coverage, inadequate awareness among beneficiaries and communities on their social protection rights, Low advocacy and monitoring of social protection programs, limited civil society and social partners participation in implementation of social protection programs, weak governance and administration systems, low ownership of programs both technically and financially which raises the question of sustainability. While the main responsibility for the provision of comprehensive social protection systems lies with the states, civil society organizations and social partners play an important contribution towards strengthening the design and implementation of effective social protection systems by governance and accountability in social protection systems as Civil Society organizations advocate for the rights and the empowerment of people¹. The Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No.2022) urges members states to formulate and implement national social security extension strategies, based on effective social dialogue and social participation. Members states are encouraged to monitor progress in implementing social protection floors and achieving objectives of national social protection strategies through appropriate nationally defined mechanisms, including tripartite participation with representative organizations of employers and workers, as well as consultation with other relevant and representative organizations of persons concerned². The social protection policy promotes an enabling environment for the implementation of the social protection systems built on the principles of good governance including inclusivity, effective participation, transparency, accountability, and effective management of responsive social protection systems.

1 Civil Society Guide to National Social Protection Floors; Friedrich Ebert Stiftung)

2 https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_INSTRUMENT_ID:3065524



1.0 Civil Society Social Protection Network

The Civil Society Social Protection Network, which is simply referred to as the Network, is a grouping of civil society organizations in social protection sector. The Network was formed to fill the gap in social protection advocacy. In 2019, the International Labour Organization in conjunction with Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs commissioned a study on social accountability in social protection. Some of the key findings of the study were that there was weak social accountability mechanism, limited understanding of social protection at all levels, low political will as evidenced by weak governance mechanisms. The study among other factors attributed this to low participation of civil society organizations in social protection sector which could have strengthened social accountability mechanisms through setting up structures of accountability and also raising awareness of social protection in the country. Social accountability tools play a crucial role in ensuring the effectiveness, transparency, and responsiveness of social protection programs. These tools empower citizens, beneficiaries, and civil society organizations to actively participate in monitoring and influencing the design and implementation of these programs.

The Network has a steering committee led by chairperson and 10 other members plus the coordinator. It was launched on May 30, 2023, at Golden Peacock Hotel in Lilongwe.

1.1 Objective of this Strategy

Developing an advocacy strategy on social protection requires a well-structured and comprehensive approach to effectively engage with stakeholders, policymakers, and the public. This strategy document provide roadmap to help civil society realize its potential in contributing towards a comprehensive social protection system in Malawi through advocacy and capacity building. There is an urgent need to advocate for social protection to build ownership, increase financing and raise awareness of its importance in national development. Successful advocacy is not solely about demanding change but also about building relationships, offering evidence-based solutions, and engaging in constructive dialogue with decision-makers. Therefore, this advocacy strategy will employ initiatives focusing on collaboration and evidence-based dialogue to facilitate Civil society network effective advocacy for improvements in social protection policies. Below are the key elements to for the Civil Society Social Protection Network advocacy



Malawi

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2.0 Goals, Activities, Outputs and Outcomes

This strategy has three main goals, each goal has outlined its activities, outputs and outcomes.

2.1 Goal 1: Enhance Advocacy on Social Protection

The Network through its organizations will advocate for implementation of a comprehensive social protection system across the country reaching out to all current and potential stakeholders. This will contribute to raise the profile, importance and impact of social protection programmes in Malawi.

2.1.1 Activities

The Network will implement the following activities among others to advocate for social protection in this country.

- a. Conduct regular meetings targeting policy makers including but not limited to members of parliament, ward councilors, cabinet ministers, principal secretaries, heads of government agencies, and development partners.
- b. Evidence building and regular dissemination of research findings on social protection to provide up to date evidence and developments in the social protection sector
- c. Produce annual policy briefs on social protection programmes
- d. Conduct strategic meetings targeting, beneficiaries, policy makers, implementers and civil society organizations both local and international
- e. Conduct Joint Review missions to promote collaborative assessments involving government representatives, donors, civil society, and beneficiaries to evaluate the implementation and impact of social protection programs.

2.1.2 Outputs

The key outputs after implementing activities will be but not limited to the following:

- a. Four high level meetings on social protection conducted every year
- b. Two key research study reports disseminated to policy makers, practitioners and development partners every year
- c. Four strategic meetings with civil society organizations conducted every year
- d. 1 joint review mission to specific selected programmes



2.1.3 Outcomes

Implementation of these activities as a means of advocating for social protection will lead to the following outcomes among others.

- a. Profile of social protection raised leading to increased political will by Malawi Government and policy makers potentially leading to increased financing and improved coordination at all levels.
- b. Well-designed and comprehensive social protection programs which are cost effective
- c. Increased adequacy and inclusiveness of social protection programmes
- d. Civil society organizations capacitated to meaningfully engage in social protection programmes design and implementation leading to improved social accountability mechanisms

2.2 Goal 2: Raising Awareness of social protection

The levels of social protection awareness is inadequate among most people including beneficiaries. This has led to myths about social protection resulting to limited support.

2.2.1 Activities

The Network will implement activities which will contribute to better understanding of social protection, its roles in national development among leading stakeholders. Some of the activities to be implemented include the following:

- a. Conduct meetings at district and community levels
- b. Conduct media engagement meetings on social protection
- c. Conduct quarterly stakeholders' engagement meetings on social protection
- d. Promote dissemination on social protection information through conduct phone in radio and television programs on social protection and other appropriate channels.
- e. Raise awareness amongst Decision Makers and increased beneficiary voice in the implementation of social protection programmes in Malawi
- f. Develop and implement platforms for public forum discussions on social protection programming and service delivery

2.2.2 Outputs

- a. The key outputs after implementing the activities will be;
- b. Two district meetings and two community meetings conducted per district per year
- c. Two media engagements on social protection conducted per year
- d. Two radio and television phone in programs run with main media houses during social protection week



2.2.3 Outcomes

Implementation of these activities will lead to the following outcomes among others;

- a. Key stakeholders like district councils have better understanding of social protection, thereby district council reflect social protection in planning and budgeting
- b. Better coverage of social protection
- c. Better understanding of social protection among the populace thereby reduced misconception about it

2.3 Goal 3: Strengthening Transparency and social accountability in the delivery of social protection system

The recent study commissioned by the International Labour Organization and Malawi Government on social accountability in social protection showed that the system is weak. Most programs don't have accountability mechanisms. The Network will work to address this through implementation of a number of activities.

2.3.1 Activities

To achieve the set goal, the following activities among others will be implemented

- a. Conduct policy engagement meetings on social protection
- b. Establishing social accountability structures at all levels
- c. Conduct regular quarterly stakeholder's meetings on social protection
- d. Conducting annual budget tracking and analysis
- e. Beneficiary Feedback Mechanisms: Develop and implement social accountability tools such as Community Scorecards to facilitate beneficiaries and communities' opportunity to assess the quality and performance of social protection services.

2.3.2 Outputs

Key outputs after implementation of the key activities will be:

- a. Two policy engagement meetings conducted with Malawi Government agencies
- b. Facilitate establishment of twenty-eight district grievance redress mechanisms and one mechanism per traditional authority
- c. Four networking meetings conducted every year
- d. Annual social protection budget Tracking report every financial year



2.3.3 Outcomes

Implementation of these activities will lead to the following outcomes among others;

- a. Duty bearers and the citizenry become more accountable to each other.
- b. Social protection and development programs implemented in a transparent and accountable way there by maximizing impact of social protection in national development.

Target Audiences

Decision Making Audience

1. Members of Parliament
2. Ministry of Finance – Treasury
3. Relevant Government Line Ministries implementing services related to social protection
4. Development Partners

Influencing Audience

1. General Public
2. The media
3. Community Leaders, Chiefs, headmen
4. Other Civil Society Organizations

Implementing Audience

1. Regional Offices
2. District Social Protection Committees
3. NGOs

Using Audience

1. Social Protection Beneficiaries



Key Advocacy Messages

Key messages are aimed to transmit clear and compelling messages that communicate the importance of social protection and the benefits it brings to individuals and society as a whole. The key messages will be tailored to resonate with different target audiences.

1

Social protection services are a basic human right

2

Social protection services contribute to poverty reduction

3

Funding social protection programmes is an investment key to national development.

4

There is a need for a comprehensive legislative and policy framework to support provision of sustainable social protection services across the life cycle.

5

Social protection programmes are an investment in human capital development that contributes to national development.

6

The population in Malawi should have access to basic amenities such as health, education, jobs, food income security across their life cycle.

7

Social protection sector in Malawi has several programmes /services available for different categories of the vulnerable population.

8

Citizens are key partners in delivery of social protection services.

9

Citizen's voice matter in the delivery of social protection programmes.

10

Citizens must exercise the right to speak to contribute to effective delivery of social protection services.

11

Social protection accountability should be promoted to improve effective delivery of social protection systems.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring indicators will be critical in keeping the advocacy initiative on track, and for assessing the changes it has achieved based on the stated goals. Regular meetings by the Civil Society Social Protection Network members will be held in accordance with the agreed schedule. All activities will be reviewed subject to the success and lessons learnt from implementation will feed future programming.

Estimated Budget and Resources

Table 1: Implementation Plan; Budget

Objective/ Goal	Key Messages	Activities	Target Audience	Outputs	Indicators	Targets	Channels / tools	Budget USD	Source of Potential funding
Goal 1: Enhance Advocacy on Social Protection	Social protection services are a basic human right Funding social protection programmes is key to national development	Conduct regular meetings targeting policy makers including but not limited to members of parliament, ward councilors, cabinet ministers, principal secretaries, heads of government agencies, and development partners	Policy makers, development partners	Four high level meetings on social protection conducted every year	Number of high level meetings conducted	4	Workshops Policy Debates	50,000	Development partners

Table 1: Implementation Plan; Budget

Objective/ Goal	Key Messages	Activities	Target Audience	Outputs	Indicators	Targets	Channels / tools	Budget USD	Source of Potential funding
	Social protection accountability should be promoted to improve effective delivery of social protection systems	Conduct Joint Review Missions to promote collaborative assessments involving government representatives, donors, civil society, and beneficiaries.	Development partners, policy holders, CSOs, Beneficiaries	1 joint review mission to specific selected programmes	One joint review meeting held	1	Meeting	20,000	Development partners
	Social protection programmes are an investment in human capital development and contributes to national development	Produce annual policy briefs on social protection	Policy holders, decision makers	Every year policy briefs published and disseminated to policy makers	Policy briefs produced	1	Consultancy	25,000	Development partners
	Citizens are key partners in delivery of social protection services	Conduct strategic meetings targeting civil society organizations both local and international	CSOs, Development partners	Four strategic meetings with civil society organizations conducted every year	4 strategic meetings conducted	4	Workshops Policy dialogue meetings	30,000	Development partners

Objective/ Goal	Key Messages	Activities	Target Audience	Outputs	Indicators	Targets	Channels / tools	Budget USD	Source of Potential funding
	Funding of social protection programmes is key to national development	Evidence building and regular dissemination of research findings on social protection to provide up to date evidence and developments in the social protection sector	Policy holders, policy makers, development partners	Two key research study reports disseminated to policy makers, practitioners, and development partners every year	2 research study reports disseminated	2	Workshops	50,000	Development partners
Goal 2: Raising awareness of social protection	Citizens voices matter in delivery of social protection programmes	Conduct meetings at district and community levels	Citizens, district council officials, and CSOs, media	Two district meetings and two community meetings conducted per district per year	2 district and 2 community meetings conducted	4	Community sensitization Meetings	28,000	Development partners
	Social protection accountability should be promoted to improve effective delivery of social protection systems	Conduct media engagement meetings on social protection	Media houses	Two media engagements on social protection conducted per year	2 media engagements held	2	Workshop Radio programmes	20,000	Development partners

Objective/ Goal	Key Messages	Activities	Target Audience	Outputs	Indicators	Targets	Channels / tools	Budget USD	Source of Potential funding
	Monitoring key to social protection implementation	Conduct quarterly stakeholders' engagement meetings on social protection	Policy holders, development partners, CSOs and media	Three meetings with stakeholders conducted every year	3 stakeholders meetings conducted	3	Meetings	23,000	Development partners
	Social protection accountability should be promoted to improve effective delivery of social protection systems	Promote dissemination on social protection information through conduct phone in radio and television programs on social protection and other appropriate channels	Policy holders, policy makers, development partners	Two radio and television phone in programs run with main media houses during social protection week	2 radio television programs conducted	2	Radio, Television and Newspapers	20,000	Development partners
	Need for comprehensive legislative and policy framework for social protection	Raise awareness amongst Decision Makers and increased beneficiary voice in the implementation of social protection programmes in Malawi	Policy makers, development partners, and policy holders	Amplify social protection through awareness raising by engagement of the policy makers.	Number of awareness conducted	4	Meetings	25,000	Development partners

Objective/ Goal	Key Messages	Activities	Target Audience	Outputs	Indicators	Targets	Channels / tools	Budget USD	Source of Potential funding
Goal 3: Strengthening Transparency and social accountability in the delivery of social protection system	Social protection accountability should be promoted to improve effective delivery of social protection systems	Develop and implement platforms for public forum discussions on social protection programming and service delivery	CSOs, citizens , government and development partners	District forums established in each of the districts in Malawi	Number platforms established	28	Meetings	35,000	Development partners
	Social protection services key to national development	Conduct policy engagement meetings on social protection	Policy holders, policy makers, development partners and CSOs	Two policy engagement meetings conducted with Malawi Government agencies	2 policy engagements meetings held	2	Meetings	16,000	Development partners
	Social protection accountability should be promoted to improve effective delivery of social protection systems	Establishing social accountability structures at all levels	Citizens, CSOs	Facilitate establishment of twenty-eight district grievance redress mechanisms and one mechanism per traditional authority	Number of grievance redress mechanisms established per district and traditional authority level	28 Districts 400 traditional	Meetings	300,000	Development partners

Objective/ Goal	Key Messages	Activities	Target Audience	Outputs	Indicators	Targets	Channels / tools	Budget USD	Source of Potential funding
	Social protection services reduces poverty	Conduct regular quarterly stakeholder's meetings on social protection	Development partners, CSOs, policy holders and policy makers	Four networking meetings conducted every year	4 network meetings held	4	Meetings	30,000	Development partners
	Funding social protection programmes is key to national development	Conducting annual budget tracking and analysis	Policy makers, policy holders, CSOs, development partners and media houses	Annual social protection budget Tracking report every financial year	Number of budget tracking meetings held	1	Policy Brief Meetings	100,000	Development partners
								772,000	



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Government of Ireland

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