

**Scottish Government International Development Programme
End-Year Report**

1. General project information		
1.1	Project reference Number	MAL/18/19-SS
1.2	Name of organisation	CCAP Synod of Livingstonia Education Department.
1.3	Lead partner(s) organisation	Sense Scotland.
1.4	Project title	Promoting Equal Access to Education in Malawi.
1.5	Reporting period	From: 01/04/2020 To: 31/03/2021
1.6	Reporting year	2020/21
1.7	Project start date	01/10/2018
1.8	Project end date	31/03/2023
1.9	Total project budget*	£1,331,043
1.10	Total funding from Scottish Government*	£1,239,488
1.11	Provide a brief description of the project's aims, highlighting which of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) your project is working towards? (200 words)	<p>This community empowered inclusive education project in the Northern Region of Malawi aims to address ingrained and inherited negative attitudes towards disability, improve access to a quality education and enable all children to reach their full potential regardless of any additional needs.</p> <p>The project is working in 502 schools across 40 educational zones in Chitipa, Karonga and Nkhata Bay to support the provision of a relevant education for learners in both primary and secondary schools. We work with influential community leaders, mainstream teachers, parents, government structures, local government officials and the children themselves to promote equal access to education for all children, to give them a future of their own choosing that only an education can bring.</p> <p>The project takes a holistic approach to tackling the obstacles identified locally which hinder access to education for children with additional needs. These can be attitudinal, at home, school or the wider community and they can be physical, with challenges to get to school or easily access classrooms or toilet blocks.</p> <p>The project works directly towards supporting three SDGs: 4 (Quality Education, 5 (Gender Equality) and</p>

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		10 (Reduced Inequalities) and indirectly 1 (No Poverty) and 3 (Good Health and Well Being).
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2. Project progress and results

Please use this section to give an update on the progress the project has made during this reporting period.

2.1	<p>Provide an update on the progress your project has made over the past 12 months. Use this space to update us on what has gone well and any challenges you have experienced, detailing how you have overcome these. (Max 500 words)</p> <p>Progress 221 Parent Support Groups (PSGs) have been established of which all have been equipped with business management, group dynamics and leadership skills and started income generating activities (see case study). After training, many PSGs have undertaken initiatives in supporting children with disabilities to learn during school closures (https://www.sensescotland.org.uk/what-we-do/latest-news/positive-impact-continues-despite-the-pandemic) Anecdotally, members of the PSGs are reporting improved living standards, including roofing houses, family bedding and increased access to buy food due to resources from their income generating activities. 2562 peer educator members have been trained, with their roles focusing in promoting disability friendly environments in schools as well as advocating for the wellbeing of their fellows with disabilities in their communities through a model of “My, School, My Voice.” Their active roles in promoting inclusion were recognised by both the Ministries of Education, Science and Technology and Health to champion change at community levels on issues of disabilities and COVID-19 awareness messages in schools and communities, as well as disseminating messaging around child protection, from both potential abuse and COVID-19 infection. A new implementation strategy, continuing from last year focused on training Zonal Education Coordinators (ZECs), Community Development Assistants (CDAs) and School Health and Nutrition Teachers (SHN) as project Trainer of Trainers (ToTs), in project interventions, implementation strategy as well as data collection, keeping and management via an online platform of Kobo Collect toolkit. This approach targeted enhancing project visibility amidst the pandemic which brought restrictions in movements and limited gatherings, alongside ensuring a practical Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system at community level for reliable and valid data management. This resulted in an improved community-based network system for both effective project implementation due to locally</p>
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	<p>available ToTs and ensured an effective support structure for PSGs and their children.</p> <p>With the fully trained ToTs and volunteers leading on training, this school-based approach even with social distancing, allowed the project to reach more people, with smaller groups but more frequent sessions to those living locally. This was undertaken using savings in transport costs for both staff and beneficiaries with remote staff support ensuring quality control and M&E.</p> <p>By using this approach and taking advantage of the school closures to work with more teachers without disrupting school timetables, this has ensured that all the workshops substantially exceeded the year end milestones.</p> <p>Challenges: COVID-19: limited staff movement and school closures for most of the year. Mitigation using local ToTs to facilitate training and M&E. Demand for assistive devices: Mitigation included linking with other stakeholder who offer these and sharing project updates at District wide stakeholder meetings. Lack of disability-friendly school infrastructures: Working with school management to use School Improvement Grants and PSG income to improve facilities, eg ramps, wider doors etc. Continued shortage of specialist and mainstream teachers: Mitigation included advocacy with relevant stakeholders and promotion of Continuous Professional Development of teachers with inclusive education skills. Accessibility; heavy rains and impassable roads impacted on beneficiary turn-up and staff's mobility. Using local ToTs, and more frequent smaller group sessions to offer alternative training options.</p>
2.2	<p>Has the focus or plans for delivery changed significantly during the last year? Please highlight what issues or challenges prompted this change and how you anticipate any changes in focus will impact on the previously agreed outcomes (Max 500 words)</p> <p>Inevitably with the growing impact and restrictions to normal activities due to COVID-19 prevention measures, the project's original delivery plans and focus for the year's implementation changed.</p> <p>We put in place a number of measures to enable safe and refocused delivery including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher training: we were able to take advantage of school closures to work with teachers on both the two-day Teacher Awareness and Communication Training (TACT) and the longer five-day INSET. Usually, schools could not release more than one or two teachers per school at a time without affecting their school timetables, but with more teachers free and with the full encouragement of District education staff, these sessions were increased. Smaller groups but with more frequency ensured that social distancing and all prevention measures were observed, and specific COVID-19 Government approved messaging was introduced at all training sessions.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilisation of Peer Educators: following school closures in April 2020, the project lobbied with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology on engagement of Peer Educators groups at school level to advocacy for inclusive education, alongside COVID-19 awareness gatherings conducted by the Ministry of Health. Here the Peer Educators were used to display different activities educating the community members on prevention as well as education and disability matters, ensuring the continued visibility of the project regardless of the restriction in public gatherings. • Use of ToTs to train project beneficiaries at school level: living locally, these ToTs were able to train the recommended number of people following the precautionary measures, through smaller but more frequent sessions, remotely supported by project staff. • Designated as Provider of Essential Services; Being part of the prevention taskforce in Northern Malawi, the project successfully lobbied for this recognition, which enabled the project to operate within pandemic guidelines of meetings of less than 20 people, but regardless of the ban on public gatherings. • Remote staff meetings: with staff restrictions on the numbers of staff working in offices and limited travel possible, online staff reviews and planning meetings were held monthly. This enabled joint planning for field activities and support for the ToTs at community level. • Generally, the project is largely on track or in some areas ahead of targets, but with school closures, we marginally underachieved in the percentage of schools maintaining accurate data about learners with additional needs. With schools now open, this will be a priority for the local volunteers and project staff.
2.3	<p>Taking into consideration what you have achieved during the last 12 months, along with any challenges you have experienced, please highlight to us what lessons you have learned, and how these will be applied in the project in the future. (Max 500 words)</p> <p>Continuation of the school-based delivery of project activities: This approach targeting school-based instead of wider zonal based delivery, has helped the project to reach out to a large number of beneficiaries, safely within COVID-19 protocols, whilst using the same budget, with the local focus reducing the transport allowances and staff costs.</p> <p>The use of project-trained ToTs for direct project implementation: The use of local government and district education officials as ToTs worked really well in improving the ownership of the project by stakeholders as part of long-term sustainability. It was noted that in spite of COVID-19 restrictions, community mobilisation, data collection and sharing of information has improved in the past 12 months compared to previous years.</p> <p>The use of Peer Educators for lobbying and advocacy at school level: This is one of the great lessons. While facing pandemic restrictions in public gatherings, the trained Peer Educators in all the schools could still organise events to educate the communities surrounding the school, teachers and other learners to advocate for inclusion of learners with disability alongside prevention messages, a situation learnt to be a vibrant tool for project sustainability and in any future emergency situations.</p>

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The use of Community Development Officers (CDAs) to train parent support groups: With both the challenges of mobility during rainy seasons and COVID-19, the use of CDAs to facilitate the project trainings has been very effective and efficient for the project. Working with these CDAs, has helped project visibility at local level as they have been able to organise project beneficiaries within their reach and train them on Village Savings and Loans skills and support the development and sustainability of the groups locally.

Lessons learned include:

Assessment of children with disabilities and data management: The project will empower the ToTs, with skills of the Mobile Platform of Kobo Collect toolkit to conduct school-based assessment of children with disabilities in order to identify all the children.

Project visibility and result based management: The project will work with ToTs to support all project beneficiaries in the implementation of project interventions in support of children with disabilities in schools and the wider communities.

Bridging the community development agenda gap: Previously there was limited opportunity to share disability data collected at community level. With the establishment of PSGs and the wider community network established by project activities, this gap is now being addressed. Data is collected by PSGs, shared with ToTs who consolidate and share with teachers and then Primary Education Advisers and upwards to District levels of both education and planning. Ultimately it is hoped that this will now feed into District Implementation Plans, ensuring wider disability planning, inclusion and engagement going forward.

Continued pandemic mitigation to protect both staff and beneficiaries will include:

- ✓ ToTs and Peer Educators to reinforce COVID-19 prevention measures during all project interventions;
- ✓ Provision of hand washing facilities at every training sessions or project meeting;
- ✓ Provision and wearing of masks by all the staff and beneficiaries during all gatherings.

3. Partnerships and collaboration

This section allows you to discuss how partnership working is progressing on the project, as well as wider collaboration and sharing of learning.

3.1

Provide an update on how partnership working has gone in the past 12 months. Let us know about any highlights, challenges or changes to roles and responsibilities. (Max 350 words)

CCAP Synod of Livingstonia Education Department: There are no changes within the project leadership and Education Department, but the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia Secretariat has a new General Secretary [redacted] replacing the former, and [redacted]. This is a four-year term position.

MaSP: As reported last year, the project is still a lead partner in the Northern Cluster of MaSP where the project participates in the quarterly meetings, most of which have been held online due to COVID-19.

World Vision Malawi (WVM): During the reporting period, the project has worked with WVM at community level across the three project Districts in areas

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	<p>of constructing disability friendly infrastructures including ramps and toilet access.</p> <p>500 Miles: A physiotherapy NGO based at Mzuzu hospital working in partnership with the project as a referral point for children identified with different disabilities across the three districts.</p> <p>Other stakeholders engaged with through District level meetings include the following NGOs and CSOs, but more on a general basis of information sharing: Action Aid, MACOHA, LIP Africa, World Relief and Plan Malawi.</p>		
3.2	<p>Have any Scotland-based staff visited the project in the past 12 months? Give details including key activities and outputs of these visits.</p> <p>Due to Covid-19 pandemic and restrictions in movement, no visit has been undertaken during the reporting period. However, there has been frequent online meetings and calls between the project staff in Malawi and Sense Scotland's Project Manager, [redacted].</p>		
Date of visit		Key achievements / outputs of visit	Follow-up actions
N/A		N/A	N/A
N/A		N/A	N/A
N/A		N/A	N/A
3.3	<p>Please tell us about any dissemination and learning throughout this reporting period. How have you promoted effective learning across the project? Please explain what processes you have used both internally and externally to share learning from the project so far, and how this learning is being used. (Max 500 words)</p>		
	<p>Project advocacy: During this year under the coordination of the Project Advocacy Officer, the project held meetings and linked up with key relevant stakeholders including the Ministries of Education and Health and partners at both community and regional level. These were to lobby for inclusion around disability mainstreaming in the development agendas of individual NGOs and government interventions across the three Districts. Specific meeting outcomes are expected during the next reporting year.</p> <p>Review meetings: Quarterly review meetings with beneficiaries have been conducted across all three Districts in order to plan together, give and receive feedback and ensure project relevance. At these meetings the project implementation strategy is reviewed against three key questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Successes of the project II. Key challenges III. Possible solutions to the challenges. <p>With such guiding questions, beneficiaries are able to highlight areas of concern or success. One of the notable outcomes from these meetings has been the school-based approach for project implementation to reduce the distances travelled and fair and appropriate transport refunds.</p> <p>Stakeholders meetings: The project has conducted quarterly stakeholders meetings at district level as an effective learning strategy to share and discuss</p>		

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	<p>project progress as well as opportunities to learn, coordinate and reduce duplication across project management in each district.</p> <p>Annual MEL report: The production of the second annual report. Cross-sectional in nature and adopting a mixed-methods approach used in the original Baseline survey to assess progress against project outcomes and indicators. This will be shared at District level for wider dissemination and data analysis.</p> <p>The utilisation of social media: Alongside specific stakeholder meetings, the project continues to expand its' use of social media platforms to disseminate its work, getting feedback and in the process, learn from individual suggestions and comments.</p> <p>Project Risk Management register at community level: The project developed community-based registers where PSGs, with support from ToTs, keep issues of safeguarding, children identified with disabilities and membership of PSGs reached by the project. This information is helpful for the local government councils in developing their District Implementation Plan. These registers and PSGs have also become a focal point to share updates of what is happening at community level. Working with World Vision in Karonga these have been used to develop their community-based management interventions. These have also proved invaluable for YUNECO, an NGO in Nkhata Bay which targets girls' education. They use the availability of registers in all the community, and links up with PSGs to identify girls that have stopped attending school to encourage and support their return.</p>
3.4	<p>Has the project completed a mid-term project evaluation in the past 12 months (or is one planned for the next 12 months)? Please provide detail of the outcome of the evaluation. (Max 500 words)</p>
	<p>It was not possible to undertake this during the year due to the limitations of effective data gathering with COVID-19 restrictions in place. Permission was sought and obtained to carry this forward to the new financial year, based around current and emerging restrictions.</p>
3.5	<p>Please highlight how you are maintaining an awareness of others working in this region, giving details of collaboration, joint working or partnerships with others. (Max 500 words)</p>
	<p>Advocacy Meetings: The project coordinates advocacy meetings with different project partners including local communities to influence change by targeting duty bearers and those influential in making decisions of development agendas to include children with disabilities. Using the "Citizen Voice and My school, My Voice" model the project coordinates interface meetings between project beneficiaries and duty bearers in influencing change, particularly working with the Peer Educators.</p> <p>MaSP networking meetings: The project is a lead member of Malawi–Scotland Partnership. As a MSP Award of Excellence winner last year, and with COVID-19 restrictions impacting on field visits this year, this project was chosen to have a video made about it's work, evidencing the impact of the PSGs in particular. At just under 10 minutes long, it was shown at a MSP zoom session in March with participants from both Malawi and Scotland,, Using this forum, the project represents and submits reports as part of an awareness to others in the region.</p> <p>Stakeholders meetings: The project further conducts quarterly stakeholders meeting in each of the three Districts. These stakeholders are those working either in education or other activities which affect issues of disabilities, in order</p>

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	<p>to advocate for wider and long-term disability mainstreaming. In such way, the region is well informed of the project's work.</p> <p>DEC Meetings: This activity involves the full local government council which compiles all NGO, line ministries and all partners who are working in the district. The project provides reports to such forums and above that the each of the Project District Project Coordinators are members of the DEC, and are tasked at their monthly meetings to inform the Council on the progress of the project, keeping the wider District stakeholders aware of the work, sharing data and best practice, and reducing duplication.</p> <p>Public awareness of the project: With the use of national and community media, the project also works with well-known media houses including Zodiac Radio and TV, Times News and Nation New Publications including other various community radio stations as a way of informing the region the work of the project in promoting equal access to education in Malawi, regardless of additional needs.</p>
<p>4. Safeguarding and fraud <i>Please ensure you complete questions 4.1 and 4.2 even if you have no incidents to report.</i></p>	
4.1	<p>Have there been any safeguarding incidents, either relating to staff/volunteers or beneficiaries of the Grant or the Project, in the last 12 months?</p> <p>The project has community registers in place, manned by PSGs in order to capture any safeguarding issues which can then be reported to the relevant local authorities for appropriate actions.</p> <p>During the past 12 months, the project has not registered any safeguarding issues.</p>
4.2	<p>Have these incidents reported at 4.1 been reported to relevant authorities, and if so, to whom?</p> <p>No incidents were reported, but existing systems have continued to be strengthened during the year, working closely with other NGOs and stakeholders on local best practice.</p> <p>Systematically, if an issue is identified by either PSG members, Mother Groups or any community member, this is registered at PSG level, who immediately report to community policing with the involvement of head teachers. The PSG send the report to the District Project Coordinator, at the same time the head teacher reports to the Primary Education Advisors, and the village heads reports to the police. With such system put in place, the Advocacy Officer of the project, who ultimately manages safeguarding, is informed of any potential issue within the day as every member concerned coordinates with the police for the law to provide justice.</p>
4.3	<p>Describe what action has been taken, and highlight any lessons learned.</p> <p>No action has been taken so far considering that no safeguarding issue has been identified. However, in an event of such issue, the key lesson is in having an effective, publicly known and robust network of community-based assessment that helps to identify, track and prevent any safeguarding issue within short period of time.</p>

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	<p>Project staff have been informed at review meetings, that more people have realised that it is very easy to be identified as potential perpetrators with such community-based systems in place, and awareness around issues of safeguarding and gender violence have increased.</p> <p>Njerengwa zone in Chitipa district is located at the open border between Malawi and Tanzania. In the past, there have been incidences where parents would send their children to Tanzania for business where they could face abuse or personal threats. The local chief reported that since the community-based registers and understanding and awareness of such issues through project interventions, parents have stopped sending their children over to Tanzania.</p>		
4.4	<p>Have there been any incidents in the last 12 months of financial mismanagement, theft, fraud etc, either relating to the Grant or the Project or which affects the organisation?</p> <p>No, the project has not experienced any incidents of financial mismanagement, theft or fraud during the last financial year.</p>		
4.5	<p>Have these incidents reported at 4.4 been reported to relevant authorities, and if so, to whom?</p> <p>N/A</p>		
4.6	<p>Describe what action has been taken, and highlight any lessons learned.</p> <p>N/A</p>		
5. Risk assessment			
5.1	<p>Have any issues materialised during this reporting period? If so, how were they addressed?</p> <p><i>Please refer to risk assessment provided at application stage.</i></p>		
Assumption	Risk	Action taken	Was this included in the Risk Assessment Table in your application?
High infection of COVID-19 within project locations.	Outbreak of COVID-19 infection amongst project staff and beneficiaries.	Provision of basic PPEs to project beneficiaries during every single training and teaching PSGs and Mother Groups to make low-resource face coverings. The use of ToTs that reside within the communities to limit	No

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		travelling of staff to communities for field activities. Working from home by all the project staff to reduce potential infection at home and at work. Working in shifts to avoid congestion at office.	
Political instability & national elections	Potential political protests and strikes becoming violent	Learning from previous year's political demonstrations, plans are in place for all staff to be able to safely work from home, should any instability impact on safe working practices for staff and beneficiaries.	No
Quality of classroom construction	Poor quality construction/maintenance of classroom blocks, particularly in rural areas during the rainy seasons.	Advocate with school management committees on the utilisation of Government funded School Improvement Grants to cover renovation costs of such infrastructures at schools.	No

6. Inclusion & accountability

Thinking specifically about the past 12 months, please use this section to tell us how you are mainstreaming through your project, ensuring that you are aware of and actively working to reach vulnerable and marginalised groups.

6.1	Is the project still relevant for the beneficiaries you are working with? Please highlight how you ensure accountability on the project, ensuring beneficiaries have the opportunity to feedback on the project and influence its development? (max 350 words)
	<p>Staff review meetings with beneficiaries: The project conducts quarterly review meetings with project beneficiaries. These include children with disabilities, their parents, teachers, their fellow peers and their community leaders. This gives an opportunity to safely discuss the relevance of the project, it's successes, the challenges and how to address them locally, all translating into an action plan. This is "owned" by all the relevant project beneficiaries to suggest and undertaken possible solutions, while the role of the project team is to facilitate the agreed action points.</p> <p>The use of ToTs in the implementation of the interventions: The establishment of the ToTs to train their fellows within their communities has brought an increased level of accountability in each community and location, where project beneficiaries are able to raise their concerns and plan the possible solutions by themselves. The project team provides a wider facilitation role and support for the ToTs and other volunteers, all of whom live within the communities where</p>

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	they implement the activities. This effectively provides a closed loop for beneficiary feedback; easily raised and locally addressed, with additional project staff support if appropriate.
6.2	Do you have an awareness of particularly vulnerable or marginalised groups within the community in which your project is working? Please give details on how you are disaggregating data to recognise these groups across the project. (Max 350 words)
	<p>Our direct beneficiaries, children with additional needs and their families, are particularly marginalised and vulnerable groups and the whole project is designed around supporting their inclusion at both school and community level, through challenging negative assumptions and promoting their abilities and rights.</p> <p>This is particularly highlighted by the identification, training, focus and work of the Peer Educators, children both with and without disabilities, working to promote life long inclusion practices and attitudes.</p> <p>They deliberately use different strategies to reach across learners with different communication needs including poems, dramas etc, in different forums such as school assembly, community based social events and schools Open Days among others.</p> <p>We disaggregate data by both gender and location for all direct activities, for example all attendees of workshops, training of Peer Educators and gender composition of all PSGs, as agreed in the final log frame proposal.</p>
6.3	How is your project working to actively meet the needs of these vulnerable and marginalised groups, ensuring they are benefiting from the project? Please outline any mechanisms you are using. (Max 350 words)
	<p>Working with local authorities: The project works with local authorities to protect children with disabilities. For example, the local government has given mandate to village leaders to establish by-laws governing their communities and the project works with these village leaders to establish by-laws that are disability inclusive.</p> <p>Working with service providers: The project works with different service providers for disability mainstreaming. For example, the project works with Ministry of Health to ensure the majority of the services they provide are disability friendly, such as provision of wheel chairs to learners with disabilities within the wider community, rather than keeping all wheel chairs in the hospitals that do not benefit the most vulnerable and marginalized groups.</p> <p>Working with Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST): The project advocates for disability inclusion of education services for all, particularly working with schools and their management structures to allocate Government resources, including the School Improvement Grant for disability friendly infrastructure and other educational resources. Apart from shared MEL, the project has used Ministry specialist teachers as ToTs during the pandemic period to reach out within their location with trainings to teachers, parents, and Peer Educators.</p> <p>Working with other NGOs: The project partners with other NGOs for services beyond its scope. For example, the project has again worked closely with other</p>

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	disability focused organisations, including MACOHA, World Vision and 500 Miles as referral points for learners with diverse needs to access services including hearing aids, wheelchairs, spectacles etc.
6.4	Taking into consideration some of the challenges of mainstreaming, please describe any challenges you have faced in reaching vulnerable and marginalised groups, how you have overcome these or plans you have developed to support inclusion on the project. (Max 350 words)
	<p>The design and directly targeted beneficiaries are those already marginalised from wider society. The whole ethos and holistic nature of project delivery is designed to address this, working around the child themselves and all who have an influence upon them.</p> <p>This year additional elements were identified:</p> <p>Fears of COVID-19: The pandemic has brought different reactions and beliefs among community members. Throughout all its activities, the project increased the factual knowledge and understanding surrounding COVID-19 including prevention and treatment as well as case management. Local Peer Educators were used to reach out to schools on prevention measures, which also brought confidence amongst many community members in understanding the preventative measures and overcoming any “fake news” or misinformation or ability to understand Government messaging not suitable for individual communication needs.</p> <p>Attitudinal and cultural challenges: In Malawi, disability is often associated with cultural beliefs, resulting in negative attitudes towards people with disabilities. During periods of particular stress, as in a pandemic, this ingrained attitude can become more pronounced.</p> <p>As a project, we targeted among others the custodians of culture or opinion leaders, to be champion of change after being trained on the importance of inclusive education and wider community inclusion for all members.</p>
<p>7. Financial information</p> <p><i>This section will be reviewed alongside your budget report, which should be included alongside your narrative and log frame. Please ensure this spreadsheet is completed with both a detailed breakdown of expenditure for this financial year, along with your projected spend for the next financial year.</i></p> <p><i>Please note carry-over of funds to the next financial year should have been agreed with the Scottish Government by January 31st of the current financial year.</i></p>	
7.1	<p>With reference to your budget spreadsheet, please give a detailed explanation of any variances between planned and actual expenditure, including reasons for the variances and whether these are as a result of COVID-19, timing issues, price achieved, quantity etc. If these are temporary variances, please outline plans for expenditure. (Max 500 words)</p> <p>Generally, we are on track with our expenditure. Initial underspends first reported when schools closed were, as predicted, caught up during the remainder of the year. Alongside adaptive planning and reprioritising of activities it was safe to</p>

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	<p>undertake, the project also benefitted from being named a Provider of Essential Services, allowing smaller groups to meet for training more often, approved by District authorities.</p> <p>Vehicle Services and Spares: With the strategy of school based approach in the implementation of activities, whilst beneficiary transport costs are reduced, the project vehicles have had to cover more ground, albeit less frequently. The vehicle is regularly serviced to ensure its' safety and ability to cover the terrain, often with poor road surfaces, made worse during the rainy seasons.</p> <p>Staff Costs: Continued from year 2 with the co-funded role of Deputy to Project Coordinator. This salary is covered by other shared positions across two donors, with savings from Project Manager and Assistant Accountant' salaries costs.</p>
7.2	<p>Please give details of any capital expenditure in this reporting period. (Max 350 words)</p> <p>There has been no capital expenditures during this reporting period.</p>
7.3	<p>Please explain how you have worked to ensure cost effectiveness on the project in the past 12 months, whilst maintaining the quality of delivery. (Max 350 words)</p> <p>By close monitoring and tracking the budget to ensure that all expenses are in line with budget lines, whilst ensuring that any cost implications for COVID-19 prevention were clearly built in and followed. For eg, this meant ensuring adequate handwashing facilities at each event and that masks were either provided, or skills in making masks included into the relevant training.</p> <p>As far as practical for logistics, weather and prevention measures, activities were clustered including M&E.</p> <p>Due to both beneficiary feedback and COVID-19 prevention measures, activities were undertaken at school rather than zonal level, reducing the need for transport costs. This was only possible once locally based ToTs were in place to undertake the training in their communities, with the remote support for M&E, general queries and to ensure quality control of the activities by project staff. When safe to do so, these were followed up by project staff, the DPCs in each District and during the Focus Group Discussions and advocacy meetings by the specialist project staff.</p> <p>Savings made during direct project implementation, were used to ensure that beneficiary feedback was safely gathered with action points and recommendations going forward.</p> <p>One of the key points this year has been the need to adapt to a COVID-19 secure delivery of planned activities where possible, whilst also ensuring the quality of delivery would not be compromised. During the early months, only parents were targeted for the family training for safety reasons of ensuring social distancing, but when restrictions began to be eased, it was decided that children would also be targeted as it was safe and, following the holistic nature of the project design, effective to do so.</p>

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As always, funds were transferred in GB£ and the team moved funds into their Kwacha account when the exchange rates were most favourable.

8. Any other information

Use this section to tell us any other relevant information regarding your project including any information relevant to COVID-19, and how that has impacted activities and/or budget. (Max 500 words)

COVID-19: The impact has been felt across all activities, with schools closed for most of 2020, restricted size on public gatherings and meetings and no international travel.

The project adapted planning and implementation of all activities from the start of the new reporting year and as the true impact of COVID-19 was being understood. To take advantage of school closures and with the full support of the Ministry of Education, the team targeted teachers for training. During a normal year, schools often struggle to release more than one or two teachers per school because of shortages.

Based on beneficiary feedback, and to adhere to prevention guidelines, training courses were implemented at school rather than zonal level, and using ToTs rather than project staff. This ensured safe implementation, increased turnout and coming on budget as transport costs were negligible.

Suspension of all the District Commissioners of Malawi as a result of Covid-19 funds misuse: Due to the impact of COVID-19 across Malawi, the Government supported local government with funds to directly support the fight against the pandemic. At the reporting period of the funds, none of the 29 districts were able to account for the resources given which forced the President of Malawi to suspend all the 29 District Commissioners in Malawi to pave way for a forensic audit of the District Councils. District Planning Officers have temporarily taken on the role of District Commissioners. As yet this has not impacted on the project delivery or long-term plans.

New Government administration: Reforms across all Government departments have been taking place following the new Government administration. As such, the formerly known position of District Education Manager has been changed to Executive Director of Education. The aim behind the change is to empower the Executive Director to manage the entire education offices and schools holistically. For example, the DEMs then had little mandate to monitor the operation of the finance office, but the Executive Director of Education changes the job description to include the broader scope of management and administration of the district in the sector of education and hold accountable to the entire District education office.

To date, the only impact is that these are new officers who have no idea or history of the project and just beginning to orient themselves on all education interventions in their remit. So far, all the former DEMs of the three districts were already heading for retirement, but this has not been the same across the rest of the country with some demotions or promotions. The project team will work closely with the new officials to ensure a smooth handover and engagement locally.