

**DECENTRALISATION AND INFORMATION, EDUCATION AND  
COMMUNICATION (IEC) FOR DEVELOPMENT IN SELECTED  
DISTRICTS OF SOUTHERN REGION OF MALAWI**

**MA (Theatre and Media for Communication in Development) Thesis**

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**CHANCELLOR COLLEGE  
UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI**

**MAY 2010**

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**MA (Theatre and Media for Communication in Development) Thesis**

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**Submitted to Faculty of Humanities, in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Theatre and Media for  
Communication in Development**

**Chancellor College  
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**May 2010**

## **DECLARATION**

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that this thesis is my own original work and that I have not previously submitted it to any other institution for similar purpose. Where other people's work has been used, acknowledgements have been properly made by means of references.

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**Name**

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## **CERTIFICATION OF APPROVAL**

We, the undersigned, certify that this thesis has been submitted to the University of Malawi, Chancellor College, with our approval.

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**Name – Main Supervisor**

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**Name – Head of Department**

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**Date**

## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to those who want to understand the true essence of empowerment that can lead to tangible and sustainable change and development of the grassroots.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I give my most profound gratitude to Dr Mufunanji Magalasi, the main supervisor for his tireless effort, guidance, and advice that helped me to produce this work. I am also greatly indebted to the District Commissioners for Mulanje and Neno, Chief Executives for Luchenza Town Assembly, Mr Kandiado; Directors of Planning and Development (DPD) /Monitoring and Evaluation Officers for Mulanje, Neno and Thyolo; chairpersons and members of District Executive Committees (DECs) and of Information Education and Communication (IEC) sub committees of the three districts who all spared their precious time, as key informants, to share experiences and views about the implementation of the *IEC strategy for Malawi Decentralisation* in their districts.

I cannot forget chairpersons or and members of Area Development Committees (ADCs) in Traditional Authority (TA) Bvumbwe, Kapichi and Nanseta Sub Traditional Authority in Thyolo; in TA Chekucheku, TA Simon and TA Mlauli and STA Donda in Neno and TA Mabuka, Chikumbu and Mthiramanja in Mulanje. I am very grateful to top officials of Decentralisation Secretariat for providing desk information on Decentralisation Policy and the *IEC Strategy for Decentralisation in Malawi*, German Technical Cooperation (GTZ), Malawi – German Programme for Democracy and Decentralisation (MGPDD) for information on decentralisation in Malawi, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the British Department for International Development (DFID) on Empowerment Communication.

Lastly, I am sincerely thankful to all those who provided moral and material support in order for me to conduct the research and realize this work. God bless you all.

## ABSTRACT

The research measures the effectiveness of communicating decentralisation to *empower* the local people to participate in their development in selected districts of the southern part of Malawi, with reference to the *Information, Education and Communication (IEC) Strategy for Decentralisation in Malawi* as case study. It was conducted after general observations that efforts to implement the IEC strategy appear unsuccessful in generating desired awareness and grassroots participation in their development. Hence, the study particularly examines the most appropriate channels; media and directions of communication that can help attain desired awareness, knowledge and understanding of decentralization process and the subsequent empowerment and development goals of the grassroots. It explores the right key players of communicating decentralisation and the effects of involving government, political party and community leaders in empowerment and development communication. It exhumes the essence of empowerment in relation to tangible and sustainable development of the local poor. In its endeavors to investigate the nature of communication for empowerment, the study has identified communication factors that empower or motivate people to participate actively in their development and has measured people's levels of participation in the development that is chosen and communicated by the local people themselves and that which is decided or chosen by others.

The study, which was both qualitative and quantitative, submits, among other things, that the *IEC Strategy for Malawi Decentralization* has not been effective in producing desired awareness, levels of knowledge and empowerment of both the stakeholders and the grassroots. It unveils that the relevance of development and people's sense of ownership are distinct

factors that stimulate maximum tangible and sustainable grassroots participation in development. While it shows that political or government leaders have played a less effective role in communicating empowerment and participatory development, the study also uncovers the local people's need for a diagonal and direct bottom up communication in which native non partisan leaders would be key players of communicating development needs to the government. The research further asserts that interpersonal face-to-face channels are the most appropriate means for empowerment, change, and development communication.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

ADC	Area Development Committee
AEC	Area Executive Committee
CBO	Community Based Organization
CI	Communication Initiative
DA	District Assembly
DBU	Development Broadcasting Unit
DC	District Commissioner
DDF	District Development Fund
DDP	District Development Plan
DDPF	District Development Planning Framework
DEC	District Executive Committee
DFID	(British) Department for International Development
DPD	Director of Planning and Development
ECD	Early Child Development
EU	European Union
EW	Extension Worker
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GTZ	German Technical Cooperation
GVH	Group Village Head
HH	Household
IEC	Information Education and Communication
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MASAF	Malawi Social Action Fund
MBC	Malawi Broadcasting Corporation
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MGDS	Malawi Growth and Development Strategies
MPGPDD	Malawi – German Programme for Democracy and Decentralisation
MP	Member of Parliament

NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
OVC	Orphaned and Vulnerable Children
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PSRP	Poverty Reduction strategic Paper
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
STA	Sub Traditional Authority
TA	Traditional Authority
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
VDC	Village Development Committee
VH	Village Head
WC	Ward Councilor
WCCD	World Congress on Communication for Development
WFP	World Food Programme

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 BACKGROUND

Empowerment of local communities has recently been identified as an effective way of bringing tangible change and development to the grassroots. Empowerment, however goes beyond mere provision of material resources and significantly refers to motivating and mandating people to undertake actions for change of their status by equipping them with necessary knowledge and skills and by awakening consciousness of their potentialities, abilities, and opportunities<sup>1</sup>. Decentralisation, commonly known as *power to the people* in Malawi, and generally conceived as “bringing the government to the citizens” by transferring to them authority and power, to plan, to decide, and to manage resources<sup>2</sup>, has been identified as an effective means of empowering the grassroots to participate productively in democratic governance and in their own development. Decentralisation brings development to the local people<sup>3</sup>, not only by giving them authority and responsibility but also by affording them opportunities to discuss, decide, choose and articulate the development they desire apart from participating in its attainment. However, discussing, deciding, choosing and articulating ones needs are elements of communication, and communication becomes effective when it is strategically planned<sup>4</sup>. Thus, strategic or

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<sup>1</sup> Page, N. and Czuba, C. “What is Empowerment? *Journal of Extension*, Michigan, October, 1991, p2.

<sup>2</sup> Hussen, M. “Decentralisation and Development: The Malawi Experience”, *African Development*, 2004, p 108.

<sup>3</sup> Brosio, G. *Decentralisation in Africa*. p2.

<sup>4</sup> Kamlongera, C. and Mafalopulos, A. *Participatory Communication Strategy Design: A Handbook*. Second Edition, Zimbabwe, Rome: SADC Centre of Communication for Development and FAO, 2004.

effective communication is both a springboard and means without which the goals of decentralisation cannot be realized. This is why when Malawi instituted the *Decentralisation Policy* in 1998 following the inception of multiparty politics, a communication strategy named *Information Education and communication (IEC) Strategy for Decentralisation in Malawi* was formulated to help attain awareness and empowerment goals of the decentralisation. The overall objective of the IEC strategy was ‘to increase knowledge, engender positive attitude and promote specific behaviours in decentralisation and good governance’

This implies that the *IEC strategy for Decentralisation in Malawi* aims at changing the attitudes and behaviour of the people so that they can participate meaningfully in decisions and actions of development that concern them. This means that the IEC strategy needs to go beyond raising awareness to awakening consciousness in the citizens about their, self-esteem, abilities, opportunities and motivating them to contribute to the change and development they need. Specifically the *IEC Strategy for Decentralisation in Malawi* was designed to help **empower** people to communicate their development needs, to participate effectively in good governance and in the socio economic development at community and household level. In other words, the *IEC Strategy for Decentralisation in Malawi* was designed to be a tool for empowerment, change, and development particularly of the people at the grassroots level.

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However, some empirical indications observed following the implementation of the IEC Strategy raise questions as to whether the IEC strategy has been effective in raising desired awareness and knowledge motivating people to participate in their development.

To begin with, it was observed in Mukhweya Muhiriri village, Traditional Authority (TA) Chikowi in Zomba that people were and still are reluctant to participate in constructing their own small bridge over one of the rivers in the village, claiming, “this is time for democracy”. They also refuse to rehabilitate their roads unless the government through Food for Work pays them: a scheme in which local participation yields a bag of 50 kg maize and a K600 at the end of the month.

Another observation is that between 2003 and 2005 government built flea markets for vendors and pedestrians in urban centers. When the markets were completed in 2005, the vendors refused to move into them simply because the government constructed the markets without consulting them on how the inside should be structured, to display their wares. The government had to use police to force the street into the markets. Perhaps if the vendors were instilled with sense of ownership by involving them in deciding the design of their market they could have gladly accepted the development and even shoulder the responsibility to look after it.

Related to this, government in 2007 constructed highway fly or crossover bridges for pedestrians in major cities of Lilongwe and Blantyre. However, the researcher observed at Chichiri Crossover Bridge that many pedestrians do not use the structure. Three pedestrians who the researcher interviewed at random at Chichiri crossover claimed that they “do not

use” the crossovers bridge because they are very steep and insecure. They further claimed that if people or the users had been consulted they would have suggested a more user-friendly structure.

In Sitima Village, TA Mlumbe in Zomba, the researcher also discovered that parents refused to participate in a project of cooking porridge for their own children at Sitima Primary School in March 2005 unless they were paid by the NGO that brought the development. One villager indicated that if the villagers were consulted, they could have suggested how best to implement the development initiative. It was learnt that the NGO was the only key player in deciding this development. People did not feel that they owned the development. As of December 2006, the bags of flour were still piled in one on the classrooms at the school without being used. The development did not benefit the intended recipients. As in the case of Mukhweya village, Sitima village case equally shows that the majority of the local people have not been awoken to realize that they hold the keys, the potentials, and abilities to change their status or to attain the development they need, clearly indicating that empowerment goals advocated in the *power to the people* programme have not made much impact.

Experience has also shown that political leaders in Malawi tend to use mono directional and impersonal mass media such as radio and television to talk about change and development to the local communities without consulting or offering opportunity for the bottom up views of the local people on the development they desire and how they wish to get it. The political leaders believe that their views, decisions, and approaches alone are paramount. For example, in 2005 the media reported incidents where tobacco prices were determined, fixed

and communicated by government using *top down, one way* and sometimes directive approach as reported by *The Daily Times* of 12<sup>th</sup> August 2005 “Bingu Cautions Tobacco Buyers And Threatens To Throw Out Of The Country Any Buyer Who Is Out To Exploit The Local Farmers”. While the president had good intentions, tobacco was sold at too low a price. The government seemed not to have provided opportunities for farmers to dialogue and communicate the prices they wanted and to negotiate with buyers and reach a win- win agreement. This showed that political leaders rarely involve or consult the recipients before communicating development and that the strategy has not empowered most key players to uphold participatory approach to development as advocated by decentralisation

Having explored the above however, media reported some successful cases of the IEC strategy for decentralisation in Malawi in 2006. One such case is of Neno district published in the *Weekend News* of 23<sup>rd</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> December 2006 entitled, *Neno Villagers Enjoy Fruits of Decentralization*. It reports of a K2.4 million IEC decentralization mobilization campaigns that ended on 31 December 2006. According to the article “it is only in Neno where a very effective method of teaching decentralization was used” The report said the mobilization targeted the VDCs who were “mandated to choose the type of development they needed”. They presented the problems to the Group Village Headperson who in turn presented it to the TA who also took it to the District Assembly. In addition to the newspaper report, the research sought prior views from Donda I Group Village Headperson who confirmed about the success of the project. He confirmed that people asked for a borehole, funding for widening the road to the graveyard in the Donda area, nursery and primary schools, and maize mill in Chimembe area. Other projects included rehabilitation of teachers’ houses and construction of school blocks where people participated by moulding bricks. All these

projects were initiated by people and funded by the District Assembly. Asked if she understood what decentralisation meant, Lezifa Duwe of the Donda VDC explained clearly that it means, “giving people mandate to choose the kind of development they want, among other things”

The article attributes the success of the mobilization campaign to two things. First, targeting of the right audience for the mobilization whose main objective was to empower, motivate, and change attitude and involving the people in the identification and implementation of their own development in order to change their life. Second, and far more importantly, no top political leaders of the area were involved in the identification and implementation of the projects as Duwe acknowledged that the absence of the councilors was a blessing in disguise because they were able to report to the assembly directly. According to the article, the implementation of the campaign through the department of Social Welfare and Community Development, which is, works more closely with people at the grassroots level also contributed to the success. Views the researcher got from Mr Magomero the Social Welfare and Community Development Officer, confirmed the newspaper report. He asserted that unlike other districts that used the ministry of information as a secretariat for communicating decentralisation at district level, Neno opted for his department, the Social Welfare and Community Development, and this contributed to the success of the *power to the people*. He claimed attributed the success to the fact that his department worked closely with people at grassroots and used face-to-face media and channels, for example meeting the village heads, their development committees and their people to encourage them on participatory development.

Decentralization embraces a number of related concepts ranging from delegation, participation, divisionalisation, deconcentration, and devolution with the last two as the frequently used forms. De-concentration, also referred to as administrative decentralization, is the transfer of workload and selected administrative or decision making authority and responsibility from the headquarters to lower field level within the central government. On the other hand, devolution, also known as political decentralization, involves the transfer of authority or power to local units of government, which operate in quasi – autonomous manner outside direct administrative control, and structure of central government<sup>5</sup>. It is the assigning of responsibilities and functions to the local government, which is given a discretionary authority to do what it decides while bound by the broad national policy guidelines, own financial, human and material resources and the physical environment<sup>6</sup>. Commonly however, decentralization is a process of transferring authority and power, to plan, to decide, and to manage resources from higher to lower levels of social or organizational hierarchy in order to facilitate efficient and effective service delivery<sup>7</sup>. Thus, decentralisation involves transfer of resources, power to the lower elected bodies and accountability mechanism achieved through representation and participatory communication of the policies and decisions both in upward and downward directions<sup>8</sup>. Decentralization instituted after the attainment of democratic governance, otherwise referred to as democratic decentralisation, was designed to contribute to good democratic governance through the promotion of popular, grassroots or citizen participation. Administratively, it is a key

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<sup>5</sup> Hussein, M. “*Good Governance and Decentralisation at Local Level: The case of Malawi*” p 23

<sup>6</sup> Silverman, J. *Public Sector Decentralization: Economic Policy and Sector Investment* (Technical Paper, 188), Washington: World Bank, 1992.

<sup>7</sup> Hussein, M. “Decentralization and Development: The Malawi Experience” *African Development*, 2004, p 108

<sup>8</sup> Manor, J. “*Decentralisation and Local Governance, Opportunities and Challenges*”, University of Sussex, Institute of Development Studies, 2004, p 14

strategy that facilitates effective coordination in planning and implementation of local government by bringing “services and development to the neglected and remote areas and enhancing a more equitable distribution of public services<sup>9</sup>. The ultimate goal of decentralisation is to promote sustainable poverty reduction and human development of the local people by empowering them to participate in decisions that directly affect their lives and in accomplishing the development<sup>10</sup>. The participation of the grassroots makes development plans and interventions more relevant. It gives people self-esteem, as they are able to realize their full potential<sup>11</sup>. The empowering and offering opportunity to participate in decisions for development is the essence of empowerment and development communication.

In Malawi, decentralization dates back to the colonial rule. However, like most African states, Malawi got into far-reaching reforms of decentralisation particularly the devolution type in 1998, which came following the attainment of democratic rule when government passed the New Local Government Act that enshrined the approval of *Decentralisation Policy*. Malawi, like most African countries Malawi also embraces the democratic decentralisation when donor communities exerted pressure for the change and development of the people at grassroots level. This study therefore focuses on decentralisation instituted after the attainment of *democratic government*, which is hinged on principles of involvement of the citizens where bottom up communication plays a major role.

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<sup>9</sup> Brosio, G. “Decentralisation in Africa”. p 2

<sup>10</sup> Materu, J. et al, in *Decentralized Cooperation and Joint Action: Building Partnership Between Local Government and Civil Society in Africa*, Policy management Report 10, May 2000, p11

<sup>11</sup> Chinsinga, B. “The Role of Information, Education, and Communication in Poverty Reduction Efforts: The Case of Malawi Social Action Fund” in Mulinge, M and Mufune, P. (Ed) *Debt Relief Initiatives and Poverty Reduction: Lessons from Africa*. South Africa: Institute of South Africa, 2003, p 530.

Communication is thus an inalienable aspect of the decentralisation process. The 2001 evaluation study of government's initiative for Local Government revealed that the change from centralized to decentralized politics and system of administration was slow and faced resistance mainly due to low level of awareness and knowledge. It was established that this was largely because of the absence of the communication strategy to support the implementation of the program. This is why the communication strategy for the Malawi Decentralisation Policy, also known as *Information, Education, and communication (IEC) strategy for Decentralisation in Malawi* was designed in 2001 to help 'to increase knowledge, engender positive attitude and promote specific behaviours in decentralisation and good governance". Other specific objectives include creating awareness and knowledge of the decentralization and good governance, enhancing dissemination skills, clarifying the roles of political and civic leaders in the decentralization. What the above means is that at a hypothetical level it can be assumed that the *IEC strategy for Malawi decentralisation* has in some areas, failed to empower the grassroots to decide or choose the development they want, and to stimulate in them sense of ownership to shoulder the responsibility to participate in actualizing the development.

## **1.2 LITERATURE REVIEW**

This literature review has examined only those empirical studies that have focused on how communication for development of the grassroots has been and how it ought to be implemented. A number of empirical studies have shown that designing and implementing a communication strategy in which the local people are empowered and granted opportunity to

decide and communicate the development they desire, help in attaining change and development of the nation and the local people. Four studies have been examined here.

“PRSP and Decentralization: Can They Offer Any Progress” published in 2004 by Milton Kutengule and Frank Ellis is the first one. Adopted from their 2003 study, *Livelihoods and Rural poverty reduction in Malawi* the paper argues that decentralization and poverty reduction strategies in Malawi are addressing rural realities but are heavily infused with the rhetoric of local ownership, participation, and empowerment of the disadvantaged when the reality is more complex. The two authors hold that Malawi decentralization program is not only responding to spontaneous popular demand for local autonomy in decision-making but is only promoted from the top by leaders and donors. The domination of political leaders and donors in the communication process makes it difficult to achieve the lateral and bi-directional nature of the effective communication process. The two authors see decentralization communication as a top-down political communication by political/government officials lacking the involvement and input of the local people. Consequently, the top people benefit when they impress the donors who respond by pumping in more money which, however, does not reach or benefit the rural people. The authors assert that the multiple constraints confronting the rural Malawians must be clearly identified through proper bottom-up communication or grassroots base line survey. The paper, *inter alia*, proposes that the idealized notion of decentralized participatory processes should be shed off and that the government and donors should clearly articulate, in the decentralization policies, the role and the place of the local people in the process. The author sees the articulation itself as communication

Related to Kutengule and Ellis publication is Mawhood's *Local Government in the Third World: The Experience of Tropical Africa* which analyses trends of leaders or key players who are involved in the decentralisation process. Mawhood emphasizes on leaders' inclination towards "*deconcentration*" that mainly satisfies government administrative goals through local administrators or centralized systems. Like Kutengule and Ellis Mawhood sees deconcentration as using downward communication and provides no opportunity for the local people to give feedback. The study further asserts that the majority of local people in Africa, have not been empowered enough to own and share goals of national leaders because freedom of expression, both horizontal and bottom up, has not been intimately espoused in the political administration of most postcolonial regimes. Bottom up views are not centralized because they are at times seen as "*subversive*" to the ruling party, instead of being seen as a means to enhance national and local development. This has resulted in suppression or negligence of communication emanating from the bottom society. Participation then often becomes a buzz, meaningless word on development projects designed by politicians or the government. As a result, communicating decentralization becomes a top down undertaking, fulfilling only the goals of central government.

Agreeing and echoing the same view of top down communication is Mustafa Hussein with his 2003 study of "Good Governance and Decentralisation at Local Level: The case of Malawi". Based on his research of Decentralization and Good Governance in Malawi this study analyzes, among other things, the problems encountered in designing and implementing the decentralization program. Singling out issues about the involvement of political leaders in the Communication strategy for Malawi decentralisation, the study unearths, in the district committees, elitist dominance that restricts grassroots participation

leaving the less educated people unable to express themselves in the presence of the highly educated who in most cases, are political or government officials. The absence of local ward assemblies promotes top down communication, as there is no grassroots-linking channel for bottom up communication. Hussein however qualifies that reporting indirectly through representatives at Area Development Committee (ADC) and District Development Committees (DDC) and the District Executive Committees(DEC) does not necessarily guarantee delivery of all ideas and decisions of the grassroots as messages become lost, distorted, or edited out completely. It is even misty whether the representatives include specific interest groups such as women and youth. Due to lack of civic education for decentralisation, many people are not aware of the Village Development Committees (VDCs), which is the primary forum and channel for communicating development at the grassroots level. As if this is not enough, the VDCs are not operational in some areas making politicians and government officials dominate in suggesting development projects. Even where some degree of participation exists, administrators and politicians' views are usually given priority because of the culture of fear for political leaders that reigned in Malawi during the one party regime.

Participation itself is reduced to mere consultation during public meetings addressed by officials and politicians where they impose their agenda to the villagers. People's perception of the political figures as being selfish, crooked, and full of political rhetoric is one of the major barriers to participatory communication. Hussein thinks that this generates people apathy in undertakings where politicians are involved. Finally, Hussein observes that the existence of many political parties in the political dispensation breeds intolerance and antagonism that hinder and weaken community participation and participatory

communication. Like the other reviews, Hussein's study underlines the negative effects of engaging political leaders in communicating empowerment, change, and development.

While not dealing directly with decentralisation, Blessings Chinsinga's study entitled "The role of Information, Education and Communication in Poverty Reduction Efforts: The Case of Malawi Social Action Fund" offers more insights about the challenges of development communication at grassroots level and how it can be improved to achieve intended change and development goals. The study, which was set to find out the strengths and weaknesses of MASAF IEC strategy in affecting behavioural and attitudinal change among beneficiaries, gave two findings and related conclusions that are relevant to this paper before proposing the need for identifying the credible design, most appropriate media and channels, how and when to use them.

Firstly, the study acknowledges that IEC activities, especially in the context of grassroots development initiatives, are very crucial in creating knowledge, skills and attitudes that are geared at developing peoples' capacity to assess, to respond to and to initiate development interventions. It underlines that the "IEC materials are crucial in fostering development intervention because quite often development innovation require re-engineering and re-orientation of behaviour and attitudes". However, Chinsinga's claims that few IEC channels identified in the strategy have proved viable because they do not consider the recipients' perception of their problems, the innovations being proposed, what they aspire to achieve, how they want to obtain and which media and channels enjoy most credibility.

Secondly, while appreciating that politics cannot practically be divorced from development and that politicians play a major role in publicizing MASAF activities, the study indicates

that most politicians “have fallen prey to using MASAF initiatives as a springboard for gaining political mileage”. The study also unveiled that the majority of politicians belonging to the ruling party used MASAF as platform for communicating or pointing at failure of the former regime, Malawi Congress Party (MCP) to bring development “not as a basis for debating strategies that would effectively bail the country out of its current development”.

Critically viewing the above studies some gaps seem to exist. First, the studies propose the need for careful planning of communication strategy and identification of effective appropriate media and channels of communication but they do not clearly single out what these channels and media are. Second, the studies bemoan the dominance of top down communication approach that is usually done by the political leaders. However, no clear bottom up communication structures have been suggested, let alone remarking on the most appropriate players of the process, bearing in mind the high levels of illiteracy and culture of fear that reign among local grassroots leaders.

Third, while the four denounce political interference and dominance, Chinsinga’s study acknowledges that political leaders cannot be very divorced from development. Yet the literature does not propose how the political leaders can be turned into productive players of the process of communicating empowerment, change and development.

Finally, the four studies seem to advocate grassroots’ participation for change and development to be attained in local communities. However, they do not clearly single out the most effective impetus and motivation for concerted and sustainable grassroots participation in terms of empowerment. There four studies show consensus for the need to empower the

grassroots but not much effort have been made on describing the essence of empowerment that can truly motivate the grassroots into participation desired for community change and development.

### **1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

The objectives of the IEC strategy for Decentralisation in Malawi were made clear, that is,

*to create awareness, increase knowledge and skills that would engender positive attitude and behaviours towards decentralisation and good governance whereby people are empowered to participate effectively in their socio economic development, by communicating their development needs and physically involved in actualizing them.*

However, a number of indications show that the IEC strategy has not been effective in achieving awareness, change, and empowerment goals of motivating the local people to participate in the social economic development beneficial to them. A close examination of the structures and functions of the *IEC strategy of Decentralisation in Malawi* show that a lot of power is vested on political leaders such government officials and political party officials to undertake the communication functions to achieve decentralisation objectives. Observations also show that there are very few cases of success of the decentralisation programmes in Malawi. The reported successful case like that of Neno district is partly attributed to the use of the targeted communication strategy and use of interpersonal face to face media to sensitize the people and the absence of political leaders and councillors, which gave opportunity to the local people to communicate directly to the assembly, the development they wanted. Therefore, it can hypothetically be said that IEC strategy for the decentralization has not been effective in bringing awareness of the decentralization, in empowering the local people to participate effectively in the decision-making and the implementation of their development. This is grounded on the observation that the use of

impersonal channels and media such as television and radio and the designation of political leaders as the only key players have some drawbacks in attaining the desired goals of communicating decentralisation in Malawi. In other words, it appears that the *IEC strategy for Decentralisation in Malawi* was neither well designed nor was it well implemented.

## **1.4 OBJECTIVES OF STUDY**

### **Main Objective**

The main objective of the research is to evaluate the effectiveness of the *IEC communication Strategy for the Decentralization in Malawi* from the perspective of Development Communication.

### **Research Questions (Specific Objectives)**

- 1     What are the common media, channels and directions used in the process of communicating decentralisation in Malawi?
- 2     Who are the main players involved in the process of communicating decentralisation in Malawi?
- 3     What is the success rate of the *IEC strategy for Decentralisation in Malawi* in raising awareness, knowledge and understanding of decentralisation?
- 4     What is the effectiveness/impact of the *IEC Strategy for Decentralization in Malawi* in empowering the local people to participate in their development, particularly when political leaders and not the local people themselves, are made actors of the communication?
- 5     How can the communication strategy (the IEC for Decentralisation in Malawi) be

improved to help attain decentralization goals of empowering people in order to change and develop?

## 1.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The research is founded on three theories, *effective communication theory* and two related development communication theories *participatory communication*, and *empowerment communication*.

According to Paolo Freire, Melkote, Anyaegbunam et al, Kamlongera and Mefalopulos, **participatory communication** focuses on the values of consultation and dialogue in which the recipients of the development communication messages are engaged in deciding the development they want, in planning the process and means of getting it, and in realizing the development. The salient feature underscored in the participatory communication approach is the acknowledgement of cultural values, aesthetics, indigenous knowledge and experience, perceptions, and local traditional means of communication as a basis for effective development at the grassroots. It is the theory that underlines culture as the environment in which the natives can freely identify themselves and articulate their needs and the kind of development they value.

Supporting the participatory communication from the perspective of communication planning is Kamlongera and Mefalopulos *Participatory Communication Strategy Design*, which maintains that designing an effective participatory strategy, should entail, *inter alia*, a baseline research where people's focal problems, attainable objectives, viable approaches, techniques, media, materials, and methods are identified together with the people who need

the development. This implies that policy makers who are mostly political leaders should not dominate.

An additional perspective to participatory communication is promoted by Bella Mody in *Designing Messages for Development Communication: An Audience Participation approach*. In it, Mody highlights that apart from community media, mass media, can help attain the desired development of the grassroots when the intended grassroots are involved in designing messages. Mody calls this “putting the mass back to communication” which involves choosing audience-responsive messages that express people’s needs and goals and choosing appropriate media before communicating. Thus, decentralisation communication that is characterized by political communication in which only political leaders communicate policies and decisions without the involvement of the people concerned may not help achieve tangible development of the poor.

The second theory on which this paper is based is **communication for empowerment**, a key aspect of development communication. Empowerment communication drives from the concept of empowerment that generally refers to a multi-dimensional social process that helps people to gain control and mastery over their own lives and affairs in the context of improving the quality of their lives<sup>12</sup>. World Bank defines empowerment as “the process of increasing capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes...”<sup>13</sup> Specifically, empowerment refers to motivating and mandating people into actions for change of their status by equipping them with required

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<sup>12</sup> Page, N and Czuba, C. Empowerment, What is it? *Journal of Extension*, Vol 37, No 5, October 1999 and WHO, *What is the Evidence on Effectiveness of Empowerment to improve Health?* Feb 2006. p17, adopted from *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 1987, 15(2):121–148

<sup>13</sup> World Bank. *What is Empowerment?* November, 2005, <http://www.worldbank.org>

resources, necessary knowledge and skills and by “raising consciousness”<sup>14</sup> of their status, potentialities, abilities and opportunities to use them to change and improve their live.

Paulo Freire sees empowerment as a process of “conscious raising” emanating from continuous cycle of “dialogue” and action<sup>15</sup>. Such a dialogue is participatory communication in which people who need development are provided with opportunities and are motivated to use the available media and channels within their indigenous knowledge, values perceptions and experiences, to articulate their development needs and attain it. Communication for Empowerment therefore, as upheld by Melkote and Steeves<sup>16</sup>, Freire, Robin Koshy, Deane and McCall, is a *means* for awakening and increasing people’s consciousness of their state of being, self-esteem, opportunities, potentialities, abilities and motivating them into actions for change, self-actualization and development. Empowerment communication achieves conscientization and motivation by providing required information, instilling necessary knowledge, equipping skills, and opening media and channels through which people are stimulated to voice out their choice and perspectives of the development they desire.

Empowerment communication underlines that “sense of ownership” which is granted through communication, is an impetus for securing peoples’ motivation and participation in development. Communication for empowerment recognizes that attaining the development spelt out in Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) requires the awakening of people’s stronger sense of ownership. This is why the UNDP upholds empowerment communication as a critical driver for securing the necessary ownership participation, and accountability for

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<sup>14</sup> Liberative Philosophy of Brazilian Paulo Freire in *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. The Sea bury Press, 1970

<sup>15</sup> Ibid ,40

<sup>16</sup> SR Melkote, HL Steeves -*Communication for Development in the Third World: Theory and Practice for Empowerment 2001*, a Comparison of Development Communication in the Modernization Paradigm with Development Support Communication in the Empowerment Paradigm.

achieving the millennium development goals<sup>17</sup>. Since decentralisation and empowerment are mutually inseparable, empowerment communication is thus an effective means for achieving goals of decentralisation, the *power to the people*, as it is locally termed.

**Effective communication** is the third theory on which this paper is grounded. As supported by a number of human and social communication theorists such as Littlejohn, Griffin, Prince and others, effective communication refers to the conscious and well-planned undertaking of *conveying* carefully organized *messages* from the *sender* through appropriate *media* and *channels* to the intended recipients who understand the message and respond by giving desired feedback. This desired feedback can be the complete awareness of message, increase in knowledge, change of attitude, behaviour and state of being to mention a few.

From this definition, effective communication is a bi-directional process in which both the sender and the receiver share responsibility of the success of the communication event. It requires thorough knowledge of the *purpose* for communicating, thorough knowledge of the recipients in terms of needs, goals aspirations, education background and cultural traditions embracing the values and belief system, apart from a careful selection of appropriate *media* and *channels*. *Media* refers to the *form* or the *medium* in which the message is, for example, oral, written, visual, and non-verbal, also categorized as print, broadcast, electronic and traditional media. *Channel* denotes the *via* or the *way* through which the messages can be relayed for example, newspapers, radio, television, meetings oral traditions such as songs. This research examined the effectiveness of empowerment and development communication in relation to the appropriate media, channels, and right key players.

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<sup>17</sup> James Dean et al, *Communication for Empowerment: Developing Media Strategies in Support of Vulnerable Groups: Practical Guidance Notes*: a UNDP Publication, Bureau for Development Policy in Democratic Governance Group , 2006

Effective communication requires the sender's competence to *encode* the messages, that is, to synthesize and organize information into clear messages, which can be easily *decoded* or interpreted by the recipient. It entails putting the messages into the right *code* (language) or medium that can be understood by the recipient. Effective communication generates *desired feedback* not only by making the messages simple and clear but also by motivating the recipients, arousing their interests through appeal to their needs, goals, and aspirations, providing media and channels for them to express their responses.

Effective communication embraces most elements of **strategic communication** that involves carefully planned process actualized through identification and specification of the purpose of communication, meticulous analysis, and full knowledge of the targeted recipients, cautious selection of appropriate channels and media, consideration of recipients in encoding messages and seeking desired feedback from them. Supporting strategic Communication are the DFID and the World Bank in their 2005 publication that underlines the application of strategic communication as essential for delivery of participatory process required in poverty eradication of the poor. The book highlights strategic communication as a planned and deliberate communication undertaking that goes beyond mere dissemination of information but seeks perspectives and contributions of citizens to create a two way process and which can help shape policies and decisions of the development agenda. Its purpose is to create ownership through free process of open dialogue, hence promoting transparency, and accountability and delivery of participatory process. The *IEC Strategy for Decentralisation in Malawi* was meant to be “strategic” communication. It is expected to be effective in empowering people to participate in good governance, meaningful and

sustainable development. This research was therefore uses the above theories to evaluate the “effectiveness” of the strategy.

## **1.6 METHODOLOGY**

The research is both qualitative and quantitative. It is qualitative because it centres on human, attitudes, processes, behaviour and how things happen. For example, it examined how people get messages of the decentralisation, through what media and how they respond to them. It focuses on people’s perceptions rooted in their knowledge, experience, values, and traditions. The research examines the actual process of decentralisation and the impact of communicating decentralisation in terms of attitude and behaviour change or being empowered to participate in deciding, communicating, and physically taking part in their development. The research is also quantitative because it considers how many of the sampled local population got the decentralisation messages and how many understood the concept and practice of “power to the people” as decentralisation is locally defined.

### **1.6.1 Research Design**

This study is generally founded on some **grounded theories** of empowerment, change, and development communication, such as participatory communication. Specifically it is based on **case study design**. Alan Bryman observes that case studies entail detailed and intensive analysis of a single case like the Malawi Decentralisation program. He further maintains that some of the best-known studies that are based on case study design include that of a single programme or project e.g. the decentralisation programme.

### 1.6.2 Population and Sampling

The targeted population was divided into four main groups. The first were the rural communities and their development committees such as the ADCs and the VDCs at both GVH and village level. The second group was the District Assembly (DA) and committees responsible for development at district level such as the DEC and IEC committees, DC or DP and the M&E officials. These were key informants. The third population was the Local government officials responsible for decentralisation at the secretariat. The last group included support organisation such as GTZ, UNDP, and DFID whose views were sought, mostly through desk research, on the outcomes of communicating decentralisation. The support organisations and the secretariat officials were also chosen as key informants

**Table 1:** *Organisation of Respondents*

	<b>Households(HHs)</b>	<b>Village Devpt Committees (VDCs)</b>	<b>Traditional Authority(TA) /Area Devpt Committees (VDCs)</b>	<b>DISTRICT</b>
	2 in VGE 4 in TA 12 in District	1 in VGE 2 HHs, 1 VDC –fgd	2 VDCs - fgds 4 HHs 1 ADC – fgd	3 ADCs – fgds 6 VDCs - fgds 12 HHs
<b>Total</b>	<b>36 HHs</b>	<b>18 Villages or VDCs</b>	<b>9 TA</b>	<b>3 Districts</b>

In the local communities, **two** households and a VDC were randomly sampled for key informants and focus group discussion (FGD) from **one** village in each of the **three** traditional authorities of the selected **three** districts of Southern Malawi. Purposive sampling was used to get the key informants and to identify districts, which had actively engaged themselves in the decentralization activities, as reported by the media and the decentralisation secretariat.

### **1.6.3 Data Collection Techniques and Tools**

Semi structured face-to-face interviews were used for data collection. Responses were recorded through the written notes and audio tapes. Testing the applicability of the tools was done in Chiradzulu, another district in the Southern Malawi.

### **1.6.4 Research Setting and Scope**

The research was conducted in three districts, **Neno (NO)**, **Mulanje (MJ)** and **Thyolo (TO)** which includes Luchenza Town Assembly. Stratified sampling was used to identify the three District Assemblies (DAs). Neno was widely published in the daily papers as the most successful district in implementing decentralisation followed by Thyolo. Little was heard about Mulanje. In Thyolo, research was conducted in TA Bvumbwe, Kapichi, and Sub TA Nanseta; TA Mabuka, Chikumbu and Kapichi in Mulanje and TA, Simoni, Mlauli and Sub TA Donda in Neno.

In the absence of a full ADC, like in TA Mthiramanja, views were sought from the traditional authority (TA) or Group Village Heads (GVHs). From organizations supporting decentralisation in Malawi such as GTZ and UNDP, and the failure to meet their officials the researcher resorted to desk research. The local government department responsible for Decentralisation provided much written information on decentralisation, particularly the *IEC Strategy for Decentralisation in Malawi*, and how they are managing it. **Appendix 1** below summarizes the scope of the research and **Table 1** above shows the organisation of the respondents.

### **1.6.5 Data Analysis**

As a qualitative research, interpretational analysis was used. This entailed classifying responses into thematic responses categories such as levels of awareness and knowledge

including the players, channels and media used and levels of people's empowerment or commitment to participate in development. As an aspect of grounded theory, the research was concerned with developing or inducing concepts or theories from the hypothesis. Coding of emergent data was also done as data was collected in order to organize it into systematic categories. As a quantitative design, magnitude of certain variables such as the kind of media used or the number of people who had heard about decentralisation was analyzed and demonstrated visually, e.g. in graphs and charts, using EXCEL or SPSS computer packages.

## **1.7 LIMITATIONS**

Due to limited resources, the research was conducted only in the southern part of Malawi and in three districts. Support organisation such as GTZ, UNDP, and DFID were not interviewed due to their busy schedules, however the researcher was able to get desk information from them. Some key leaders of the assemblies were too busy to be interviewed as they kept postponing appointments. This delayed completion of the research. As a result, some views were collected from lower officers. Most key informants at District and ADC levels expected to be paid money or given refreshments. With meager financial resources of the researcher, it was hard to meet such useful informants.

## **1.8 BENEFITS / JUSTIFICATION OF STUDY**

The research will be of great benefit to the nation. It will help the nation identify some of the problems in its current endeavours to implement the decentralization policy. The study will also help the nation to identify and redesign a communication strategy that will help effectively *empower* communities to participate actively in development belonging to them.

## 1.9 CHAPTER BREAKDOWN

*Chapter One* gives a background of the problem in the light of Decentralisation and Empowerment Communication and the IEC Strategy for Decentralisation in Malawi before going into detailed discussions Problem Statement, Rationale, Literature review and Research Methodology. *Chapter Two* presents and analyses the upward and downward processes of communicating decentralisation. It evaluates the effectiveness of the structure, channels, media and key players employed in raising awareness, knowledge and understanding. The chapter also identifies the most appropriate media, channels and key players for bringing the desired knowledge and understanding of the decentralisation. *Chapter Three* examines the effectiveness of using radio as a channel for communicating decentralisation in Malawi. *Chapter Four* presents findings and analyses of people's empowerment to participate in development, first in choosing the development they want and second in attaining it. People's levels of participation in the development they choose versus those chosen by others have been explored in this chapter. The chapter shows the correction between sense of ownership and authentic participation. Finally, *Chapter Five* details conclusions and related recommendations.

## CHAPTER TWO

### PROCESS AND STRUCTURE FOR COMMUNICATING DECENTRALISATION: EFFECTIVENESS IN RAISING AWARENESS, KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

#### 2.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter studies **two** main things; the two-way process of communicating decentralisation in Malawi as presented in **Section 2.1** and the effectiveness of communicating decentralisation in raising knowledge and understanding of the decentralisation process in Malawi in **Section 2.2**. **Section 2.1** also studies the players that were designed and used in communicating the power to the people in Malawi

#### 2.1 BI-DIRECTIONAL PROCESS OF COMMUNICATING DECENTRALISATION IN MALAWI

Effective communication is a two way process. It is a conscious and well-planned undertaking of *conveying* carefully organized *messages* from the *sender* through appropriate *media* and *channels* to the intended recipients who understand the message and respond by giving desired feedback<sup>18</sup>. This desired feedback can be the complete awareness of message, increase in knowledge, change of attitude, behaviour and state of being to mention a few. In an attempt to achieve this, the *IEC strategy for Decentralisation in Malawi* structured the undertaking of communicating decentralisation as a two way process, that is, sending to the people messages about decentralisation, or arrival of funds for projects at the assembly and getting feedback from the people through their committees. This is done through players and

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<sup>18</sup> Adopted from Littlejohn, S. *Theories of Human communication*. Belmont: Wadsworth, 1989. p 12

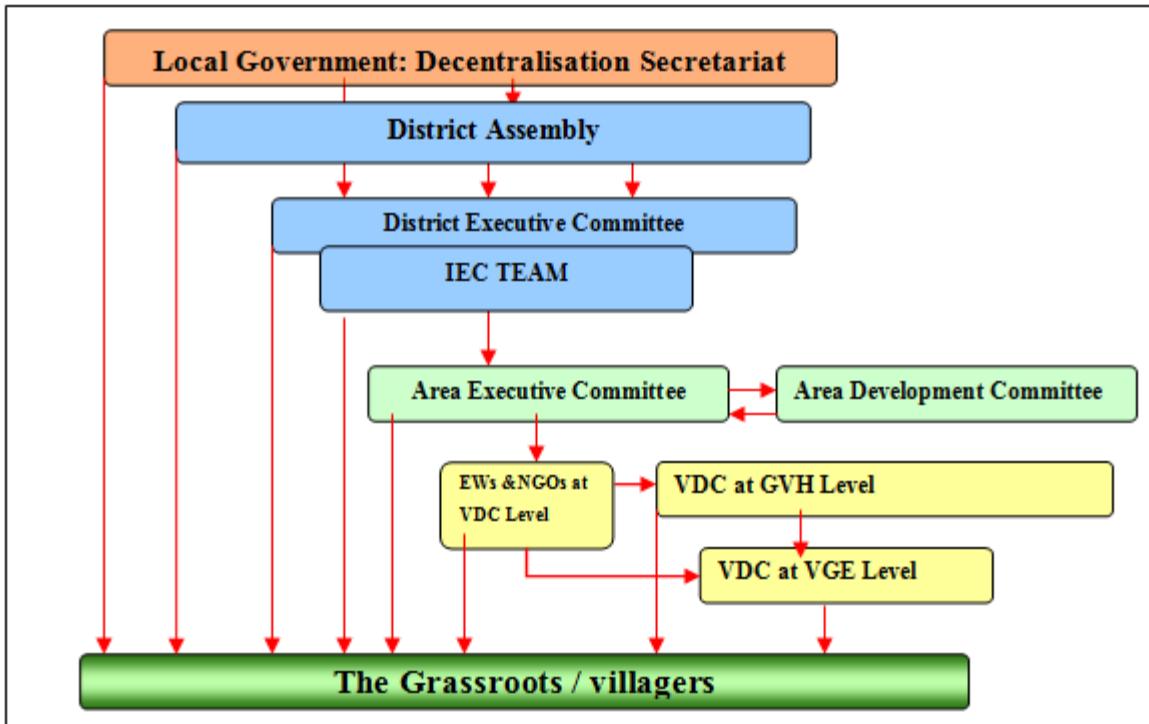
structures as described in the case study. This segment presents findings and analysis of the bi-directional process of communicating decentralisation.

### **2.1.1 DOWNWARD PROCESS OF COMMUNICATING DECENTRALISATION**

This section studies the downwards process by looking at two things, the general downward process and each stage of the process. In both cases, findings are presented from two sources; desk research and empirical research. The empirical research will study the channels and the media used.

#### **2.1.1.1 STUDY OF THE GENERAL DOWNWARD COMMUNICATION PROCESS**

From the **desk research**, it was found that the *IEC strategy for Decentralisation in Malawi* provides a down ward process of communicating decentralisation by assigning IEC roles to the Decentralisation Secretariat through to the District Assembly (DA) down to the local development committees and the grassroots. According to the strategy, all players designated for the downward process are assigned IEC functions. IEC strategy singles out mass media, interpersonal face-to-face media such as trainings and meetings, and traditional media such as songs, dance, puppetry and drama as appropriate means of communicating decentralisation to the local people. **Figure 1** summarizes the downward process as designed in the *IEC strategy for Decentralisation in Malawi*.



**Figure 1: The Downward Process of Communicating Decentralisation in Malawi as portrayed in the IEC Strategy**

From empirical findings as reported by Mr Kandiado the then Chief Executive for Luchenza town Assembly, the DC for Mulanje, the IEC team from Neno and Thyolo, the downward process for communicating decentralisation to the local people, is as follows; The District Assembly (DA) mandates the DEC to communicate decentralisation. The DEC which uses the IEC sub committee, is the technical arm of the DA. The DEC in return sensitizes the AEC, which is also the technical arm of the ADC. The DEC & AEC are known as the technical arms because they comprise members who have technical knowledge or expertise in their fields. They are mainly extension workers with expertise in agriculture health, forestry, information, education, security, and social and community development. Thus extension work is not only limited to agriculture. The DEC includes heads of sectors in those technical areas of expertise while the AEC, which helps the ADC by providing technical

advice and services, is mainly made of extension workers who live in the local community including the NGOs working in the area. The AEC in turn sensitizes the VDCs at Group Village level through extension workers of the area or through the GVHs who in turn trains or sensitizes the VDC of the grassroots villages.

All the three DA key informants and the some chairpersons of the ADCs interviewed shared some views on the messages that are carried in the downward process of communicating development. According to Mr Kandiado and the then DC for Mulanje, the downward process of development carries a number of messages related to decentralisation such as roles or functions of the committees, good governance as portrayed through good leadership, planning and development; funding process; good budgeting skills, accountability and transparency. Kandiado further said that the downward communication “is also used for strengthening local communities to come together and identify the development they want and how best they can communicate it to the assembly using the available structures”. He added that the downward communication encourages positive behaviour and attitudes towards community participation in development. The chairperson for Bvumbwe ADC, Mr Gumbala, disclosed that the downward communication is used to report the arrival of funding at the assembly and inviting VCDs to submit proposals for funding. It was further learnt that most of the funding comes from African Development Bank, NGOs such as Oxfam, and GTZ that funds selected districts.

### ***Discussion of the Study of the General Structure of the Downward Communication Process***

The desk study of the general structure of the downward communication unveils two main observations. First, that the downward process is too long, as it need to go through many stages. In effective communication, messages are likely to be lost as they go through many stages. It is questionable whether messages cannot be lost as they go through many stages before they reach the recipient, the villagers. Second, desk research shows that each stage is assigned role of communicating decentralisation down to the grassroots. However this is also doubtful whether distant players such as the *decentralisation secretariat* can use interpersonal face to face media and channels which are most appropriate and effective for persuasive and change communication.

The empirical study agrees with desk research in that it also shows that the downward communication process is too long. However, the empirical study shows that not everyone has the mandate to communicate decentralisation down to the villagers. It shows that from the secretariat, messages go to the Assembly, which uses the technically skilled committee, the DEC, which also depends on the IEC team to reach yet another technocrat group at the local level the AEC to go down to the ADC and the VDC. The decision by the implementers to use a rather different downward flow may not only show the primary confusion brought by the designed downward communication but also leaves some questions whether the designed strategy is considered relevant in implementing the downward *power to the people* process. It is doubtful as to whether the drafting of the strategy which was intended to promote participatory development, used participatory approach.

### **2.1.1.2 STUDY OF STAGES OF DOWNWARD PROCESS: PLAYERS AND MEDIA USED**

According to the IEC strategy, each player of the downward process has been assigned various IEC roles. First are the government officials at national level; the Local government Decentralisation secretariat officials and the District Assembly, in collaboration with the DECs and their IEC teams.

#### **THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT DECENTRALISATION SECRETARIAT**

The Local Government Decentralisation Secretariat was not only designated as the custodian of the IEC Strategy in terms of managing, and updating the strategy and building the capacity but was also assigned the paramount role as main key player of communicating decentralisation. As detailed in *Appendix 2*, the main IEC roles of the Secretariat include “identifying the overall IEC needs for decentralisation, designing messages, developing and producing IEC products and pre-testing them, distributing and disseminating and sharing information with stakeholders including organizing IEC related orientations workshops, establishing media relations and ensuring the availability of materials on decentralisation”<sup>19</sup> .

However, findings from the nine (9) ADCs and the four (4) District Assemblies reveal that the secretariat mainly used the radio and television to communicate decentralisation. This was done some three or four years ago. Though a more interpersonal communication approach, the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) was initiated in Thyolo by the secretariat and the some NGOs, as reported by the Thyolo IEC team, the approach became

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<sup>19</sup> *IEC Strategy for Decentralisation in Malawi*, p 16, you can also see the *Appendix 2*

unsustainable and was never extended to all the areas in the districts, as it required funding to cater for the secretariat experts and the DECs or IEC sub committees supporting it.

As it can be seen, the secretariat, which is far away from the grassroots, is given general major responsibilities of communicating decentralisation. As a result, it resorted to using impersonal media such as radio and television. However, the television is not affordable to the majority of Malawians and not every Malawian can afford to buy batteries to listen to the radio every day. Though mandated to design messages, develop and produce IEC products, the secretariat does not have communication experts and hence the dependence on radio, television and other consultants to use the mass media.

### **THE DISTRICT ASSEMBLY: District Executive Committee and IEC Team**

The IEC Strategy shows that the District Assembly (DA) includes ward representatives, TAs and STAs, MPs and five representatives from special interest groups. As outlined in *Appendix 3*, the assembly is charged with four IEC related activities that comprise sensitizing communities on decentralization, providing feedback on action plans to community, distributing IEC materials, monitoring, and reporting on IEC activities.<sup>20</sup>. From primary research at the three assemblies, Thyolo, Neno and Mulanje reported that it is the DEC technocrats, through their IEC sub committees, who are responsible for communicating decentralisation to the people at the assembly by decoding messages and choosing appropriate media or channels.

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid, p 15 also *Appendix 3*

## **THE DISTRICT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (DEC)**

The DEC is composed of all heads of Government ministries, departments, NGOs and is an advisory organ of the assembly. Its members are said to be technically qualified people in their area of expertise. Its main IEC responsibilities include orienting communities on principles of decentralization and development, facilitating participatory project identification process, distribution of the decentralisation materials, training project management, conducting and providing feedback on desk and field appraisal of project applications, supervising, monitoring, and reporting on IEC activities at district level.<sup>21</sup>

*Appendix 4* gives full details of the functions of the District Executive Committee.

From empirical research Thyolo IEC committee stated that the DEC technocrats are responsible for designing communication down to the people and it does this through its technical arm, the IEC team. According to Mr Kandiado of Luchenza and Mr Magomero and Mwakhwawa of Neno, the assembly with the support of the District Executive Committee is responsible for setting up a development committees in the local communities. It was observed and reported that though the DEC members comprise skilled people in various areas they are government officials who are also busy with their core work. Decentralisation is just an additional task. Besides, they wait for funding to engage in decentralisation. This is perhaps why they rely on the IEC sub committee to communicate decentralisation to the local community.

### ***Discussion of the DEC as Players of communication Decentralisation***

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid, 15, also *Appendix 4*

Assembly depends on the DEC to communicate decentralisation and the DEC members are also busy with their core responsibilities and wait for funding to engage in communication decentralisation. This makes the DEC stage a weak joint in continuing the downward process. The relief is that they depend on the District IEC team to help them continue with the process. A study of the IEC team below will help us see if the team can effectively take *power to the people* down the next stage.

## **THE DISTRICT INFORMATION EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION (IEC) SUB COMMITTEE**

The IEC recommends that the District IEC sub Committee is established and regularized as sub committee of the Assembly. It recommends that each assembly establish a six-member IEC sub committee with the Information Office as the secretariat. Other members include Government Departments with high presence in the district. As can be seen in *Appendix 5*, its main IEC roles include conducting a training needs assessment for IEC at district level, organizing training for stakeholders at district level, distributing communication materials systematically to all interactive groups, developing and designing messages and materials and organizing thematic and cross cutting campaigns, organizing/conducting training needs assessment for IEC at the district level.<sup>22</sup>

From the interviews, the key informants at district level confirmed that each assembly is supposed to set up an IEC team, which is a sub committee of the DEC, the technical arm of the assembly, to design messages and to communicate them down to the people through the decentralisation structure and through any other possible channels. From meetings with

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<sup>22</sup> *IEC Strategy for Decentralisation in Malawi*, p 15

Thyolo IEC team, it was found that Thyolo IEC was less active while the DC and M&E officer for Mulanje reported that their IEC team was not very active. The Chief Executive for Luchenza reported that its IEC team was defunct. In Neno, Mr Magomero, the Social Welfare and Community Development Officer and Mr Mwakhwawa the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer reported that the IEC had just been established and was very active thanks to the Department of Social Welfare and Community Development that was also given responsibility to chair the IEC team. However, the Thyolo and Neno, complained that they are given little or no funding to continue sensitizing the local committees. Furthermore, it was reported that the IEC teams were not given IEC orientation workshops and were forced to use their own skills. Nevertheless all the three districts reported to have communicated decentralisation through the DEC and IEC team using the channels /media presented and discussed below.

### ***Discussion of the IEC team as Player of Communicating Decentralisation***

That the Assembly depends of the DEC and the DEC in turn relies on the IEC team .was clearly articulated. However, that the IEC in some assemblies are non-operational or inactive signifies that process of communicating decentralisation cannot be continued to the grass roots in those districts. It also shows irresponsibility on the part of the assembly to ensure the continuous down flow of messages about *power to the people*. The IEC teams are poorly funded. This slows or halts the process. The teams have not received orientation to participatory IEC skills. This casts down on whether the IEC teams can use the appropriate media techniques for empowering local communities on decentralisation process. From the desk research, it shows that the information department is the secretariat for IEC team. However, most of the people that work in the information department are journalists who are

more skilled in mass media like newspapers and radio. It casts doubt as to whether these journalists would effectively use the face-to-face interpersonal media such as focus group discussions, traditional media such as songs to communicate *power to the people*. In short, the IEC team stage shows that it halts or slows the downward communication and that it does not have the desired skills for communicating decentralisation to the local communities. However, the decision by Neno to use the Social Welfare department which is well versed in community based participatory communication approach to development deserves praise.

### **CHANNELS / MEDIA USED BY THE DISTRICT ASSEMBLIES (DA)**

As reported by the Area Development Committees (ADCs) and the assemblies themselves, open day campaigns, training meetings, focus group discussions, participatory rural appraisals, Television Malawi and radio, ward councillors, mainstreaming decentralisation, songs and dance were the channels / media which the four assemblies and their development committees used to communicate decentralisation down to the grassroots. This section studies these channels and media. However, radio, which was claimed to be the main channel, has been discussed in detail in Chapter Three.

#### ***OPEN DAY CAMPAIGNS: Case of Mulanje District***

The Open Day Campaign for Decentralisation was reported to have been done in Mulanje in



2004 where poetry, drama, dance, songs, IEC materials such as caps, T shirts, leaflets and posters were used to spread decentralisation messages. No official currently working at the Mulanje assembly was able to give a full report of the campaign. Nonetheless, Mr Michael

Chimbala who was then Director of Planning and Development (DPD) and organizer of

the **Mulanje Open Day Campaign** accepted to come to Blantyre on 24 March 2008, all the way from Dedza where he is working in the same position, to give a description and a background of the campaign. **Appendix 10** is the detailed description, which Mr Chimbalanga gave during the face-to-face interview.

### ***Discussion of the Mulanje District Open Day Campaign for Decentralisation***

Open day campaign shows that it was done once and four years ago. The messages in the songs and banners were very clear. It is reported that about 15,000 turned up to the open day. However, Mulanje covers an area of 2,056 square kilometers and has a population of 428,322. This means about 413, 322 people did not come to get the messages. Besides, it is doubtful if all the people who attended the function still remember what they learnt and whether those who attended the campaign still exist in the villages. In fact when the researcher sampled three households (3) from four villages (4) near Chitsitu namely, Ngolowera, Chimutu, Namisasi, Zipangani, the results showed that out of the twelve households (12) (HHs) only five (5) households remembered about the Chitsitu Open Day. The remaining seven (7) households reported that they never heard about the event. Four (4) of them said they heard about power to the people through the radio. The results of levels of knowledge and understanding detailed in this section will show whether the local people in Mulanje got messages on decentralisation. Many songs were sung on that day but out of fifteen households, I visited none except the village head Zipangani could remember any song performed on that day.

## **TRAINING MEETINGS**

According to the DC for Mulanje, the Chief Executive officer for Thyolo and the IEC teams from Neno and Thyolo training meetings were done at the assembly level mainly to orient the AECs and ADCs on various messages and other aspects of decentralization... The ADCs were required to continue with the process down to the VDCs of the villages. Unfortunately, no assembly was able to get a training programme, minutes or report of the training for case study analysis. However, the Thyolo and the Neno IEC teams described the training meeting.

The target groups were usually the ADCs and the VDCs particularly those at Group villages levels. Usually it was a one-day workshop, whose content included the following; The roles of the DA, DEC and the ADC. How to choose development projects, how the local communities are expected to contribute to the development projects. How to write proposals and how manage financial resources for the project and Factors considered the assembly to fund the chosen project and how they can empower the local villagers to participate in development

From the research however, the six (6) ADCs denied to have been invited by the assembly to any meeting to be trained on how to communicate decentralisation, except those training meetings organized by NGOs such as Oxfam, MASAF and World Vision in Thyolo to orient development committees to the decentralisation approaches when development money had come and when their development had been approved. The DC for Mulanje claimed that due to lack of funding, meetings to train the development committees were not conducted in all the TAs. The IEC team in Thyolo claimed that trainings were mainly organized in the first years of decentralisation programmes to train the DEC and AEC committees on decentralisation structures and operations.

### ***Discussion of the Training Meetings***

Training meetings are one of the best channels to sensitise committees on decentralisation process. However, it was reported by the Thyolo DEC / IEC team and the chief executive for Luchenza that these trainings require funding and used to be conducted by members from the secretariat in the early years of decentralisation. Funding was therefore a limiting factor. Mr Kandiado of Luchenza and Mwakhwawa of Neno observed that the demand for allowances had been the main motivating factor for attending and even organizing these trainings. In case of lack of funding, it is not known as to how many assemblies would organize these meetings and how many people would turn up for these meetings. The researcher himself was told to give allowance and buy food and refreshment for one of the ADCs he interviewed in Thyolo. In other words, not all development committees were trained. This shows that even the main players of communicating decentralisation have not been fully empowered, thereby casting doubt on the effectiveness of such players in communicating development.

### ***FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS (FGDS)***

The FGDs claimed to be used in Neno to instill knowledge and skills to the local committees on decentralisation issues and processes. It was initiated by Neno's IEC sub committee that was led by the Department of Social welfare and Community Development headed by Mr Magomero. It started with orienting the AECs and ADCs, then the VDCs of the Group Village leaders and the DCs of the Village who were also mandated to do the FGDs approach down to the people. The chairperson of Neno IEC sub committee, Mr Magomero said they used FDGs because they wanted to be different from the districts, which were using open days, and road shows because Neno is a developing districts with few trading

centres and open grounds for open days. Neno employed the *FGDs* to equip AECs, ADCs, and VDCs of GVHs with skills for undertaking the decentralisation process.

### ***Case Study: Focus Group Discussion (FGD) on Power to the People Programme- Neno***

The case study of FGD Neno used was reported by Mr Magomero who was then the District Social Welfare. He narrated that the FGDs were carried out at the VDC level and were mainly carried in VDCs of TA Tchekutcheku and Dambe. According to him, the VDCs would meet and brainstorm on the following questions.

- *What do we understand by power to the people?*
- *What are the roles of the development committees?*
- *What is the process of choosing and attaining development people want?*
- *How should people write a project proposals*
- *What conditions must be considered for a project to be funded*
- *How should people participate in actualizing the development?*

### ***Discussion of the Focus Group Case study***

It appears that the FGDs would be the most effective way of taking decentralisation to the people because it uses face-to-face channels that encourage interaction, brainstorming and discussion amongst the people who need development. The FGD gave the opportunity to the local people to realize amongst themselves the knowledge and the skills they have and need to have in order to attain the development. The finding that the FGDs were conducted in VDCs by the IEC team,<sup>23</sup> perhaps explains why Neno was praised in the media to show

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<sup>23</sup> *Malawi News*, 23 – 29 December, 2006, p 13

fruits of decentralisation. However, it is yet to be established whether the VDCs were empowered enough to do the same to the lower VDCs. Results of the effectiveness of the IEC strategy in raising knowledge and understanding .below will tell.

### ***PARTICIPATORY RURAL APPRAISAL (PRA)***

The PRA was reported to have been done in Thyolo. The IEC committee revealed that the PRAs were led by the extension workers and funded by the secretariat and later by Oxfam. The IEC team revealed that this was the process whereby the villagers and the extension workers facilitate the process of identifying peoples' needs and communicating them to the assembly. According to Thyolo IEC team, one case of PRA he could remember took place in TA Mchilamwera in 2003 conducted by the IEC team in collaboration with the ADC and VDCs. The following is a brief case study of the PRA as reported by the Thyolo IEC committee.

“The PRA is a strategy that we use to help people see the development needs, identify their potentials and participate actively in development. It takes form of a focus group discussion where through facilitation people were involved in the following:

- Exposing people to the need for development of Thyolo town and their area through power to the people programme.
- Asking people to outline their own development needs at Thyolo and particularly in their community.
- Asking them to identify the root causes of lack of development in their area/ community.
- Asking them what can be done to eradicate the problems and attain development.
- Asking them how they can participate in the development....”

### ***Discussion of the PRA Case Study***

Like FGDs, the PRA appear the best and practical way of equipping the local people with knowledge and skills for attaining development through decentralisation process. First the

approach appeals to Paulo Freire's learner centered approach which pivots on the facilitation to raise conscientization of development needs among the local poor, to awaken knowledge and realization of their potentials, obligations, capabilities to make them participate effectively and attain the development they need. The PRA obviously promotes participatory approach on which this study is grounded. However, this was reported in Thyolo only. It was mainly used by the NGOs working in the district and it required funding to support the facilitators to go the local areas to conduct the PRAs.

### ***ELECTION OF WARD COUNCILORS***

It was reported by all four assemblies that the councillors were elected to be the mouthpiece-decentralized development between the assembly and the people. However, councillors are no longer operational as there were no elections of councillors during the 2004 general election. Hence, councillors cannot be considered as part of the structure for communicating decentralisation now except for reference during the time they were functional.

### ***TELEVISION***

The Thyolo IEC committee and the Chief Executive for Luchenza reported that there were some decentralisation programmes on Television Malawi initiated by the Local Government Decentralisation between 2003 and 2005. Effort to get programmes for analysis from Television Malawi station proved fruitless as it was reported that the programmes were incinerated during the inferno that burnt the station in 2004. However, *television* is not a commonly accessible media to the local poor majority who cannot even afford it. Besides, it requires electricity, which is not available in most rural communities.

## **MAINSTREAMING THE DECENTRALISATION MESSAGES**

It has been confirmed that communicating decentralisation to the people was done once and it is now the responsibility of various extension workers to mainstream the decentralisation messages to the specific programmes where local people are involved, such as healthy, agriculture, forestry, security, water, and community development. It has been learnt that various stakeholders particularly the extension workers / IEC teams are given the responsibility to talk about *power the people* every time they have chance to meet the people on development functions. Mainstreaming the communicating decentralisation to various development specialties is good idea as it ensures sustainability of communicating decentralisation and its application to specific development spheres. However, this is a loose expectation. It is not a guarantee that all stakeholders will talk decentralisation every time they are meet people. Meeting people, to mainstream decentralisation itself presupposes that there must be an occasion, function or a specific development programme. However, how many times do these meetings take place in the communities?

## **TRADITIONAL MEDIA AND CHANNELS**

Traditional media and channels have not been used except for the FGDs in Neno and Open Day Campaigns in Mulanje and Neno where songs and dance were used. This shows lack involvement of the indigenous people in the designing and implementation of the *IEC strategy for Decentralisation in Malawi*.

## **Main Players of Communicating Decentralisation At Local Community Level**

The main players of communicating decentralisation at Local Community level, as shown in the *IEC strategy for Malawi decentralization* are the AEC assisted by the ADCs and the VDCs. It was also learnt from Mr Kandiado, the M&E form Mulanje and form Neno that the Director of Planning and Development (DPD) at the assembly is responsible for setting up development committees in the local communities “

### **AREA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES (AEC)**

At the local level, **Area Executive committee (AEC)** and the VDCs are assigned key roles of communicating empowerment communication. The AEC is composed of *extension workers* representing all ministries and departments as well as NGOs operating in a Chiefs area. It brings all individuals with different technical expertise to examine development issues in a given area and advise local leadership accordingly. As it can be seen from **Appendix 6**, the AEC is given “important role of disseminating information about decentralisation to the local people”. Its specific IEC functions include disseminating information about decentralisation to local people, sensitizing communities in prevailing community development methodologies and approaches, training the VDCs on decentralisation processes of development, participating in message designing, recording and pre-testing, organizing and participating in community reporting meetings and providing feedback to District assembly staff and members. The AEC also assists the ADC in the identification and preparation of project proposals and in reviewing all project proposals before submitting to the DEC for consideration.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> *IEC Strategy for Decentralisation in Malawi*, p 13 -14

From empirical research, meetings with the key informants it was found that the AEC comprises the extension workers and NGOs in the area. They further said that AEC is the brain behind the ADC and the major role of the AEC is not only to examine development issues and advise local leaders accordingly but also to sensitise communities, village development committees on decentralisation issues and process. The Thyolo IEC team and Luchenza Chief Executive disclosed that the chair of AEC is the secretary of ADC, designed in this way to give the ADC “technical advice” on the process of attaining development from the area with financial support from the assembly.

The key informants further disclosed that most areas do not have AECs (extension workers) such as, forestry, agriculture, health, and veterinary because they deserted their offices due to poor conditions following the advent of multiparty government in the mid 90s. Up to the time this research was conducted, they had not been replaced. Most extension workers quitted to seek greener pasture as Muluzi’s government paid cold shoulder to extension workers in the rural areas and shifted attention to promoting business or small-scale enterprise. It was further reported by the ADCs that the few AECs who were able to visit the area came from the districts and could not visit all the areas and VDCs. With an exception of Donda, the existing extension workers in the other ADCs confessed of not having organized meetings to communicate or train people on decentralisation because they were never told to do so by the DEC, they had no funding and they were in role conflicts with the councilors and MPs. This shows that the process of communicating decentralization down to the people started to be loose or disjointed at the AEC level, which was designated and mandated as the communication expert and advisor at the local community level.

### ***Discussion of the AEC as Key Players of Communicating Decentralisation***

Looking at the kind of the people who dominate the AEC such as *extension workers* representing all ministries, these people are also busy with their core business. Secondly, these are extension workers and NGO most of whom are not natives of the area and may lack indigenous experience, knowledge, and values of the people. It is thus questionable if they can find enough time or use appropriate and accessible channels to reach all the VDCs and the communities. The finding that most AECs deserted their jobs during the first multiparty democracy is a clear indication that the downward communication process flopped or disintegrated at the AEC level.

### **AREA DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (ADC)**

The ADC is a representative body of VDC chairpersons and vice chairpersons, MPs, Members of Assembly, representatives from business community, religious leaders, women, and youth. The ADC used to be chaired by the TA, is said to be politically neutral and is the apex development institution at the sub district level<sup>25</sup>. It comprises natives of the area. The IEC strategy shows that the ADC was assigned seven IEC functions five of which are mainly on “assisting”, for example “assisting in dissemination of information on decentralisation and other development initiatives and “assisting” in sensitizing communities on community driven development methodology” just to mention a few. Two other roles are “participating” in message designing, recording, and pre –testing and “participating” in community reporting meetings. The only independent role of the ADC is that of providing feedback to the Decentralisation field staff. Details of IEC roles of the ADC are given in *Appendix 7*.

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid, p 14

From empirical research, five (5) of the nine (9) ADCs stated that they did not know they had responsibility to communicate decentralisation. These were TA Bvumbwe, Mabuka, Simon, Kapichi, Nanseta, and Mthiramanja. They said the Secretariat and the DA through their DECs were the ones responsible for communicating decentralisation. They further indicated they had never been told nor gone to any training to be empowered in any way on how to communicate decentralisation. Two of them, Chairpersons of Bvumbwe area and Nanseta STA said it was the NGOs and CBOs who taught them about the *power to the people process* through the programmes the NGOs and CBOs embark in the area. The remaining four (4) ADCs acknowledged having responsibility of communicating decentralisation but only indirectly through **meetings** mainly plans convened to give feed to the VDCs about the approved projects, assembly development, and availability of funds from the Assembly. The other channel they use to communicate decentralisation is the project itself when they want to encourage sense of self-help and ensure 25% community participation in the projects. These ADCs said they became active when there was a development project.

On the composition of the ADC, it was found that most of the ADCs had few members. Only TA Bvumbwe, Chikumbu, Simon and Chekucheku had full members of about 20 each. Some have no extension workers, to set up and to strengthen the AEC. In TA Mthiramanja, it was reported by the chairperson of the ADC that their committee was almost dead as many people had passed away and others moved to the urban to seek employment.

#### ***Discussion of the ADC as Player of Communicating Development***

Though strategically located in the local community, the IEC Strategy does not mandate the ADC to communicate decentralisation. According to the strategy the IEC roles of the ADC are reduced to mere “assisting” and to “participating” in message designing and community reporting. The only clear and independent IEC role of the ADC is “to provide feedback”. Besides, the ADCs are sidelined, as they are not given training on how to communicate empowerment. This is a missing link because the ADC is not only strategically positioned but it is also politically neutral and has representatives of most community groups. Like at the IEC team stage, the findings from both the AEC and ADC stages clearly show that the downward communication is lost or disintegrated at the AEC and ADC stages.

### **THE VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (VDC)**

The VDC is composed of a representative body of a village or group of villages, chaired by group or village head and including prominent business people in the village, extension workers and civil leaders. As described in *Appendix 8*, the VDC is charged with IEC responsibilities, which include sensitizing communities on decentralisation and other development initiatives, participating in message design, recording and pre-testing of decentralisation IEC materials, Organizing and participating in community meetings, providing feedback to ADC and identifying prioritizing and preparing community needs using the village participatory planning processes. The eighteen VDCs were interviewed on whether they communicated power to the people. Their responses are detailed in *Table 2*, below.

**Table 2: VDCs Responses on whether they communicated decentralisation**

Total Number of VDCs	VDCs that Never Communicated decentralisation because they never heard about it	VDCs that did Not Communicate Decentralisation because they were never told to do so (and are not active)	VDCs that communicated Decentralisation
<b>18</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>6</b>

Findings from the 18 VDCs that were interviewed indicate that seven (7) VDCs said they never communicated power to the people messages because they were never told nor taught to do so. Some of them said it was not their responsibility but that of the ADCs and councillors. Three (3) stated that they never communicated decentralisation because they had not heard about it. The remaining which came from NENO, said they communicated *power to the people* messages through FGDs and normal meetings at village heads' *bwalo* (ground for meetings), assisted by the IEC sub committees, AEC and ADCs. In essence, twelve (12) VDCs representing 67% had not carried any IEC roles for decentralisation while six (6) representing 33% communicated decentralisation through meetings

#### ***Discussion of the VDCs as Player of Communication Decentralisation to the People***

The field research findings from the VDCs show that the process of communication *power to the people* has not reached the villagers as only 6 out of 18 village development committees (33%) confirmed to have communicated decentralisation to the villagers. In TA Kapichi, some villages indicated that their VDCs were inactive. This means there are no leaders to facilitate the *power to the people* process.

## **POLITICAL PARTY LEADERS AS PLAYERS OF COMMUNICATING DECENTRALISATION**

Findings from the households indicated that most MPs became active in talking about development only during campaigns using mass rallies as a channel for reaching people. However, these rallies are mainly attended by supporters of the party to which the aspirant MPs belonged. Even when such MPs talked about development, they did not teach or underline decentralisation and participatory approach but portrayed themselves as sole achievers of development in order to buy people's votes for the lucrative parliamentary seats. On the other hand, households from only five (5) villages acknowledged that some party political leaders had brought development they were expected to participate such as rehabilitation of a road and construction of a small clinic in STA Nanseta and TA Kapichi in Thyolo. These used public address media to encourage people to participate in the development.

From the key informants, the VDCs and ADCs, it has been established that political party leaders talk development not only during campaigns. When voted into power most party leaders especially the MPs disappear from the local communities. They come to talk about development only at the launch of developments initiated by the NGOs, CBOs, or government. They do not call for participatory approach to development. The talk of the development being launched as an actualization of the development they promised during the campaigns. Perhaps inculcated by the beliefs and experience of giving "handouts" to the people, party leaders do not emphasise on "*power to the people*" or the need for people to rise up and work hard together on their own to develop their area. They would like to be seen

as the sole fountain of development as it is a measure for them to remain in power. This is perhaps why they disappear from their areas when they do not have money for development. Briefly, party leaders have not been very active in communicating decentralisation and have hence not left much effect on awareness and raising knowledge about decentralisation.

## **COUNCILLORS: DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION LINK BETWEEN ASSEMBLY AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES?**

The failure to conduct local government elections in the last general election in Malawi in 2004 has created what most donors and oppositions in the media call “the missing link” between the assemblies and the local communities on matters of development. Most critics have slammed Malawi government that the absence of Ward Councilors has impaired local communities from communicating and getting the development, they need. Views were sought from the 36 HHs and the key informants (VDCs, ADC, and the 4 Assemblies) whether the absence of the councillors has hampered development communication between the assembly and the grassroots

Findings indicate that 15 of the 18 VDCs, Six (6) of the 9 ADCs, 23 of the 36 households and three District Assemblies (Thyolo, Luchenza, and Neno) reported that they had been able to have development in their area without the Councillors. They attributed the success to the following reasons:

The people were able to take development directly to the assembly through the ADC chairpersons most of whom were not TAs. It was learnt that most ADCs had elected independent chairpersons other than TAs to lead the ADCs. The person is elected among

well-mannered persons and dedicated to development in the area. TA Bvumbwe, Mabuka, Chikumbu, Donda, and Simon and STA Nanseta have independent chairpersons.

The absence of ward councillors has shortened the otherwise long communication process and has enabled a diagonal and more direct communication direction where people's development is taken to the assembly without exposing it to many delays and too much scrutiny. The absence of ward councilors has enabled the presentation of people's development "as is". It is not indirect or reported communication, which is liable to distortion. The Directors of Planning and M&Es of the Neno, Luchenza, Thyolo confirmed that they are likely to believe a TA or any chair reporting development needs and not a ward councillor who sometimes wanted to benefit from the development funding.

On the other hand, some ADCs like TA like Nthiramanja, the DC for Mulanje and some views from Luchenza and Thyolo, maintained that Ward Councillors are indeed a missing link for the effective communication and attainment of local people's development. The following reasons were given; The MP takes peoples wishes and needs to parliament. The Councillor takes them to the assembly. District full assembly meetings where projects are evaluated require strong and knowledgeable representatives to persuade assemblies to fund projects. The TA or the chair of the ADC lacks persuasive powers at assembly meetings. They are full of respect. Confirming this TA Mthiramanja maintained he needed a Councillor in his area to take development needs to assembly and to ask for development. He said he regarded the DA as his boss. He said if he talks about government that he knows and sees, it is the District Assembly. Therefore, he has to respect it. Hence, he finds it hard to go to assembly and push his bosses and his "government" to fund development projects needed in his area.

The DC for Mulanje asserted that the Ward councillors are very important because apart from pushing for development funding, they ensure transparency of expenditure of district development funds (DDF) and makes the assembly work. He pointed out that Councillors are checkers of democratic governance and decentralisation at district level in terms of fairness, transparency, and accountability. The DC said in the absence of the councillor he would spend three or four months without producing monthly reports, a thing never happened when the assembly has councillors.

Two (2) VDCs and three (3) households also maintained that the councillors were their letter to the government on matters of development. They said the councillors were much better than the current village heads who get good salaries but do not develop their areas. In TA Chikumbu, people moulded bricks for development three years ago but nobody is able to push the assembly or NGOs to fund the project following the death of TA Chikumbu. People in the area maintained that if they had a councillor he would go to push for funds for the project.

#### ***Discussion of the Downward Communication Process: Players and Media***

The desk findings from the strategy show that the downward communication has some features of empowerment and development communication particularly peoples' participation, in the "identification of community needs" and in designing messages and IEC materials. However, some observations raise a number of questions as to whether the

strategy by design reflects the essence of strategic, empowerment and development communication.

First, the strategy shows that the ultimate responsibilities to design communication strategy and messages, to communicate the *power to the people* and to monitor its progress have been vested in government officials like those at national level such as the decentralisation secretariat and those at district level like the DA, DEC and the IEC teams. However, being far from the targeted recipients, the government officials national and district levels tend to use mass media which unfortunately are less accessible to the majority of the local people in Malawi. This confirms observations by some *political communication* theorists that most political leaders tend to use mass media such as radio, print television and mass rallies and sometimes IEC materials to reach large public.<sup>26</sup> They do so because they cannot reach all the people through face-to-face channels. They are also unfamiliar with people's traditional channels. Besides, impersonal media may be less persuasive in empowering individuals and communities as it offers less participatory, interactive opportunities that are instrumental in concerted decision, actions and community development. This makes the grassroots passive recipients of the messages, as they are not involved in designing and encoding the messages.

In addition, the IEC strategy also shows that the vertical communication processes are too long with many stages and players such as the AECs whose existence in the local communities is very uncertain. Furthermore, the desk study shows conflict of roles in communicating decentralisation like those of the secretariat, the DA, DEC and the IEC teams. Both desk and empirical findings do not show clearly whether there is genuine representation and participation of the local people at the meetings where people's

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<sup>26</sup> Perloff, R. *Political Communication: Politics, Press, and Public in America*. Mahwah NJ: Publisher: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1998, p 3

development projects are heavily scrutinized before reaching the assembly. It is therefore doubtful if this strategy can be effective in raising the required awareness and empowerment of the local people to choose their development and to secure their participation in governance and development.

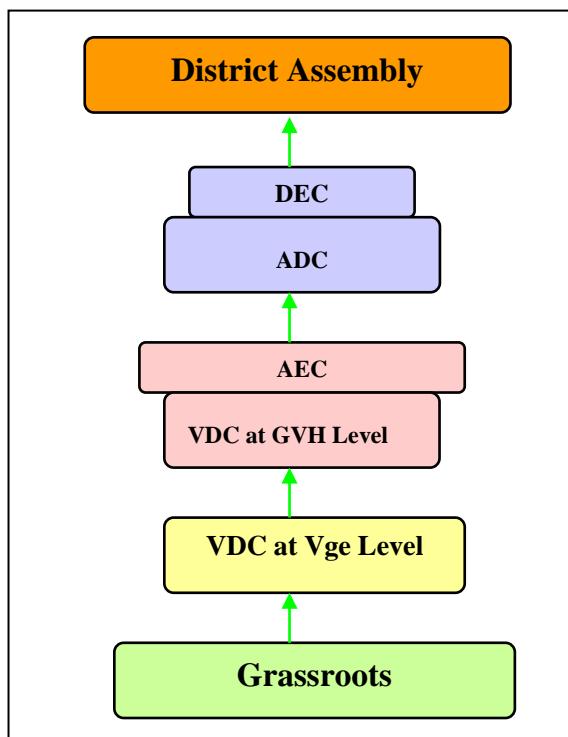
Both the IEC teams and the assemblies show that the DEC, IEC and the AEC by virtue of having the so-called technical skills for communication, are designated as appropriate people to take decentralization messages to the local communities. However, not all communities have extension workers. Findings on the downward communication process unveil reports of the absence of IEC committees in some assemblies such as Luchenza and that they are inactive in other districts such as Mulanje as stated by the then DC for Mulanje and the Chief Executive for Luchenza respectively. This shows that downward communication process is impaired in some districts raising some doubts about the effectiveness of the strategy. That some districts do not have IEC committees does not only show a broken link in the process but also laxity of both the Secretariat and the Assembly in monitoring the downward process and ensuring that messages are delivered to the intended recipients, the local communities. The Thyolo and the Neno IEC team that the DECs, IEC sub committees and the AECs do not consult nor engage the local communities in choosing the most accessible media, channels, and communication approaches that can be used to reach the people. The committees said they did not consult the local people when designing messages because as “technocrats” they believe they have the right expertise to design effective communication strategies to reach the grassroots. This is not in line with participatory communication model on which this study is grounded.

Ministry of information itself which designated been chosen to be the secretariat of the IEC is manly made of experts in mass communication such as journalist or reporters who may not necessarily have skills in development communication. Perhaps this certifies why Neno whose IEC team was chaired by the Social Welfare and Community Development Section has the most active IEC team since the Social welfare and community development experts are empowered with participatory community development skills.

The **ADC** which is the apex of the local committees that is closer to the local people and can be a good link in communicating decentralisation between the local communities and the assembly have been designated as mere “assistants” when it comprises natives who have indigenous experiences, knowledge of and values of the grassroots. The DA, DEC, AEC, and the VDCs all are assigned to communicate directly to the grassroots. It is not made clear how these players coordinate to share role on the messages to communicate and when. This may make the VDCs less empowered, less responsible and less committed to take the messages to the villagers as they may see the upper committees doing the job the VDCs were told to do. In the end if the upper committees do not communicate decentralisation, the VDCs will find themselves blameworthy or shouldering total responsibility to deliver decentralisation messages to the villagers. With an exception of the Neno FGD Case, the secretariat and other districts used channels whose ability to reach the targeted recipients such as the villagers remain doubtful. Lastly, political party leaders have not been very instrumental in communication decentralisation. The councillors, the so-called development communication links have ineffective. People prefer someone from the community to link them directly with the assembly

### 2.1.1 THE UPWARD COMMUNICATION PROCESS OF DECENTRALIZATION IN MALAWI

The *IEC Strategy for Decentralisation in Malawi* provides a structure for an upward communication to the assembly. Though this is not clearly summarized in one paragraph, the strategy indicates an upward direction of communication right from the people through the development committees to the assembly. For example, every development committee is required to give “feed back”<sup>27</sup> to the next upper committee up to the assembly. This makes the undertaking of communicating decentralisation a complete two way process. The upward process of communicating decentralisation up to the assembly is presented in the *Figure 2* and is as follows;



**Figure 2:** The Upward process of communicating decentralisation as reported by the DAs, DEC & IEC teams

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<sup>27</sup> *IEC Strategy for Decentralisation in Malawi*, pp 12 - 15

According to Kandiado, Magomero, Mwakhwawa, and the DC from Mulanje, people in the village communicate their development needs to the VDC at root village level, which passes them over to the VDC of the Group Village Head. At this stage, the projects are scrutinized and prioritized by the AEC alone before taken to the ADC which, together with the TA, MP (and Councillor), scrutinizes and prioritizes projects before taking them to the DA. The TA, MP are also members of the assembly. At the assembly the DEC which is also the eye of the DA scrutinizes and prioritizes the requested projects by inspecting the cited site to find out if the committee has met all conditions such as security and 25% contribution before funding is disbursed. This is mainly led by the M&E specialist who is another important member of the DEC, apart from heads of ministries and departments. Then a Stakeholders Consultative Committee meeting, also known as “full assembly” (when the councillors were available) is then convened. According to Mr Kandiado, the meeting involves the DC, the DPD, the Director of Finance, MP, funding NGOs, the DECs and the Traditional Authorities.

After the assembly has prioritized the developments, that is, which and how many projects should be funded according to available funds, the chiefs (ADCs) are told to re- prioritize and bring back a new trimmed list of projects they believe should be funded first with the available funds. Training of committees and procurement then starts. Funding is disbursed and follow ups are made by the M&E section until the projects are completed. In general, the upward communication mainly carries people's proposed development needs to the assembly. It was further reported by the Chief Executive for Luchenza that most ADCs are moving away from being chaired by the Traditional Authority (TA). They have chosen independent leaders to chair the ADCs to promote effectiveness of the ADCs as the TAs had double load of chairing the ADC and looking after all matters of the traditional authority.

### ***Discussion of the Upward Process of Communicating Decentralisation***

The upward communication process demonstrates a number of weaknesses in view of effective and development communication theories. It shows that before reaching the DA, projects are subjected to heavy scrutiny and prioritization yet in the absence of the people who have chosen the projects. This weakens the essence of participatory communication approach of engaging the recipients of in the process of deciding, choosing, and the development projects they want. If the owner of the projects are not present at meetings for scrutinizing and prioritizing the projects some projects might be suspended as not a priority or scrapped as not important because people who have asked for them are not present to clearly describe what exactly they need and how they intend to participate in attaining the development project. The process of attaining a development is also long.

### ***Section Summary***

There was some effort to draft vertical communication process aimed to allowing people to articulate the development they needed. However, the processes are too long and some messages may get lost, get kept or distorted at some of the stages. In order to reach as many people as possible, the secretariat used radio and television to communicate decentralization in Malawi. The DEC and the IEC teams apart from being inactive have not fully involved the local people in the designing, encoding and pre-testing of decentralisation messages. They think they have all the technical expertise for developing communication styles and messages for the rural local communities .The absence of IEC teams shows that the process of communicating decentralisation down to the local communities is impaired in some districts. The ADCs have not taken part in communicating decentralisation since they were

designated as mere “assistants” in carrying out IEC roles and they claim that they are not given any training on how to communicate power to the people to the grassroots. There are no or very few AEC members, *extension workers*, who were assigned major IEC roles as “technocrats” to *disseminate* decentralisation to the communities, down to the VDCs and the villagers. Most VDCs have not communicated decentralisation, as they are not empowered in terms of skills, knowledge, and mandate. Because of their usual absence in the areas, political party leaders have not played much role in communicating decentralisation. Political leaders who live in their areas have not preached participatory development. Very few people support the need for having councillors as a final link for communicating decentralisation between the assembly and the local communities. From these observations, it is questionable if the IEC strategy and efforts to implement have been effective. The following section now presents the effectiveness of the IEC strategy in raising knowledge and understanding of decentralisation

## **2.2 EFFECTIVENESS IN RAISING AWARENESS, KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING**

One of the main objectives of the *IEC Strategy for Decentralisation* is to create awareness and enhance knowledge of decentralisation and good governance<sup>28</sup> so that people should be able to utilize the knowledge and the process of decentralisation to attain the development they want. This section explores whether the implementation of the IEC Strategy has created the desired level of awareness, knowledge, and understanding of the decentralisation. It is divided in two major sections. The first section, which covers *Section 2.1*, is to assess

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<sup>28</sup> *IEC Strategy for Malawi Decentralisation*, p 5

general awareness in terms of whether people “have heard” about decentralisation. *Section 2.2* examines deep levels of knowledge and understanding of decentralisation and its process.

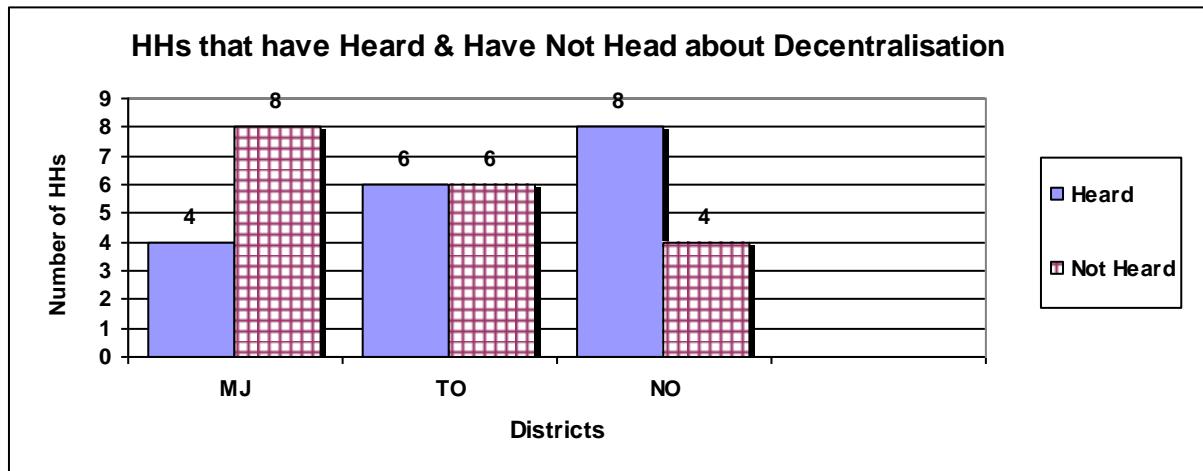
### **2.2.1 EFFECTIVENESS IN RAISING AWARENESS OF DECENTRALISATION**

This section details findings on people’s general awareness of decentralization at household (HH) and VDC levels. It specifically examines the simple question whether the respondents “have heard about decentralisation or not”.

#### **2.2.1.1 Households that Heard About Decentralization**

Thirty-six (36) households (HHs) were interviewed to find out if they had “heard about decentralization” and its process. The 36 HHs comprised twelve (12) from each of the three districts Mulanje, Thyolo, and Neno with four (4) HHs from each of the three traditional authorities (TA) in the districts. The four (4) HHs from each TA were made of two (2) HHs sampled from two (2) villages in the same Traditional Authority.

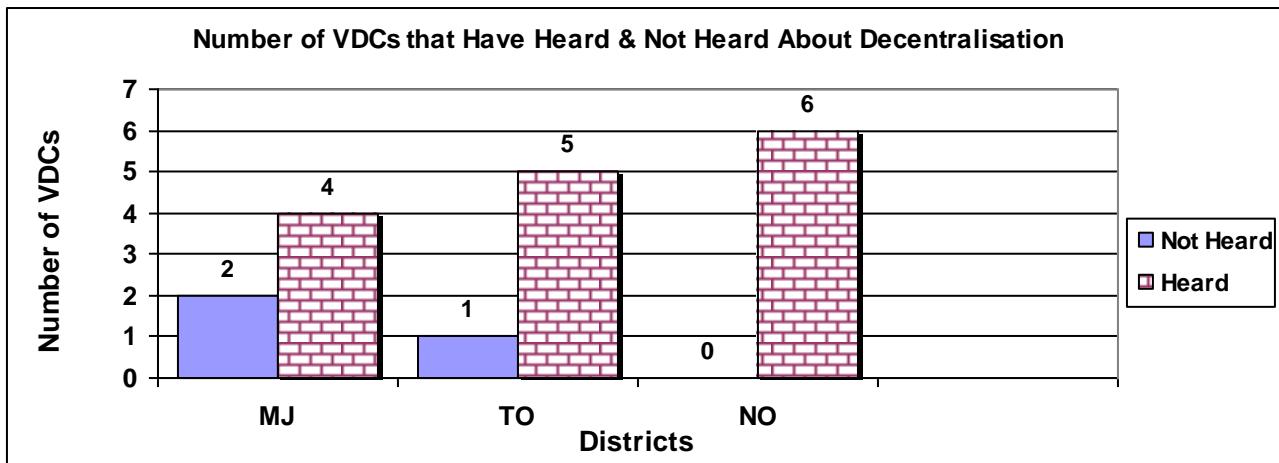
Findings show that 18 HHs, representing 50% of the total number of house holds, said they never heard about decentralisation. Out of the 18 HHs, eight (8) representing 44.4 % of the HHs who had not heard about decentralisation were from Mulanje, 6 HHs (33.3%) from Thyolo and 4 HHs (22.2%) from Neno. Putting it positively, 18 HHs heard about decentralisation, with Neno having the highest number, that is, 8 estimated at 44.4%, followed by Thyolo 6 (33.3%) then Mulanje 4 (22.2%), as demonstrated in *Figure 3*.



**Figure 3: Households (HHs) That Have Heard and Not Heard About Decentralisation**

#### 2.2.1.2 Village Development Committees that Heard About Decentralisation

Eighteen (18) VDCs were interviewed. Six (6) were from each of the three districts with two (2) from each TA. It was found that three (3) out of the 18 VDCs never heard about decentralisation.



**Figure 4: VDCs That Have Heard and Not Heard About Decentralisation**

Two (2) of these were from Mulanje and one (1) from Thyolo. No VDC in Neno reported to have heard about decentralisation. Conversely, all the VDCs in Neno representing 40% had

heard about decentralisation. Thyolo 33.3% and Mulanje 26.6% as indicated in **Figure 4** below.

These findings show that Neno has highest numbers of people who have heard about decentralisation at both HH and VDC levels followed by Thyolo. Three major reasons were given by both the VDCs and the HHs why they had not heard about decentralisation. Seven (7) HHs said they had never had any meetings neither with the ADCs nor with VDCs to be told or sensitized on decentralisation. Others said they had no radios. The third reason was loss of interest to go to meetings about development mainly that they had been cheated several times by community and political leaders about development, which they never got. In Neno where more direct and personal channels were used, some people have not heard about decentralisation.

### **2.3 EFFECTIVENESS IN RAISING KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING**

The research exhumed people's knowledge of decentralisation in order to understand the effectiveness of communication strategy for Decentralisation in Malawi. Respondents both at HH and ADC levels were required to explain or describe decentralisation in terms of meaning and process.

#### **2.3.1 Knowledge and Understanding of Decentralisation at Household (HH) Level**

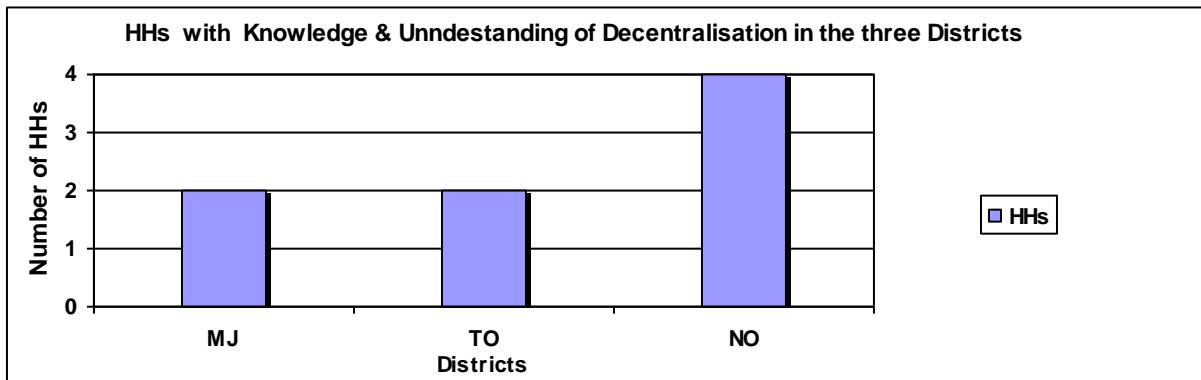
In Section 2.2.1, it was discovered that eighteen (18) HHs had not heard about decentralisation. In this section, results unveil that only eight (8) out of 18 HHs were able to define decentralisation correctly as follows; Being given chance to choose and being

motivated to participate in the development; Ownership of development that one has chosen and is obliged to participate in its actualization and that development comes from the people and is taken to the assembly. The research further established that out of the remaining ten (10) HHs, five (5) said they had heard about decentralisation but did not know its meaning. The other five (5) confirmed to have heard about decentralization but three (3) of them gave scanty explanations of decentralisation such as freedom of expression and ability to vote the leaders they want. The remaining two (2) said decentralisation is just “politics”. *Table 3* summarizes the findings as follows;

**Table 3: Levels of Knowledge and Understanding of Decentralisation at Households Level**

Total Number of HHs	HHs with Correct & full Knowledge	HHs with Scanty Knowledge	HHS with No Knowledge		
			Heard but Gave wrong explanation	Heard but said did not know what it meant	Never Heard about Decentralisation
36	8	3	2	5	18

Comparing the results of the three districts, it was found that four (4) of the eight (8) HHs that displayed good Knowledge and Understanding of decentralisation were from Neno, 2 from Mulanje and 2 from Thyolo as presented in *Figure 5*, below.



**Figure 5: HHs with Knowledge and Understanding of Decentralisation in the Three districts**

### ***Discussion of Results from Households***

The results show Neno as having the highest number of people who understand decentralisation most probably because of using interpersonal face-to-face channels particularly, the focus group discussion. (FGDs) A discussion is one of the channels with which indigenous people are familiar. It appeals to people's familiarity, experience, indigenous knowledge, and values. It is a common channel that people use to reach consensus on matters of peace, unity, and development. Neno official with right expertise for community change and development, the officials from Social welfare and Community Development were also employed but the DEC as main players of communicating decentralisation at the district level.

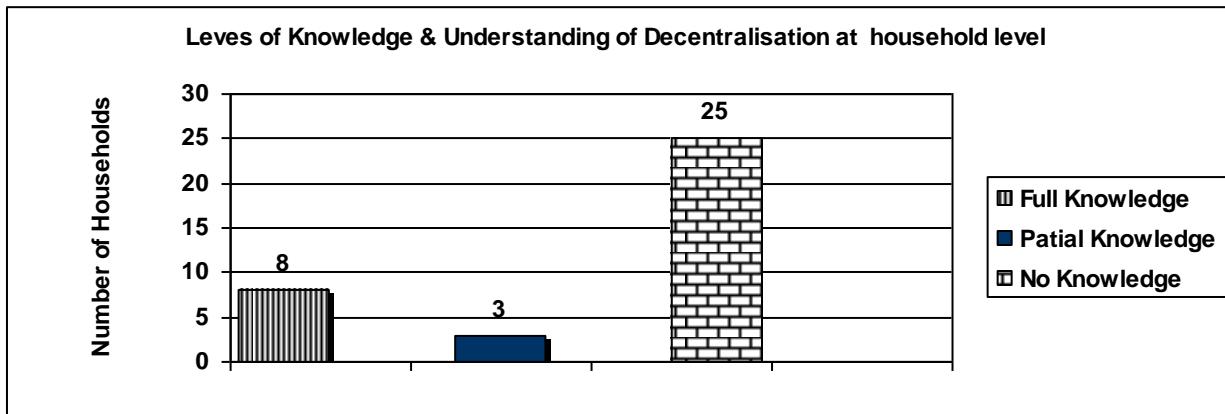
Thyolo also used face-to-face channels, the PRA meetings, while Mulanje relied on Open Day Campaign, which was done once. PRA was also done in a short period, Perhaps this explains why Thyolo comes second to Neno with Mulanje having the lowest numbers of people who have heard about decentralisation. Further, it was discovered that both Neno and Thyolo had IEC sub-committees with Neno having a more active committee. This too could explain why Neno has the higher numbers seconded by Thyolo.

A good number of NGOs were reported in Neno and Thyolo, at least in the areas where this research was conducted, for example, MSF, Oxfam and World Vision in Thyolo; Baptist, Lutheran, ADRA, and Concern Universal in Neno. However, the *IEC strategy for Malawi decentralisation* shows that NGOs working in TA areas on development projects are members of the AECs who are empowered to communicate or mainstream participatory development advocated in decentralisation. Perhaps this had contributed to the higher numbers of HHs and VDCs who have better knowledge or understanding of decentralisation in Neno and Thyolo. On the other hand, it was discovered that in Mulanje, at least for the research areas, had only two NGOs, Oxfam, and Plan International, working in the communities. It was further found that there was no NGO working in TA Mthiramanja. The GTZ had rounded up their programmes three or four years ago. Perhaps this too explains why Mulanje has low number of people who claim to have heard about decentralisation.

It was discovered that the three (3) HHs who defined decentralization as freedom of expression and freedom to choose came from Mulanje particularly in the TA Chikumbu where some NGOs had come to sensitize people on democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. Most probably, the NGOs mainstreamed decentralization in democracy and human rights awareness campaigns or that these were the most recent sensitization campaigns people could remember.

In summary, the research shows that of the 36 HHs interviewed only 8 were able to give correct definition of decentralization. Three (3) households gave definitions close to the correct meaning of decentralisation. The remaining 25 HHs did not have knowledge of decentralisation. Of the 25 HHs, 18 reported to have not heard about decentralisation while

the remaining seven (7) said they had heard about decentralisation but do not know what it meant. **Figure 6** summarizes the findings on the Effectiveness of the IEC Strategy in raising Knowledge and Understanding of Decentralisation.



**Figure 6: Summary of Effectiveness of IEC Strategy in Raising Knowledge and Understanding of Decentralisation at Household (HH) level**

These findings show that efforts to implement the *IEC Strategy for Decentralisation in Malawi* have not been effective to raise desired knowledge and understanding of decentralisation at household level. The following were some of reasons that were given by the HHs them.

The use of inappropriate media or channels: Open day campaigns were done once and at district level where not every one was be able to go to get the messages. Of the 14 households who reported to have heard about decentralisation through the **radio**, ten (10) were unable to explain the meaning of decentralisation. Finally no meetings to teach people about decentralisation: The majority of the HHs with partial or no knowledge of decentralisation confirmed that they had never had any meetings about decentralisation in their respective villages.

### 2.3.2 Knowledge and Understanding of Decentralisation at VDC Level

The *IEC Strategy for Decentralisation in Malawi* puts VDCs at the village level as the last players to take decentralisation messages to the grassroots. The VDC is given IEC functions and responsibility as can be seen in *Appendix 7*. This means that the VDC is expected to have full knowledge and understanding of the decentralisation and its process.

Eighteen (18) VDCs at village level were interviewed. However, fifteen (15) of these reported to have heard about decentralisation as presented in *Figure 4* above. The results for this section as summarized in Table 4 show that out of the 15, ten (10) VDCs estimated at 66% showed good knowledge and understanding, as they were able to explain the meaning of decentralization correctly. Two (2) had partial or scanty knowledge and three (3) had no knowledge.

**Table 4: Summary of Effectiveness of IEC Strategy in Raising Knowledge and Understanding of Decentralisation at VDC level**

<b>Total Number of VDCs</b>	<b>VDCs with Full Knowledge</b>	<b>VDCs with Partial Knowledge</b>	<b>VDCs with No Knowledge</b>	
			<b>Heard about Decentralisation but have No Knowledge</b>	<b>Never Heard about Decentralisation</b>
<b>18</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>

District distribution of the ten (10) VDCs that had better knowledge is presented in **Table 5**, below

**Table 5: VDCs with Full Knowledge & Understanding of Decentralisation in the three districts**

VDCs	TOTAL	MULANJE	THYOLO	NENO
<b>With full Knowledge</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>With Partial Knowledge</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Never heard about it</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Heard but had no knowledge</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>

**With full knowledge:** The ten (10) gave specific definitions of power to the people such as, development should come from the villagers and taken to the assembly, people should do their part so that they can be given development and that development starts with people initiating an action through their cash or material contributions. All the **six (6)** VDCs from Neno were able to define decentralisation correctly and it was in Neno where a VDC emphasized that development should come from the people. Both Thyolo and Mulanje had only two (2) VDCs that showed complete understanding of decentralisation.

**With Partial Knowledge:** The two (2) described decentralisation as freedom of expression, power to elect leader they wanted, and power as democracy to do what they wanted.

**Heard but no knowledge:** Two (2) of these confessed that though they had heard about decentralisation through radio, they did not really understand what it meant, is all about. They said there had never been any meeting in their area nor had they been to any training about decentralisation. They said they were in committees of development projects brought by the NGOs or CBO and food for work programmes. Some said they were just told by their village head to be in development committee and that they would start meeting when

development comes to their area. One of the three was identified in STA Nanseta and the other in TA Nthiramanja. Members the last one (1) VDC belonging to *heard but no knowledge* group gave wrong meaning of decentralisation as they described decentralisation as peace, obedience to the follow what the village head says.

### ***Discussion Results from VDCs***

Like those at HH level, the results continue to show Neno having highest number of VDCs with full knowledge of decentralisation. Only ten (10) of the 18 VDCs showed full knowledge. On the contrary, eight (8) VDCs which is about half of the total number of VDCs interviewed displayed poor on no knowledge of the power to the people.

#### **2.3.3 Knowledge and Understanding of Decentralisation at ADC Level**

The fact that the ADC is considered the “apex development institution at the sub - district level” and has been IEC roles presupposes that it should have good knowledge and understanding of decentralisation. Nine (9) ADCs were interviewed through FGDs to find out, among other things, their knowledge of *the power to the people* process. The six - member FGD comprised the chairperson who in most cases was the TA, ADC secretary who is also the secretary of the AEC, and representatives of the special interest groups such as business community, CBO, religious faith, women, and the youth.

Research findings show that out of the nine (9) ADCs, *five* (5) displayed and good knowledge and understanding of decentralisation. *three* (3) ADCs showed partial and scattered knowledge and *one* (1) of the 9 ADCs reported to have heard about

decentralisation but said did not really know what it decentralisation meant. The findings are summarized in **Table 6** below.

**Table 6: Summary of Effectives on the IEC Strategy in Raising Knowledge and Understanding at ADC Level**

Total No of ADCs	ADCs with no knowledge & understanding	ADCs with scattered or partial knowledge & understanding	ADCs with better knowledge & understanding
9	1	3	5

### ***Discussion of Results from ADCs***

The *one* ADC that accepted to have heard about decentralisation but confessed to have no knowledge Mthiramanja ADC, Mulanje where the chairperson, the (TA) himself, reported that his ADC was very active up to 2003 when the GTZ had development projects in the area. It was also learnt that the ADC had now very few members as some had died or moved to the urban to seek employment. Lack of development projects in the area has also made the ADC inactive. Consequently, they do not see any need to convene meetings. Members of the committee said they were no longer invited to trainings or meetings on development and hence did not feel empowered to sensitize people about decentralisation on which they have little or no knowledge. The *three* ADCs, which showed *partial and scanty knowledge* of decentralisation described it as democracy, freedom of expression, freedom to elect the leader, and not being forced or intimidated to do development, as was the case of one party regime.

**Two (2)** of the remaining *five(5)* ADCs that displayed better knowledge and understanding of decentralisation, described decentralisation as people taking the responsibility, being given chance, and encouraged to decide and participate in development work. The other *two*

excluded people's choice of the development but generally saw decentralisation as people having responsibility to take part in development.

The remaining *one* (1) of the *five* (5) ADCs showed desired knowledge and understanding of decentralisation but denounced it as mere politics. The chairperson of the ADC who was also group village head, Donda and a strong character, described decentralisation as political propaganda similar to Kamuzu Banda's "*Ife tonse Boma*" "we are all government" slogan intended to make Malawians believe that they were all part of government, they were developed when they were still poor while a few were getting rich. The ADC described decentralisation as a political gimmick and brainwash making people believe they have eaten when they are hungry; they can development themselves when they cannot get resources for development; they have been empowered to develop when they are not. The ADC asserted that people in the area always do their part well but financial resources are delayed, or do not come at all or are too little to complement people's contributions. Sometimes they do not even get what they ask from assembly. This ADC unanimously asserted they do not see the meaning of the power to the people process. This was one of the ADCs that had been praised in the media as the ideal example of the success of decentralisation in Malawi in Neno. On the contrary, all the VDCs and the majority of the HHs of the area displayed undoubted knowledge and understanding of the issues and processes of decentralisation. The findings show that *two* (2) of the *four* (4) ADCs with better knowledge came from Neno. The other two (2) came from Thyolo and one from Mulanje.

**Table 7: ADCs with Full Knowledge of Decentralisation in the three districts**

Total No. of ADCs with full Knowledge and Understanding of Decentralisation	Mulanje	Thyolo	Neno
5	1	2	2

In summary, five (5) of the nine (9) ADCS representing **55% ADCs** displayed better knowledge and understanding of decentralisation. This shows that **nearly half** of the ADCs have poor or no knowledge of decentralisation. It further indicates that the DEC, IEC teams and AECs who were given roles to take development to the lower committee have not done their job well. Although it has made a tie with Thyolo, Neno again shows highest number of ADCs who are well conversant with decentralisation. The reduction of ADCs to “assistants” of the main players, the AEC, in communicating decentralisation at the local level makes members of ADCs feel not shouldering responsibilities to have full knowledge of decentralisation.

### ***Chapter Summary***

On effectiveness of the strategy in raising awareness, knowledge and understandings it was found that eighteen (18) of the 36 HHs representing 50 % had not heard about decentralisation. Twenty-five (25) of the 36 HHs estimated at 70 % displayed poor knowledge and understanding of decentralisation. This means the IEC strategy and efforts to implement it have not been effective in bringing desired awareness, knowledge, and understanding at HH level

That about half (8) of the 18 VDCs manifested poor knowledge of decentralisation shows that not all VDCs are empowered with knowledge to take decentralisation down to the

people. In addition, that about ten (10) representing 55% have better knowledge of decentralisation shows that some effort has been made to take decentralisation to the last but one stage of the downward communication process, the VDCs. The research also shows that the VDCs are gate keeping the knowledge to themselves. They do not feel mandated to take it to the villagers. This is ratified by the finding that only six (6) of the 18 VDCs (33%) communicated decentralisation (through meetings) while the remaining twelve (12) VDCs representing 67% never communicated decentralisation. Only five (5) of the nine (9) ADCs representing 55% displayed better knowledge and understanding of decentralisation. This means nearly half (4) of the 9 ADCs have poor or no knowledge of decentralization. Neno has the highest number of HHs, VDCs, and ADCs who have better understanding of decentralisation. Neno is followed by Thyolo with Mulanje as having the lowest.

On the two-way communication process, it shows that some good effort was made in drafting the vertical communication process to allow people to articulate the development they needed. However, the processes are too long and some messages may get lost, get kept or distorted at some of the stages. In order to reach as many people as possible, the secretariat used radio and television to communicate decentralization in Malawi. The DEC and the IEC teams apart from being inactive have not fully involved the local people in the designing, encoding and pre-testing of decentralisation messages. They pride themselves of the having technical expertise for developing communication styles and messages for the rural local communities .The absence of IEC teams shows that the process of communicating decentralisation down to the local communities is impaired in some districts. The ADCs have not taken part in communicating decentralisation since they were designated as mere “assistants” in carrying out IEC roles and they claim that they are not given any training on

how to communicate power to the people to the grassroots. There are no or very few AEC members, *extension workers*, who were assigned major IEC roles as “technocrats” to disseminate decentralisation to the communities, down to the VDCs and the villagers. Most VDCs have not communicated decentralisation, as they are not empowered in terms of skills, knowledge, and mandate. Because of their usual absence in the areas, political party leaders have not played much role in communicating decentralisation. Very few people support the need for having councillors as a final link for communicating decentralisation between the assembly and the local communities. From these observations, it is questionable if the IEC strategy and efforts to implement have been effective.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RADIO AS CHANNEL FOR COMMUNICATING DECENTRALISATION IN MALAWI

#### 3.1 Background

The importance of radio in promoting development of the local people cannot be overemphasized. Many international organisations such as World Bank uphold radio, particularly that which reaches the local communities, as playing a very important role in empowering the local people. The World Bank maintains that radio fosters access for the voiceless to share information and to debate on issues of development they need. Hence, the radio becomes a vehicle for participatory development.<sup>29</sup> In Africa, the Zimbabwe based South Africa Development Cooperation (SADC) Centre of Communication for Development which gets aid from United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) upholds similar concept and sees radio for development as a tool for enlarging forum for social dialogue, for raising awareness and knowledge of community issues, providing effective capacity building of the community and mobilizing community to tackle issue of collective interest.

Moving along with the universal and regional trends, Malawi decided in 1999 to establish the Broadcasting Development Unit (DBU) at its national radio station, the Malawi Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) Radio 1, to institute a sustainable framework to broadcast dialogue about civil rights and citizenship focusing on development issues. The use of radio to broadcast development of the local people of course dates back to 1966 with the

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<sup>29</sup> World Bank Institute, “Civic Voice: Empowering the Poor through Community Media” 2005

introduction of forum listening groups to promote rural development and farming knowledge by teaching Malawian farmers better agricultural methods.<sup>30</sup>

The DBU established a network of radio listening clubs to support a 30 minute weekly development programme, *Kanthu N'khama* which was designed to promote village voices, dialogue and action updates focusing on participatory development. The institutionalization of the *IEC Strategy for Malawi Decentralisation* in 2003 saw MBC continuing with promoting participatory development, which had now been streamlined into decentralisation, *the power to the people.*

A research conducted at the MBC showed that the MBC Radio 1 aired decentralisation programmes between 2003 and 2007. According to Loveness Dazimata Chitsanya, who was the scripwriter and producer, and Chimwemwe Banda, the Executive Producer, MBC broadcast what is called the first, second, third and fourth phases in 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006 respectively. The programmes were funded by the UNDP and GTZ through Local government secretariat responsible for decentralisation. The ten to twenty minute programmes which were mostly presented by Chancy Muloza were aired on Thursdays from 6:15 pm or 7:30 pm and repeated on Sundays

The main themes for the four phases ranged from sensitizing people on what decentralisation is in terms of district and local structures, laws guiding decentralisation programmes, procedures for attaining development under decentralisation and on the importance of decentralisation.

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<sup>30</sup> Linje Manyozo, "Rural Radio and the Promotion of people centered development in Africa: Radio Listening Clubs and Community Radio in Malawi" December 2005. Maputo

Most of the respondents of this study claimed to have heard about decentralisation from the radio. Thyolo assembly claimed that Oxfam sponsored the DBU of MBC to sensitise people on the demand and supply aspects of the decentralisation, i.e. people can demand services from the providers. Findings from MBC showed that radio drama performed by local comedians Iseki and Jakobo in 2003 and 2004 and later by *Anyoni* Drama group was used to sensitise people about the *power to the people*. The following sampled cases present some of the programmes that were aired on *Radio 1*.

### **3.2 Case 1, Radio Play: “*Tidziwe za Mphamvu ku Anthu*” (Let us know about *Power to the People*)**

*Tidziwe za Mphamvu ku Anthu*” (Let us know about *Power to the People*) radio drama was sponsored by UNDP and aired on MBC on 13<sup>th</sup> August 2006. As detailed in *Appendix 11*, the play depicts the famous local comedians, Anyoni and his wife who wake up in the morning to continue constructing a “beer hall” (bar) closer to the road in the town assembly because they believe that *power to the people* means freedom to raise any structure any how in the city assembly. When Chigumu, the town assembly clerk, comes to stop them, they are arrogant and rude and challenge him even to go to the district commissioner (DC) together to tell the DC about their freedom and *power* to construct the bar, as they want. Their arrogance continues even on their first encounter with the DC. However, after being told in detail, about town planning by-laws and the dangers of constructing the bar very close to the road, Nyoni and his wife get convinced and accept to go back and demolish the bar. The main theme of the play was to teach listeners about by-laws guiding the running of the assemblies, particularly the construction of houses in the cities and towns. The play, which starts with African drumming, is in Chichewa language but in the script, it has been translated into English. However, some words are in the vernacular to maintain the original taste.

### **3.2.1 Analysis of Case 1 Radio Play: “Let us know about Power to the People”**

“Let us know about Power to the People” deserves some credit. First, the play appears to target common and local people who in Malawi experience, are in the habit of raising buildings in the city or town assemblies without observing the laws. The use of the famous local comedians, Anyoni and Chigumu and the introduction with African drumming is likely to draw the attention of such target listeners. In addition, the play is intended to inform such people about the by-laws guiding the construction of structures in the towns and city assemblies. The choice of a “beer hall” where “*masese*”, a locally brewed beer is sold is therefore more relevant and appealing to the targeted group. It can therefore be claimed that the play takes consideration of the recipients of messages in terms of appeal and accessibility of the message. Consideration of the recipients of messages is a very important aspect of effective communication. Audience consideration, which results in generating desired attention and interest in the audience, might also have contributed to the reason why the majority of the respondents who claimed to have heard about decentralization, said they heard about it on the radio.

The jingle itself looks carefully arranged. The opening with an Afro- Malawian drumming is well placed as it does not only give a local setting relevant to the majority of the targeted groups but is also likely to arouse their interest to listen to the programme. The language is simple and the words are skillfully arranged to aid understanding. First, the Chichewa interpretation of decentralization is given immediately, “Decentralisation! Mphamvu ku anthu! (*Power to the people*)” Second, the jingle immediately opens by preparing people to get the meaning of *power to the people*. “When we say *power to the people!* We mean....”

The appeal to poetic style of delayed meaning takes the listener through very important facts before getting to the main meaning, that is, “to choose the development you want”. In the areas where you live” as can be seen in this verse

“When we say power to the People,  
We mean we should work with councillors  
In the villages, towns/ cities and assemblies  
To choose the development you want  
In the areas where you live...”

The use of repetition “*Power, Power to the people, Power going to the people*” appears to achieve some persuasion and helps to reinforce the core meaning of decentralization. Finally, the play itself appears to be well constructed towards achieving its teaching. After wasting effort in building a beer hall, Anyoni’s family is told to demolish it since it was unlawfully constructed. As empowerment communication entails, among other things, “increasing local communities to information” or equipping them with knowledge for change and development, process<sup>31</sup>, the play achieves this as Anyoni and his wife, after being informed, realize the importance of observing by- laws and decide to demolish the house by themselves. They now feel empowered by the knowledge as Anyoni finally says, “We will demolish it ourselves. “*Mphamvu ku anthu*”! (Power to the People!)”

On the other hand, while the play seems to consider the recipients’ values, in terms of local setting, the beer hall, the use of famous comedians, participatory communication does not seem to feature well. The inclination to attract listeners’ attention in order to sell to them the innovations may be more of *communication effect* and *diffusion of innovation* pivoting on

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<sup>31</sup> Robin Koshy, “Communicating for Empowerment” *Development Through Dialogue*, 2004, page 2

*hypodermic needle* of imposing the innovation with less or not consideration of development needs and strategies of the beneficiaries<sup>32</sup>. The lamentation by Anyoni's wife that "if we had not constructed the beer hall, how could have we known?" also shows that the act of empowering people with knowledge of the by-laws through letters alone was not enough to make people appreciate their role in the development of the assembly. The communication in the play is more of *top down* than participatory. This is indicated not only by sending messages to the people about the by-laws through the letters, but also by offering no chance for consultations and discussions with people to allow them to articulate their development needs and how best they can contribute to the development of the assembly.

The meaning of decentralization in the jingle emphasizes working with councillors only. This limits the definition of decentralization and isolates other important local leaders and committees such as the chiefs, and the village development committee in decentralization process. No wonder people's development was only seen through the councillors. The inclusion of *Chiyawo* language as an interlude in the jingle was good in establishing local setting. However, it made the radio play biased toward one ethnic group, the Yao, as it was the only native language, other than the national language, which was used in the play.

### **3.3 Case 2, Radio Play: "Children in the Malawi in the Village"**

"Children in the Malawi in the Village" radio drama was broadcast on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2006 at 7:30 pm and taught about the rules to be followed by Community Based Organizations (CBO) supporting decentralization efforts. As can be seen from the detailed script of the radio programme in *Appendix 12*, the main actor, Anyoni is the Director of *The Children in*

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<sup>32</sup> "Communication Effects" Melkote, S. *Communication for Development in the Third World: Theory and Practice*. page 65-67, Orson Welles's "War of the Worlds and the Hypodermic Needle Theory" in Fourie, P. *Media Studies: Volume 1: Institutions Theories and Issues*, page 294

*the Malawi in the Village* CBO. He goes to a village to distribute various items such as clothes to the orphaned and vulnerable children (OVC). As the children are scrambling for the items, Anyoni is badly injured and goes with the village head person to report the incident to the assembly. It is found that he had not sought permission of the assembly before going to the village to distribute the assorted items. His CBO is not even known. He is advised that the normal procedure is to go through the assembly to be told about the social economic needs of the district according to district development plan to avoid overlapping, duplicating and concentrating in one area. Anyoni and the chief accept the mistake. Anyoni is taken to the hospital.

### **3.3.1 Analysis of “*Children in the Malawi in the Village*”**

“*Children in the Malawi in the Village*” deserves some credit. The most important acclaim is the theme, which underscores the need for consultations with the community and assembly leaders if civil societies and community based organizations are to succeed in bringing needed development to the community. The tragic end the main actor faces symbolizes the obvious failure development actors can encounter if they want to bring the development to the people without consulting them. The play does not only epitomize the likely consequence of trying to bring development without consultation with the beneficiaries but also reinforces the need to respect the values, norms and procedures of the beneficiaries and the influential players if the development is to be actualized as advocated by development communication.

Like in “*Let us know about Power to the People*” radio drama, the setting, drumming and characterization of “*Children in the Malawi in the Village*” such as the presence of a chief

gives an appropriate local setting for the targeted listeners, the community based organizations leaders and the villagers. This play is also broadcast at 7:30 pm when most people tune in to the radio after listening to main news broadcast at 7:00 pm. The language is in Chichewa. It is simple and clear.

While the play attempts to call for participatory communication as an effective means to community development, it shows a number of challenges to the same approach. First, the play shows only a top down communication of inculcating laws, policies and procedures to the recipients of communication. It does not offer the bottom up or lateral communication where the chiefs and innovators can voice out their opinions on ways of bringing development to the villages.

Like the first play, *Children in the Malawi in the Village* focuses more on development of the assembly as such than that of the local people who also need development. In fact, the chief and the villagers allowed their orphaned and vulnerable children to accept the development brought by Anyoni group because such development is needed in the village. However, the play has not offered a chance for the children, their guardians and the entire community to express their development needs in relation to what Nyoni's NGO has brought. If these people were given chance, perhaps they could articulate what exactly they needed and how they want to get it, hence creating a balanced opportunity in choice of development. Perhaps if the children and the villagers were consulted on how best the goods were to be distributed, they could have proposed proper ways, hence avoiding the scramble for the items Anyoni brought and Anyoni himself could not have been injured. This shows

that going through the DC alone is not the final solution if the NGO are to bring meaningful development to the local community. The local people need to be consulted as well.

The play appears to suffer from exaggerated realism, which isolates it from the reality of a rural community life. The tragedy the main actor encounters, that is, being injured by children, appears less realistic in a natural village setting which is usually guided by norms of respect for visitors, let alone, good Samaritans. Perhaps Aristotle's concept of closeness to reality in structuring an effective drama might be more applicable if the hero, Anyoni, meets a tragic end that is close to the realistic phenomenal experiences of the local setting. Perhaps the play would qualify Aristotle's tragedy if the *protagonist*, Anyoni, who attains heroism by bringing development to the people, consciously or unconsciously, commits a *tragic flaw*, such as ignoring advice on how best to distribute the items. The play could have maintained a tragic nature if the *tragic error* had complicated to *point of no return* as the hero, driven by complacency of being a Good Samaritan and an expert innovator, would ignore that advice and go ahead to organize the function and to distribute the goods in his own ways. However it appears, the play's *tragic flaw* stems from the assembly itself for not informing or not communicating to the community leaders and the NGOs the by-laws for instituting development in the community. Decentralisation does not underscore empowerment after implementation of the development and after things have gone wrong, but at decision-making levels, through provision of information or knowledge. Ironically, therefore, *Children in the Malawi in the Village* depicts lack of strategic empowerment communication on the part of the assembly making it culpable for the tragedy met by Nyoni and the failure to bring about the needed development.

### **3.4 Case 3: Panel Discussion & Call in Programme: “Let’s talk about Decentralization”**

In an interview with Chancy Muloza, the presenter of the 2007 decentralisation programmes, it was learnt that the 2007 programmes used panel discussion after which listeners would call or send messages to comment or ask questions. The programmes were funded by the GTZ and broadcast on Wednesdays and Thursday between 9:30 and 10:00 in the morning. The panelists included decentralisation secretariat officers, DCs and later TAs were involved. The programmes were presented in English the first four months later changed to Chichewa after it was observed that people were not free to participate in English. It was further reported that the 2007 radio programmes focused on central themes which included Understanding the Meaning of Decentralisation, the Composition of Development Committees, the Roles of MPs, Councillors and Citizen, Transparency and Accountability and Budgeting to mention a few. **“Lets Talk about Decentralisation”** is a thirty- minute English and Chichewa Panel Discussion and Call In Programme in which Mr Felix Kadewere from the National Local government Finance department, Henderson Jaka, Deputy Director of Rural Development in the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development talk about Service Delivery by the Local Government. Specifically, it describes services provided in the assemblies through ministry of works, housing, health, education, lands, agriculture, environment and natural resources. The programme starts with a jingle by a local musician, Eliza Kachale Kaunda, calling people to be champions of decentralisation and a commentator explaining the meaning and importance of decentralisation. Three of the four people who called could not succeed as their lines were cut. One caller succeeded to ask one important question, why we do not have councillors. The full script of the programme is presented in **Appendix 13**.

### **3.4.1 Analysis of Case 3: “Let’s Talk About Decentralisation”, Panel Discussion**

“Let’s talk about Decentralization” is the unique and most relevant programme to development and participatory communication. First, it is the only radio programme that has offered participation of listeners by allowing them to interrogate the panelists or educators and seek clarification of the process of decentralisation. The presenter himself, Chancy Muloza, revealed that “Let’s talk about Decentralization” was the first programme that attempted to detail clearly the nature of decentralization and allowed audience participation. “Let’s Talk about Decentralisation” delineates the true essence of development communication not only by offering audience participation but also by giving clear and detailed processes of decentralization and openly emphasizing that the planning of this process is “bottom up, meaning that the people have to indicate what they want”.

The presenter himself was well prepared and did a good research before meeting the panelists because he asked pertinent questions that would help listeners understand the content of the programme. Among other things, he asked on how planning process is done at the assembly and about local people’s concerns as to why some projects are given priority while others are not. In response, the panelists were also able to supply clear answers.

Furthermore, the first caller’s question was most relevant as it touched on one of the heated concerns in the process of decentralisation, the absence of councillors, which has commonly been claimed to derail or hamper the attainment of development of the local people. In response, the panelists unveiled that despite the absence of councillors who were initially designed to link communication between people and the assemblies, the VDCs, through their chiefs, play a major role of communicating people’s development needs to the assembly.

Theoretically, a phone-in programme does not only provide an interactive communication where ideas are exchanged and misunderstandings clarified. It also offers a social learning theory where learning or change can be achieved by listening to new ideas as unfolded during interaction<sup>33</sup>.

While “Let’s Talk about Decentralisation” call in programme can be acclaimed for actualizing participatory communication, it has shown a number of flaws. First, the jingle is in English, making its message inaccessible to the majority of the local audience most of whom may not understand English. It fails to bring the **attention, interest, desire** and appropriate **action (AIDA) appeal** which is one of the most important features of effective communication. The jingle also gives incomplete and unclear definition of decentralization. It asserts that decentralisation “is for improved services”. However, it is debatable whether decentralization is all about “improved services”. As that is not vague enough, the jingle calls people to support the decentralisation, i.e. to be “champion” of this decentralisation but without providing an impetus (interest and desire) that can stimulate people to support the said decentralisation.

Though the content of the programme is very educative, the panelists also started presenting it in English before giving Chichewa versions. This may draw off the attention of the targeted audience particularly those who could not understand English. If the panelists had taken a stock or had “considered” the targeted audience, who are the local people, they could have started with Chichewa. Effective strategic communication demands prioritizing of

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<sup>33</sup> Wigston, D "Phenomenon of Phone-in Programmes- Radio Genre and Programming" in Oosthuizen, L. ed. *Introduction to Communication: Course Book 5: Journalism Press and Radio Studies*. South Africa: Juta, 1997.

unique and captivating features of the message such as language or people's values, interests and needs as one way of capturing attention of the recipients of the message. The programme therefore lacked targeting, selection and prioritization of the most appropriate media and channel for the intended audience.

Besides prioritizing English, the content was too much and this may draw away listeners' attention as information overload is one of the barriers to effective communication<sup>34</sup>. The programme was broadcast at 9:30 in the morning, when most of the right publics especially in the communities are usually busy with work and not listening to the radio. It is therefore doubtful if the majority of Malawians benefited from this programme.

Even though the programme was meant to offer participation of the listeners through phone calls, most of the right beneficiaries of the programme, the villagers, were left out since most villagers cannot afford phones let alone airtime. Furthermore, only one person succeeded and the three other callers were lost as the telephone lines were cut in the process. This means some listeners who could not understand some points failed to seek clarification and others who wanted to comment failed to do so. Thus, it can be concluded that "Lets Talk about Decentralisation" has not only failed to provide a participatory opportunity to the listeners who were supposed to benefit from the program but also failed to achieve a two way process which is one of the features of effective communication<sup>35</sup>.

Although one person, Mr. Nkhambule, succeeded to get through to the panelists, the answer he got that " the chiefs represents people in project needs, discussion and prioritization" is

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<sup>34</sup> Zeuchner, Z. *Communicating Today: The Essentials*, USA: Pearson, 2003

<sup>35</sup> Hanna, et al. "Process Model" in *Introduction to Human Communication*. P 16

questionable in as far as decentralisation structures and their functions are concerned because the chiefs alone cannot fully represent people' needs. The IEC strategy mentions that special focus groups like women and youth need to be represented at such meetings.

The content has one serious problem, too much information but no call to action. It does not instruct what the listeners should do to get the development they need. Communication for change becomes complete when it suggests what to do to attain the desired action or change. The programme centers on increasing knowledge but little on how people can utilize knowledge to get their development. For example, a big part of the programme presented by Mr. Njaka, gave detailed functions and services provided by the assembly without specifying how the local people can access such services. The programme was but a banking of information whose use for the local people has not been fully explored, clarified and illustrated.

### ***Chapter Summary***

A number of observations can be made from the study of the three cases. First, there was indeed some effort by the decentralisation secretariat to communicate decentralization through the radio. This is evidenced by the findings that of the thirty six (36) households (HHs) that were interviewed, eighteen (18) which is half or 50% agreed to "have heard about decentralization". However, of the 18 HHs, thirteen (13) representing 72 % of those that heard about decentralization claimed to have done so through the radio. Various reasons can be attributed to this. Some decentralisation radio programmes such as *Case 1* and *Case 2*, were broadcast on local radio at the right time, for example, 7:30 pm when most of the targeted audience was home listening to the radio. The programmes used radio plays with

local flavour such as local setting and featuring the famous local comedians who attract the interest and attention of majority of local people. The jingle for radio plays such as *Case 1* and *Case 2* endeavoured to explain the meaning of decentralisation let alone in Chichewa which is the national language. Lastly, at least one programme, “Let’s Talk about Decentralisation” attempted to describe the process of decentralization as “a bottom up” undertaking where the local people choose the development they want.

However, of the thirteen (13) households who heard about decentralisation through radio only five (5) households, representing 13 % of the total number of hear about decentralisation, were able to explain correctly and clearly the meaning, elements and process of decentralization. From this, it be seen that the radio programmes have not been very effective in raising desired knowledge and understanding about decentralization and its process. This conclusion can be supported by a number of arguments.

Most of the radio plays, as can be seen from *Case 1* and *Case 2*, seemed to portray and promote development of the assemblies than that of the local people who are supposed to be the final beneficiaries. The messages might therefore be less relevant to the targeted and hence less attractive as messages draws people attention when it appeals to their needs. They did not identify themselves with the decentralisation process. Perhaps there was a need to have a play depicting local people or communities being trained on development, which can be attained through decentralisation, *the power to the people*. The play would involve people choosing the development they want, communicating the development to the assembly and contributing to the realization of the development. This would have made people see the

whole process of *power to the people* and the phrase in the jingle “choosing the development you want. In the area you live” would be more meaningful.

“Let’s Talk About Decentralisation” which provided good description of the decentralisation and the functions of the assembly was presented at 9:30 am when most of the targeted listeners may not be listening to the radio. In an interview, the presenter of the programme, Mr Chancy Muloza also disclosed that he was previously advised to present some decentralisation programmes between 9:30 pm to 10:00 pm and slammed this as not strategic as he was aware that most targeted listeners would be asleep by 9:30 pm. Even if such programmes were presented at the time most people were tuned to the radio, the majority of the people in the villages would not be able to listen to the radio since not everyone can afford a radio let alone batteries.

The use of English language also negatively affected the success of decentralisation radio programmes. Chancy Mloza disclosed that during the first four months in 2007, the programmes were broadcast in English and many people were unable to participate until he requested to broadcast them in Chichewa. He pointed out that when call-ins programmes was changed to Chichewa; many people who called showed little or no knowledge of decentralisation process indicating that the previous programmes, which were broadcast in English, were unsuccessful. The producers and presenter bemoaned lack of enough preparations that affected quality of the production, for example, the programmes were produced in Lilongwe and because of bureaucracy, the money from GTZ would go to the MBC Business Department first before they got the money to travel to Lilongwe to prepare and help produce the programme. Mr Muloza said he had often times left for Lilongwe about

5:00 pm and arrived in Lilongwe by 9:00 pm and start producing the programmes to be aired at 9:30 pm.

Apart from what the presenter said, there was lack of community-produced programmes. This is probably one of the reasons why most of the local people did not identify themselves with the decentralisation process in their areas, as they felt not consulted or involved in deciding the development. The targeted audience is not involved in identification of the development messages based on their development needs and values. Decentralisation radio programmes would be developmental and participatory “if the programme content is based on community or field research and audience needs<sup>36</sup>. Kamlongera and Mefalopulos uphold that participatory radio implies the use of the radio for the people and by the people<sup>37</sup>. The dominance of *top down communication* by the assemblies in communicating by-laws and the development needs of the assembly makes the radio programmes assembly centered, offering no chance to the people for articulate their development or how they would like the development of their assembly to be. The radio programmes would be participatory if they were narrowed to a specific audience or community where they would be produced or focused on a development project which people attained through decentralisation. Mody’s Audience participation- based messages design<sup>38</sup> would be actualized if a community were involved in choosing the theme and the messages for discussion pertaining to the development they want. Most importantly, the radio programmes would be developmental

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<sup>36</sup> Wigston, D. “Issues Concerning Participatory Radio in Africa- Development and the Radio” in Oosthuizen, *Course Book 5*, page 415

<sup>37</sup> Kamulongera, C and Mefalopulos, P. *Participatory Communication: A Handbook*, Second Edition, Rome: FAO, 2004, 51.

<sup>38</sup> Mody, B. *Designing Messages for Development: An Audience Participation Based Approach*, page 47 ff

## CHAPTER FOUR

### **EFFECTIVENESS OF THE *IEC STRATEGY FOR MALAWI DECENTRALISATION* IN EMPOWERING PEOPLE TO PARTICIPATE IN DEVELOPMENT**

#### **4.0 INTRODUCTION**

The heart of this study was to assess the effectiveness of the *IEC strategy for Decentralisation* in empowering people to participate in the development that belongs to them. Participation is considered in two ways; in deciding or choosing development and in actualizing the development. This chapter has three major sections. Section 4.1 studies the effectiveness of the IEC strategy in empowering the local people to participate in deciding or choosing their development while Section 4.2 examines the effectiveness of the strategy in empowering people to participate in actualizing the development. The two sections specifically study the relationship between *sense of ownership* and active participation in actualizing development. Who are the right players of empowering the local people to participate in development through communication has been finally been studied in Section 4.3 which particularly focuses on political and government officials and local community leaders. Empowerment itself is seen a process in which people, through “continuous dialogue” enshrined in participatory communication, are motivated and mandated into action for improving their state of being, principally by “raising conscious”<sup>39</sup> of their, potentialities, abilities, and opportunities, to use them to articulate and attain their development needs. The *IEC Strategy for Decentralisation in Malawi* was principally designed to go beyond mere awareness of the decentralisation process but to be able to “engender positive attitude and to

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<sup>39</sup> Liberative Philosophy of Brazilian Paulo Freire in *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. The Sea bury Press, 1970.

promote specific behaviours in the decentralisation and good governance”.<sup>40</sup> This means the strategy was expected to motivate people to change their attitudes and behaviour so that they can actively participate in deciding and actualizing “the socio-economic development at community and household level”<sup>41</sup>. The IEC *strategy for Decentralisation* is meant to be a tool for empowerment, change, and development<sup>42</sup>.

## **4.1 EMPOWERMENT AS PARTICIPATION IN DECIDING/ CHOOSING DEVELOPMENT**

A very important measure of empowerment that is related to communication is the capacity to awaken people’s ability to decide, choose, and communicate the development they need. Deciding and choosing is realized through communication. This section examines whether implementing the *IEC strategy for Decentralisation in Malawi* has been effective in empowering the local people to decide and choose the development they want. Data was gathered from two sources; first from case studies of projects attained under decentralisation programme and second from views of the households and village development committees.

### **4.1.1 DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS CHOSEN BY PEOPLE THEMSELVES**

Two (2) projects realized under decentralisation were to be identified in each of the 18 villages to study them if they were chosen by people and to measure the level of empowerment or commitment in actualization the projects. This means 36 projects were to be identified. However, some villages did not have any projects while others had one project only. So, only 28 projects were identified as detailed in *Appendix 9*

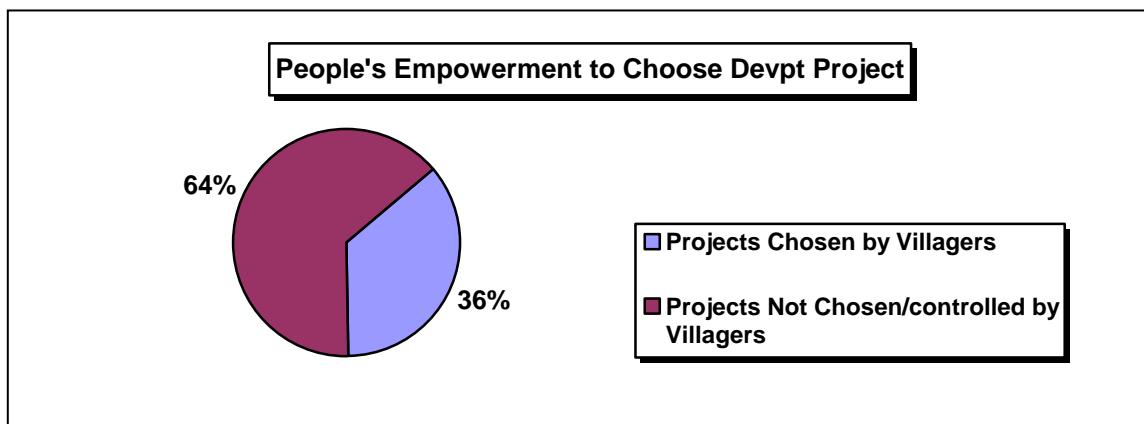
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<sup>40</sup> *IEC Strategy for Malawi Decentralisation* , p5

<sup>41</sup> “Expected outputs of implementing the IEC Strategy”, *IEC Strategy for Malawi Decentralisation*. P 8

<sup>42</sup> “Expected Outputs of Implementing the IEC Strategy” *IEC Strategy for Decentralisation in Malawi*, p8

Out of the 28 projects, only 10 representing 36% were chosen by the people themselves or the people were involved in deciding the projects. This means 18 projects representing 64 % were not chosen by people themselves or people were not given full control of the project but were only told to participate in the development chosen either by the donor, NGO, assembly, ADC and even the VDC alone. *Figure 7* below demonstrates the finding.



**Figure 7: Peoples' Empowerment to Choose Development they want**

Out of the **10** projects chosen or fully controlled by the local people, **five (5)** were identified in Neno, **three (3)** in Thyolo and **two (2)** in Mulanje. **Table 8** shows details of the projects.

**Table 8: Projects Chosen and fully controlled by the Local People**

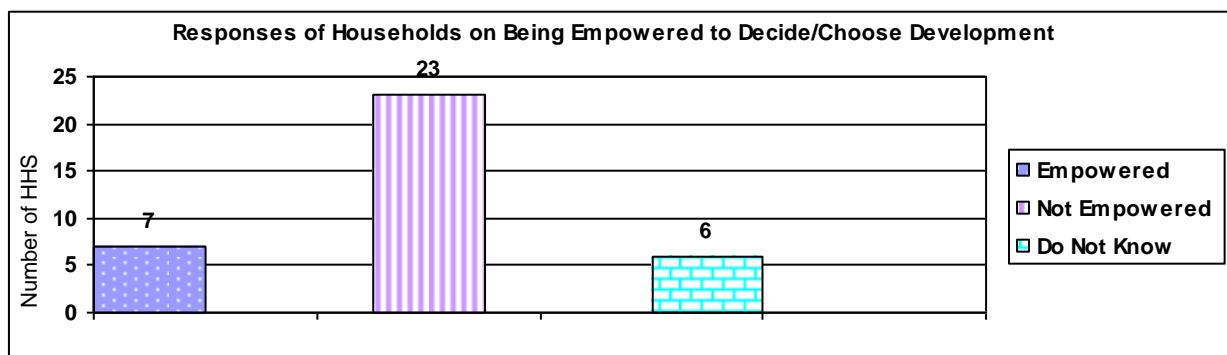
District	Project	TA	Village
Neno	Onani OVC School and Cattle Dairy Farming	Tchekutcheku	Donda 3
	Chikonde Primary School	Tchekutcheku	Donda 1
	Kaponda Junior school	Tchekutcheku	Chirombo-Donda 1
	Community Based Child care center	Dambe	Chikalema- Kanangwayi
	Kandonje Maize Mill	Simon	Kandoje
Mulanje	Sazola Health Centre	Mabuka	Supuni Sazola
	Women's Dairy Farming Project	Mabuka	Chisinkha
Thyolo	Mikalati Junior Primary School	STA Nanseta	Nanseta
	Bolehole	Bvumbwe	Machemba -Light
	Mikombe Junior Primary School	Kapichi	Kapichi

## **Discussion**

The findings show that only **ten (10)** of the **twenty-eight (28)** projects, representing **36%** were chosen by people. This generally shows that the undertaking of implementing the communication strategy for decentralisation has not been very effective in empowering the local people to choose the development they desire. These primary findings also show Neno as having the highest number of projects chosen by people, indicating the effort that Neno district put in communicating decentralisation to the people.

### **Findings from Views of Households on whether they have been empowered to Choose Development they want**

The thirty six (36) households (HHS) were also asked if they had been empowered to choose the development they wanted. As detailed in *Figure 8* below, the findings were as follows: Five (5) HHs indicated to have been empowered to decide or choose development and get it. Six (6) HHs said they did not know whether they were empowered or not. However, twenty three (23) HHs empathically said they had not been empowered to choose or decide development they wanted for reasons given below. The findings can be summarized in the following diagram.



**Figure 8: Responses from HHs on being empowered to decide or choose development they want**

These results show that only seven (7) out of thirty six (36) households accepted to have been empowered to chose the development they want and attain it, indicating that the implementation of the communication strategy has not been effective in empowering the people to chose the development they desired.

### **Reasons Given by Households for claiming that they are not empowered to Participate in Deciding their Development**

To begin with, most households maintained that they were never told to choose the development they wanted as the VDCs and village heads were the ones responsible for choosing the projects and locating them. In addition, entangled by cultural norms for respecting village hierarch, most villagers said were afraid of interfering with or encroaching into chief's responsibilities, a thing that would elicit conflicts or blot relationships with village leaders.

De-motivation was another reason. Some villagers said had chosen developments they wanted several times but they were never given any. One households form TA Kapichi and another from TA Mthiramanja said they did not have any development in the area for the past eight years so they could not say any thing about being involved in choosing development. Two (2) households in Kachingwe village TA Mabuka, one from Kasalika village in Thyolo and another from TA Nthiramanja in Mulanje said people had lost interest in choosing development following continued failure and delays by government and other organisations to fund projects people chose. A household in Donda 1 village TA Tchekutcheku, supported by two other households in Kachingwe and Misyenje village

respectively in TA Chikumbu claimed that continued failure to get development they decided and communicated to the members of parliament made people feel cheated and developed lack of interest. They see what is called participation in choosing development as mere “politics” crafted by political leaders to buy popular support during campaigns and early days of their political administration. In Machemba Village TA Bvumbwe, some households said they do not participated in choosing development projects because whenever they go to meeting to choose the development they want, some people at the meeting strongly protest against their choice. Therefore, they resorted not to speak or not to attend such meetings.

High cases of favouritism and corruption in locating projects especially microfinance projects such as poultry, goats and pigs projects were reported in most projects from people who opted for anonymity. They claimed that names of the right recipients are usually deleted and replaced by those favored by the village heads or the Village Development Committees (VDCs). The VDCs meet in secluded and private houses with the village head, to decide the development they want. This was reported in Machemba village, TA Bvumbwe. Some villages in the same areas get development while others do not and as a result, those who are not given any development feel they are not empowered, cases of TA Mthiramanja. Lastly, most NGOs and CBOs bring projects and people are just told to contribute materials.

### **Reasons given by the VDCs and ADCs why their People Do not participate in Choosing Development**

The VDCs and ADCs also gave reasons why most villagers did not participate in deciding or choosing the development projects. The major reasons being the influence of NGOs and the

assemblies who come with already-decided projects such as microfinance projects in Mulanje and Thyolo by Oxfam and European Union. Some examples of such projects include planting trees along rivers, for example along Lichenza River in TA Mthiramanja by the GTZ; bole holes in Mulanje and Neno by InterAide and Church of Christ respectively; road rehabilitation by the Ministry of Works through MASAF food for work projects. Some VDCs stated that some projects are just brought by the ADCs who advise the VDCs to ask people to participate, for example road rehabilitation and clinics.

### ***Section Summary***

Only ten (10) out of eighteen (18) projects representing 36% were chosen by people. Only seven (7) out of thirty-six (36) households representing 19% accepted to have been empowered to participate in deciding and choosing the development they wanted. Interference and over dominance of village head persons and the VDCs in the decision process is one of the principal reasons. Others reasons are people's de-motivation and apathy in choosing development projects following continued unfulfilled promises by organisations, government and political leaders to fund projects, an event that made people see the so called participation as mere political rhetoric designed by political leaders to buy support during campaigns. High cases of favouritism and corruption in locating projects and tendencies by most NGOs and CBOs to bring already decided projects to the villagers and just ask them to contribute some materials. That Neno has highest number of projects decided and chosen by the beneficiaries probably shows commitment by Neno to communicate decentralisation to the people.

## **4.2 EMPOWERMENT AS PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION IN ACTUALIZING DEVELOPMENT**

People's involvement and commitment in actualizing their development is another important aspect of the participation the *IEC Strategy for Decentralisation in Malawi* was designed to achieve as included in the expected outcome of implementing the IEC strategy,

*"Empowerment of people by providing them with information to enable them to identify and gain access to possible opportunities that are appropriate, responsive to their needs and promote increased socio-economic development at community and household level"*<sup>43</sup>

This section therefore assesses the effectiveness of the IEC strategy in motivating people to actualize their development. It studies the relationship between *sense of ownership* and people's commitment or active participation in attaining the development. Section 4.2.1 assesses the levels of people's participation in the development *not decided or not chosen by them* while Section 4.2.2 studies people's degree of commitment in development *chosen by them*.

### **4.2.1 PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION IN DEVELOPMENT THEY HAVE NOT CHOSEN**

This section studies people's levels of participation or commitment in the attainment of the development *they were not involved in choosing* it or where the structure or the main goals of the project have been changed by the funding organisation or other influential people of the community. Two cases have been chosen for study. One is Tioloke Orphanage and Vulnerable Children Dairy Farming in Mhura Village STA Nanseta, which was chosen by a

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<sup>43</sup> IEC Strategy for Decentralisation in Malawi, p 8

few people but its structure and intended objectives were changed and was highly controlled by the funding organisation. Another case is Kaponda Junior School Project that people did not choose but were committed to actualizing it. The school is in Chiromo Two Village STA Donda in Neno.

### **Case Study 1: Tioloke Orphanage and Vulnerable Children (OVC) Dairy Farming**



Tioloke Orphanage and Vulnerable Children (OVC) Dairy Farming, is a project chosen by a few people and where a funding organisation, MASAF, took full control in terms of the structure and objectives of the project, contrary to the initial purpose, wish and indigenous knowledge of the people. The funding organisation forced

members to locate the project where they did not want. The funding organisation brought extension workers who forced the people to construct a *khola* (cattle house) with an open roof, which let in a lot of water during rain seasons. All members who asked for the project, except the one whose home the project was located, withdrew their participation in feeding the cows. As of the time this research was done, two of the cows had already died. Tioloke OVC Dairy Farming is a case that examines peoples' level of participation in development whose structure and objective are forced upon them. Mr Dickson Chipote was one of the founders and now the only remaining member of the project. He gave a detailed background and description of the project as presented in *Appendix 14*.

### **Findings from people's views about the Tioloke OVC Project**

Interviewing some people in the area, they said they could not assist in feeding the cattle because they were not involved or consulted when choosing the development. They said they were not consulted about the type of development they wanted and where the

development was supposed to be. They said it is only very few people together with the village headman who choose the development. One of the villagers involved in choosing the development said he decided to withdraw because, among other things, it was taking too long for the cattle to reproduce and he was not sure as to when he would personally benefit especially in the wake of worsening poverty in his household.

### ***Analysis of “Tioloke OVC Cattle Farming” Case Study***

Indigenous knowledge of the people on how the *khola* (kraal) looks like and on how many members the committee should have, was neglected by the funding organisation. The villagers' wish and decisions in terms of objectives and location of the project were disregarded. Instead, the funding organisation forced on the people the structure and objective of the project including the required number of committee members. It also appears that the people were not consulted on where the project was to be located. As a result, people were demotivated and withdrew their participation in feeding the cattle. Consequently, the project became unsustainable and unsuccessful. This case shows that people cannot participate actively in the development they have not chosen. It shows that granting people opportunity to choose and communicate the development they want, how they should attain it and where, including accommodating their indigenous knowledge, experiences and perceptions instills sense of accountability and ownership which enhances active participation in development. The view by one respondent that he withdrew his participation because the cattle was taking long to reproduce also shows that people can participate actively in projects that respond to their immediate development needs. .

## **Case Study 2: Kaponda Junior Primary School Project**

Kaponda Junior Primary School Project is in Chiromo village, Group Village Donda in Neno. It was described by the village head woman and the chairperson of the VDC who both did not consent to



*New and Old Kaponda Junior*

have their photos taken. The chairperson of the VDC was also a member of the school's committee. Kaponda Junior School is a project that was not chosen by people but they actively participated in attaining it because it was relevant to their development needs. *Appendix 15* gives a full description of the project.

### ***Analysis of Kaponda Junior Primary School Project***

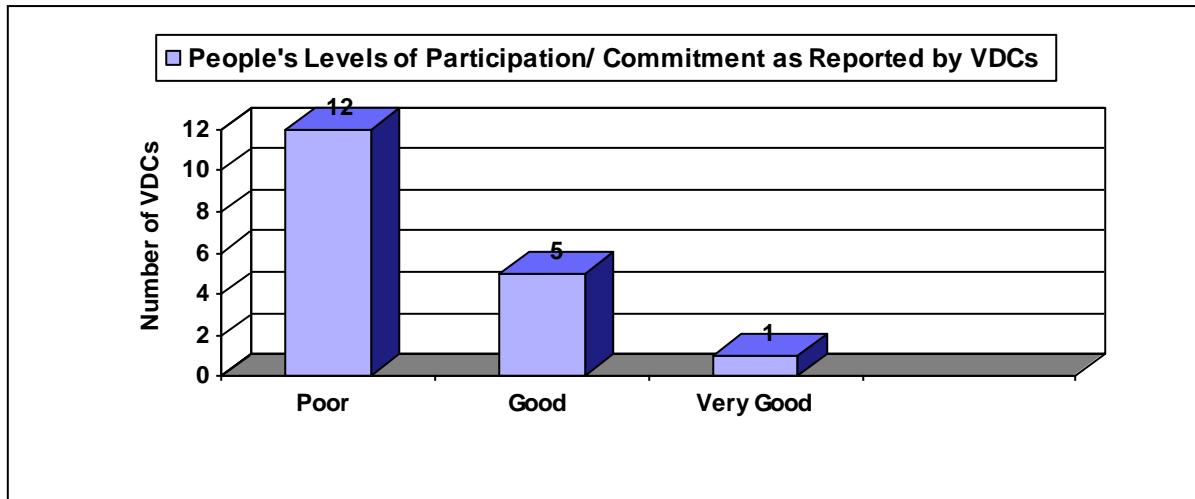
People never chose this project but they actively participated in it. First, the children were learning in a grass-thatched school. Second, the children were traveling long distances to other schools. Even though the school project was chosen by the assembly, it responded to people's needs. Thus, it can be inferred that people can participate actively in the development they have not chosen as long as it responds to their development needs.

### **Findings from Views of Households (HHs) and Village Development Committees (VDCs) about Kaponda Junior Primary School Project**

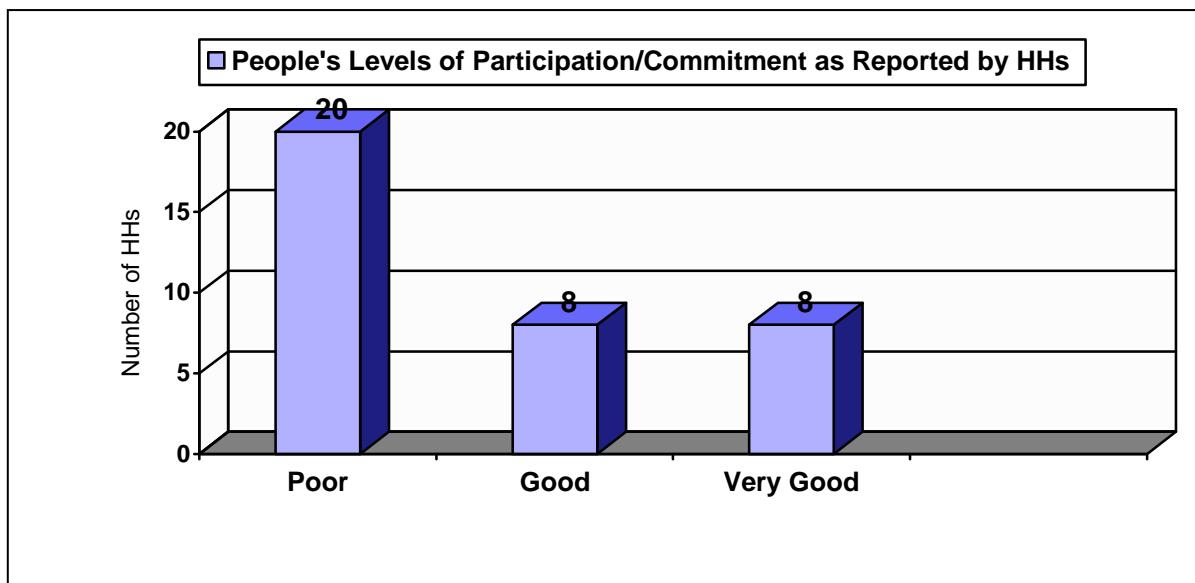
It has been reported above that out of 28 projects identified in this research, 18 projects were not chosen by the people. Respondents who were VDCs and HHs, from the 18 villages were asked to report their or people's levels of participation or commitment, rated as *very good*, *good* and *poor*. The rating was in terms of the number of people turning up for the development work, commitment in terms of speed or willingness to contribute materials or

money as required. Since there were 18 villages, 18 VDCs were interviewed and since two households were sampled from each village, 36 households were interviewed in total.

*Figure 9 and Figure 10* show the responses.



**Figure 9: People's Levels of Participation/Commitment in the Development they have NOT Chosen, as reported by VDCs**



**Figure 10: People's Levels of Participation in the development they have NOT chosen, as reported by HHs**

### ***Discussion of the Findings***

The results indicate that both the VDC and the HHs have highest numbers in the *poor participation / commitment*. This manifests a trend that there is *poor people's participation* in the projects they have not chosen or in which they not been involved in choosing

### **Reasons for Participating and Not Participating in Development Projects Not Chosen by the People themselves**

As can be seen from *Figure 10*, some households confirmed their *good participation* in the development they had not chosen. Two main reasons were given for this. One of them is relevance or usefulness of the project. Another reason was fear of being considered selfish, deviant, and insubordinate to the village authority, a behaviour whose penalties include not being given coupons for subsidized targeted inputs or few villagers coming to the funeral of a member of the family.

On the other hand, the twenty (20) households professed *poor or no participation* in the development they had not been involved in deciding and gave the following reasons. Segregation or not being involved in choosing the development they wanted made them feel less accountable and less motivated to participate in the development. Some households in TA Kapichi and STA Bvumbwe maintained that democracy had afforded them freedom to choose what they wanted, to participate or not, unlike the single party regime where they were forced to participate in development and “Youth Week programs”. Two families in TA Nthiramanja said they were used to be paid for community work such as “food for work programmes” and could not participate in free work. Besides, most village heads allocate projects near their houses and this discourages people. Delays in funding projects in which

people have invested much effort de-motivate people to participate in another development work.

### ***Section Summary***

Only ten (10) out of eighteen (18) projects representing 36% were chosen by people and that only seven (7) out of thirty six (36) households representing 19% accepted to have been empowered to participate in deciding and choosing the development they wanted. The section unveils specific reasons why people fail to participate in deciding and choosing development. The reasons include domination and interference of village head persons, VDCs and funding organisations in the decision process; de-motivation and lack of interest following continued failure by government, political leaders and organisations to fund the projects, high cases of favouritism and corruption in locating projects and NGOs and CBOs bringing already decided projects .

*Tioloke OVC case study* shows that granting people opportunity to choose the development they want, how they should attain it and where, including accommodating their indigenous knowledge, experiences and perceptions instills sense of accountability and ownership which enhances active participation in development. The results indicate that both the VDC and HHs have highest numbers in the *poor participation* in actualizing project they have not decided or chosen. Findings from both *Tioloke OVC Projects case study* and from the HHs and VDCs certify that people cannot participate actively in the projects they have been involved in deciding and choosing. This ratifies that sense of ownership acquired by empowering people to decided, choose, and communicate development they want is impetus for active participation. On the hand, *Kaponda School Project Case study* shows that people

can participate actively in the development work, which they have not been involved in choosing if the projects respond to their development needs. Views from households unveil that people can also participate in projects they have not chosen because of the fear of community exclusion and because of need for respect of village authority and cultural norms.

#### **4.2.3 PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION IN DEVELOPMENT THEY HAVE CHOSEN**

This section assesses people's level of empowerment, or motivation to participate in the development they have been given chance to choose. The chapter is therefore designed to find out if sense of ownership, possession, or accountability is a motivating factor or an impulse for participation in the development by studying two cases of projects chosen by people and how committed they were in actualizing the project.

##### ***Case Study 3: Chisinkha Women Dairy farming***

After being encouraged by a woman MP of the area not to lag behind in choosing development to be funded by the assembly, some 11 women of Chisinkha village TA Mabuka in 2005 took courage to choose a dairy cattle farming project. Since they chose the project by themselves, they started contributing K50 each to buy trees and nails for building the *khola*. From the same money, in 2006, they employed someone to mould bricks for constructing a component for milking the cows. In the same year, the assembly through MASAF bought them iron sheets and four dairy cows on 15 February 2007. The eleven women work together tirelessly to feed the animals and to contribute K8500 last year to pay the veterinary officer and K1500 for male cows. The cattle has now reproduced and increased to five. They have now begun to produce one litre of milk daily and the club sells

it at K60, 000. Members of the projects are positive that the project will be more productive as soon as they cows start producing more milk



Mrs Rute Magoda (left) and Miss Jean Maolera (right): Hosts and executive members of the *Chisinkha Women's Dairy Farming Project*, TA Mabuka in Mulanje.

#### **Case Study 4: Sazola Heath Clinic**

Supuni is a unique village in Mulanje. UNICEF chose to support the village in areas of development. The funding organisation advocated participatory development approach



whose messages were mainstreamed in the projects themselves by the village development committee. The UNICEF funded, in the village,

the construction of a two-block Junior Primary school, which was chosen by the people of

the village. Sharing boundary with Supuni is Sazola village, where people having appreciated the fruits of *power to the people* messages promoted by UNICEF in Supuni village, decided to go to Mulanje assembly to ask for funding for the construction of a clinic, now known as Sazola Health Center. Mr Ephraim Tebulo, treasurer of School committee and a member of Sozola VDC narrated how people committed themselves to actualize the project, which they chose. *Appendix 16* gives the details.

### ***Analysis of Chisinkha Women’s Dairy Farming and Sazola Health Centre Projects***

The Chisinkha Women Dairy Farming and Sazola Health Centre Projects case studies show that people get committed to participate actively in actualizing the development because they wanted it, chose it and decided where they wanted it to be located.

### **Findings from Views of the Village Development Committees VDCs & Households (HHs) to participate in Development they have Chosen**

The VDCs as key informants from the ten (10) villages which had projects decided and chosen by the beneficiaries, were required to give their views on the degrees of participation in the projects chosen by the villagers themselves. *Figure 11* below summarizes the findings.

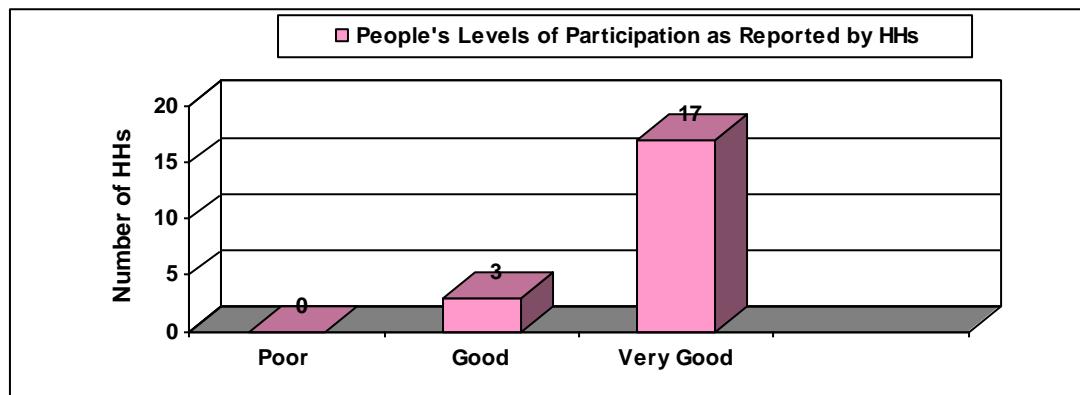


**Figure 11:** People's Levels of participation in the Development they have Chosen, as reported by VDCs

The two (2) VDCs who rated people participation as *good*, maintained that in this era of democracy and multiparty politics the question of *very good or active* participation is untenable. These two VDCs, that were identified in Donda 1 and Nanseta villages respectively, confirmed that they still had to push some people to work although the projects were chosen by the community. They also asserted that it is not possible for all the people to decide or choose unanimously, as it is very impossible for the community to choose a project and its location that can please every one. Since it is only the majority's decision that is taken, the minority that feels neglected does not participate effectively as it claims that the project they wanted and chose was not considered.

The two VDCs also noted that participation declined when in the process of implementing the development people discover that only a few would benefit or that it would take time to benefit everyone. For example in goat and pig keeping micro projects of Thyolo TA Nanseta, some people withdrew their pledges and commitment to feed the animals. This was

not only because the project was located at the family of Mr and Mrs X they did not favour, but also because the animals were taking long to reproduce and they did not know when they (the people) would benefit. Sharing similar views were the three (3) households who rated people's participation as *good*. Households of the 10 villages where some projects were chosen by the people themselves also gave views on the levels of participation/commitment in the projects, which they themselves chose, as presented in *Figure 12* below. Since two households were interviewed from each village, the total number of the households from the ten villages was twenty (20).



**Figure 12:** *People's Levels of Participation in the Development They Have Chosen, as reported by households (HHs)*

### ***Section Summary***

A section shows major findings related to empowerment communication. A good number of VDC and households rate people's participation in the development they choose as *very good or very active*. The three cases, Chisinkha, Sazola and development projects, which were chosen by people, show people's commitment active participation in actualizing development desired and chosen by themselves. This ratifies the theoretical framework of positive correlation between people's sense of ownership of the development and their

commitment to actualizing the development. Even when they have not been involved in deciding the projects, people can be commitment to participate actively when the development is relevant to their development needs. Delay in funding the projects where people have invested efforts decreases people's motivation to participate in other development projects. Delayed materialization, utilization, or benefits of a development projects particularly the micro finance development slacken people's commitment to participation.

#### **4.3 EFFECTIVENESS OF INVOLVING POLITICAL LEADERS, COUNCILLORS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS IN EMPOWERING PEOPLE THROUGH COMMUNICATION TO PARTICIPATE IN DEVELOPMENT**

Who can empower the local people to participate in development belonging to them is the main investigation here. The effect of involving political leaders in communicating decentralisation is one of the focus areas of this study. This section examines people's empowerment to participate in development, when political leaders are involved or are made main players of communicating development. As seen above, *political leaders* here refer to both those government and political party leaders or officials. However, this section discusses government leaders and political party leaders separately.

##### **4.3.1 Effectiveness of Engaging Political Party Leaders in Empowering People to Participate in Development**

The respondents who comprised HHs, VDCs, and the ADCs were interviewed on their experience about the empowerment effect of involving political leaders in communicating decentralisation. First from the households (HHs), seventy (70) % confirmed that political leaders in their areas talked development only during campaigns but never held any meetings

after being voted to power. The seventy (70) % said they never appreciated the empowerment effect of engaging political leaders in communicating participatory development, for the following reasons:

Most political leaders give false promises, and people are fed up and demotivated. For example, political leader of TA Chikumbu area told people to mould bricks for clerk's houses near the TA's court two or three years back. After completing the work, the people were told to wait for the money. Up to the time of writing this paper, the leader had neither given them the funds nor gone there to tell people about the next step. This has demotivated people to participate in other projects.

Some political leaders have chosen development that people did not really need such as school blocks or road rehabilitation when the people needed water or clinics. It was reported that sometimes the political leader choose their own development in which they believe they can benefit financially. According to TA Mthiramanja, the political leaders confuse and divide the people. They become close to some people who seem to support them. As a result, those who feel not close to the political party leaders do not participate in development or do so unwillingly. Related to this, most political leaders have lost people's respect because they have not brought any development despite their promises during campaigns. Most households said they could no longer listen or believe the political party leaders. Some political leaders located projects closer to their home areas. This made other people not participate in such development.

However, thirty (30) percent of the households in whose areas the political leaders were development conscious, reported that they were motivated to participate in development

when asked to do so by any political party leader if the development was relevant and beneficial to them. It was discovered that there is scarcity and great need for development in most rural communities such as water sources, clinics, road rehabilitations, and bridges following the end of youth week and self help development initiatives, which died with the advent of multiparty democracy. Hence, unlike the early days of the multiparty democracy, people of different political affiliations today work together in the communities to accomplish any relevant development brought by any political leader. It was further reported that people had now learnt that “they cannot eat politics” and cannot be cheated by any political party leaders not to participate in development. As long as it is relevant and responsive to their needs, they can participate with commitment. They supported any development brought by government political leaders to show allegiance to the current state president who wants to bring development to all Malawians.

On the other hand, it was unveiled that few political leaders who brought development in the communities did so single handedly perhaps due to ignorance of participatory approach advocated by decentralisation process or they want to be seen as sole achievers of the development, which they would use as evidence for maintaining or attaining their political positions. Examples are maize mill, bore holes. On levels of participation and commitment, some households said they participate actively in the development when they personally know the political party leader or if they belong to the political leader’s party and when the leader is a good person, in terms of philanthropic personality, congeniality, and good manners.

Over half of the VDCs gave views similar to those of the households about political party leaders. However, others added that most political party leaders especially MPs do not visit their areas nor find time to talk development they promised during campaigns. Hence, people have lost trust in them. They do not fulfill their development promises. This demotivates people from participating in other projects. Some MPs come to talk development when they know there is money in which they could benefit e.g. food for work programmes not self-help projects.

The **Area Development Committees (ADCs)** and **the assemblies** gave the following views about political party leaders. Political party leaders have not been active players of communicating decentralisation in terms of development. They talked development during campaigns where *power to the power* was mentioned only in relation to people's choice to vote them into power. Most of the development projects in the areas have been accomplished without political party leaders but these leaders often appear at the launch of development projects to be identified with the development that they will use as gimmick for remaining in power. Though strategically stationed in local communities, political party leaders have not been clearly mandated by the IEC strategy to communicate decentralisation. Political party leaders intrude and politicize development brought by the NGOs, CBOs and the assemblies. This does not motivate those who belong to opposing political party to participate in other development initiatives by the civil societies and assembly. Some good political leaders who have brought development in their areas have not encouraged participatory approach to development as advocated in the decentralisation because they want the development to be attributed to them alone or to be seen as the only persons who can bring development. That is why political aspirants who have little or no money find it hard to make it to parliament.

In summary, very few political party leaders have been agents or motivators for empowerment and participatory development. Most political party leaders have demotivated people to participate in development because of their selfish attitudes and tendencies to politicize development including their failures to bring the development they promised. That people are ready to listen to or support someone they know perhaps underscores the need for engaging native leaders to communicate empowerment for change and development because they share and understand people experience and needs.

#### **4.3.2 Effectiveness of Using Government Leaders/Officials to Communicate Empowerment for Participatory Development**

The government leaders include those who take part, or were assigned roles to communicate decentralisation as designed in the *IEC Strategy for Malawi Decentralisation*. These are the decentralisation secretariat officials, the District Assembly (DA), the District Executive Committees (DECs) composed of all heads of government ministries and departments in the districts, members of Area Executive Committees (AECs) such as extension workers representing all ministries operating in the chief's area. Views were collected from households and the key informants (DA, DEC, IEC teams, ADC) as to whether these political leaders as main players have empowered people to participate in development. The following were the findings:

The **decentralization secretariat** is a very distant body from the grassroots who are the ultimate recipients of development messages. In attempt to reach the grassroots swiftly while covering a wide population, the secretariat officials used mass media, which is inaccessible,

less persuasive, and unsustainable. At DA level, the DA is expected to empower the local committees, committees through DEC, IEC teams, and AECs who are believed to possess appropriate technical skills for communicating decentralization to the local communities. However, the IEC committees do not exist in some districts or are inactive, for example Mulanje and Thyolo or lacks funding to operate. The DEC also fails to reach every ADC due to funding problems. The AEC members are not enough to reach every village development committee. In short, government leaders who were made key players at District Assembly are hit by lack of funding, lack of human capacity to empower the local communities successfully. From these findings, it can be inferred that government leaders who were assigned majored roles of communicating decentralisation at national and district level have not been able to achieve enough people's empowerment due to their inability to reach the local communities.

#### **4.3.3 Effectiveness of Involving Councillors to Communicate Empowerment for Participatory Development**

The councillors were both main players and media link for communicating empowerment or participatory development between the local communities and assemblies. Their missing in the process has been criticized by political analysts as an impediment to local people's development. Views were sought from respondents of this research on whether the councillors as one of the key communicators and as a link in communicating development helped in empowering people to participate in the development. Responses from households (HHs) and Village Development Committees (VDCs) were as follows;

Only five (5) (HHs) and two (2) VCDs said they were motivated to participate in development by the councillors because the councillors used to visit them unlike the MPs. They were people's eyes and they helped bring the development people wanted. The councillors were always there for the people. They were even coming to funerals. The councillors would even join people when moulding bricks. With his commitment and personality, the councillor non-verbally communicated empowerment to the people. Three (3) HHs and two (2) VDCs, however, said they did know anything. They do not know what the councillors could do to them, connoting that even when the councillors were there or not, people did not see any development in their village.

However, the rest, 28 HHs representing 77% and 14 VDCs (78%) gave related views which reflect negative effects of engaging the councillors to communicate power to the people. They are summarized as follows: Councillors started well but later belonged to political parties. This brought division amongst people of different political affiliations in the area and affected participatory development. Twenty- two (22) HHs said councillors favoured their home areas and those areas where they had majority political support. Things are now normal without the councillors. People have been given development without the councillors. It is the NGOs and CBOs who brought development and these did not work with councillors but VDCs. Most VDCs and ADCs said the councillors never respected them even in the presence of the villagers. Hence, it was difficult for most VDCs and ADCs to bring unity and be committed to their work of communicating participatory development.

A number of views were collected from the ADCs and Assemblies particularly from Neno and Thyolo IEC executive members and from the then Luchenza Town assembly Chief

Executive as follows. Some councillors sometimes did not respect the traditional authorities (TAs). This created conflicts and division as some people supported the TA while others supported the councillors, a situation that greatly jeopardized communal and participatory approach to development in the area. According to Bvumbwe ADC, the MP and the Councillors did not always see each other as partners in people's development but as competitors for political positions or favour. From Neno and Thyolo assemblies it was reported that the MP felt more superior to the councillor and yet it was the councillor that kept scrutiny of the constituency funding to ensure transparency and accountability. If the councillors were more active, they created fear and tension in the MPs, as they feared that the councillors might become more popular than the MPs. Other MPs and the councillors themselves came to see the position of the councillor as a training field for higher political aspirations. This created conflicts and divisions, which retarded participatory development in the area. As most councillors affiliated identified themselves with party politics, the position of a Councillor came to be seen as political, a feature that in the wake of political dispensation did not fully inspire people to participate in development.

It was unveiled by one assembly that opted for anonymity that councillors always wanted quick development in all areas. When they get development funding, they want to share it amongst all the areas that need development in order to make them happy. As a result, they give the areas too little money to raise palpable development. For example giving money to build only one block at a school where five blocks are needed. In this way, people take councillors as not very serious and committed to big projects.

There is high illiteracy level among the councillors yet most of them used to take themselves as extension workers. This created conflict of roles with members of the AECs particularly the extension workers most of whom were non-natives of the area. As a result, the extension workers withdrew their commitment to propagate decentralization and motivate people to participatory development.

The common tendency by the councillors to ask for meetings even when they know the money is not ready leaves the impression that the councillors are more interested in getting the funds than real development. This made some assemblies not entrust the councillors with money for other initiatives even those that would advocate participatory development. The Neno district assembly emphasized that councillors are policy makers at assembly and the secretariats are supposed to implement the policies. However, sometimes they make policies, they go out to implement it, and this is a threat to decentralisation policy.

It was revealed that most councillors never respected the ADCs even in the presence of VDCs and the villagers. This engendered hidden antipathy in members of the local development committees who reacted by retracting their commitment to promoting *power to the people*. Lastly, from the one assembly that did not want to be named, one councillor threatened to kill anyone at the assembly who did not want to take his decisions. This created poor relationship councilor and the District assembly. This retarded development in the area. In summary councilors, the so-called communication links for development between people and assemblies, have not been effective in motivating people to participate in development in their areas

#### **4.4.4 Effectiveness of Using Community Leaders to Communicate Empowerment for Participatory Development**

Community leaders assigned to communicate development were the VDCS, the AECs to be assisted by the ADCs that include the TAs or STAs and GVHs. From households the following views were collected.

Community leaders are closer to the people. They live with the people. Sometimes they share with the people common knowledge, culture, experiences and needs. Hence, they understand people's problems and development needs. However, a number of problems were commonly noted by most households about the local community leaders. First, some community leaders who were pro-opposition had been sidelined in getting development particularly, the targeted inputs such as coupons for fertilizers and seeds. Such leaders were not able to create togetherness in terms of motivating people to participatory development. Second, most of the community leaders are selfish. The village heads highly influence decisions of the VDCs in terms of who should get the development and where it should be located. Most village heads would like the development such as bole hole, to be located near their homes. With this personality, they fail to gain total participation of the people. Lastly, most chiefs and villages heads have realized the need to work with the government of the day. In addition, they have started receiving good monthly salaries. As a result, they have started aligning themselves more with government and not the people. They have become complacent and centralized. They think they are more important. They have become more commanding. They know nothing can happen to them even if there is no development in the village or if they are biased in locating development.

In summary, while well located to communicate decentralisation to local people, the VDCs have not been good motivators to participatory development because they are not fully trained and mandated. They do not hold meetings, most of them do not involve the villagers in choosing development and they are highly influenced by selfish village heads who would like to have development closer to chief's home.

### ***Chapter Summary***

Only ten (10) out of eighteen (18) development projects (36%) were chosen by people and that only seven (7) out of thirty-six (36) households (19%) accepted to have been empowered to decide and choose the development they wanted. This shows that efforts to implement the *IEC strategy for Decentralisation in Malawi* have not been very fruitful in empowering people to choose the development they wanted. Specific reasons why people fail to participate in choosing development they want include domination and interference of village head persons, the VDCs and funding organisations in the decision making process; de-motivation and apathy following continued failure by government and political leaders to fund the projects; high cases of favouritism and corruption in locating projects and funding organisations bringing already decided projects.

*Tioloke OVC case study* shows that granting the beneficiaries opportunity to choose the development they want, how and where they should attain it, including accommodating their indigenous knowledge, experiences and perceptions instill accountability and ownership, which increase active participation in development. Findings from both *Tioloke OVC case study* and from views of the HHs and VDCs certify that people cannot participate actively in

the projects they have been involved in deciding and choosing. On the other hand, *Kaponda Case study* shows that people can participate actively in the development project they have not been involved in choosing if the project is relevant or when it responds to their development needs. Views from households indicate that people can participate in projects they have not chosen because of the fear exclusion from community and because of need for respect of village authority and cultural norms.

*Chisinkha and Sazola* development projects, which were chosen by people, show people's commitment to participate in development they have chosen. Findings from views of households(HHs) and VDCs show highest number of the VDCs and HHs indicating *active participation* in the development people have chosen and *poor participation* in the development they have not decided or chosen. All these findings ratify the theoretical framework of positive correlation between people's sense of ownership of the development and their commitment to actualizing the development. Findings also show that people can participate actively in the development projects not chosen by themselves when it is relevant to their needs. Delay in funding the projects where people have invested much efforts decreases people's motivation to participate in other development projects. Delayed attainment, utilization, or benefits of a development project also slacken people's active participation. Twenty-two (22) out of thirty-six (36) households reported that the councillors have failed to be the development communication like between the villagers and the assembly. Since most of the councillor had political colours they used to favour certain areas where they had support and they displayed more appetite for development funding than the development itself.

On who can effectively communicate empowerment to the local people, it has been found that the bring distant from the main beneficiaries of the power to the people programme, the decentralisation secretariat resorted to use mass media which proved inaccessible to the local communities and less persuasive on empowering the local communities to participate actively in development and good governance. Due to incessant false promises and tendencies to politicize development, most political party leaders failed to motivate the grassroots to participate in development. Government officials such as the district assembly (DA) which was designated overseer at of decentralisation processes at district level depend on the District Executive Committee (AECs), the IEC sub committees the Area Executive Committees (AECs) as technocrats or skilled mouthpiece for communicating *power to the people*. However, the “technocrats” are understaffed, under funded and less skilled in using participatory and effective media for empowering the local communities. The Area Development Committees (ADC) and Village Development Committees (VDC) are strategically positioned in the local communities as they are close to the grassroots and would use the available appropriate media or channels for change and development. However, by design, the IEC strategy does not mandate the ADC to communicate empowerment. Consequently, the VDCs are not fully trained and empowered. Besides, most VDCs are highly influenced by selfish village heads who would like to bring development closer to their homes. As result, empowerment process does not reach the main beneficiaries or intended recipients, the grassroots.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1.0 CONCLUSIONS

Conclusions have been grouped into four sections. Section 5.1.1 details conclusions on the channels, media, and players of communicating decentralisation. Conclusions on the process of communicating decentralisation have been outlined in Section 5.1.2. While Section 5.1.3 specifies conclusions on the Effectiveness of the IEC strategy in raising awareness, knowledge and understanding the final Section, 5.1.4 singles out conclusions on the effectiveness in the strategy in empowering the communities to participate in development.

#### 5.1.1 Channels, Media and Main Players of Communicating Decentralisation

To begin with, interpersonal face-to-face channels such as meetings, focus group discussions, and PRAs have been found to be the most effective channels for empowerment, change, and development. Conversely, mass media such as radio and television, which were used by the secretariat, have not been very effective in raising desired levels of awareness, increase knowledge and understanding of the *power to the people* programme and motivated them into participatory development. This is because the two media are not easily accessible to the majority of the local people most of whom are very poor. Besides, they lack targeting, personal touch, immediate feedback and persuasiveness.

Most of the HHs who claimed to have heard about decentralisation but did not really understand what it meant, said they heard about it on the **radio**. Hence the radio, which was used by the secretariat along with **television** has not been productive in instilling rooted

knowledge and understanding of decentralisation. It has been noted that traditional cultural channels and media such as **songs**, and **dance** advocated by the cultural theory as being effective due to their appeal to people's experiences and values, have not been used to communicate decentralisation by the main players of the programme.

On key players of communicating decentralisation, the **decentralisation secretariat** is very distant from the grassroots, with distant knowledge of the grassroots in terms of values, experiences, indigenous knowledge, culture, and available channels of communication. In an attempt to reach all the communities, it used impersonal mass media such as radio and television, which are inaccessible to the majority of the local people in Malawi. In addition, it did not involve the local people in messaging decentralisation. Hence, the secretariat has not been effective in communicating decentralisation. It is therefore not an appropriate key player for taking decentralisation messages to the grassroots.

Though mandated as an advisory and top technical organ of the assembly to orient committees and disseminate messages on decentralisation, the **District Executive Committee (DEC)** depends on availability of funding and the IEC sub committee to do the task. Its members are very busy carrying out their core duties since most of them are also heads of government ministries and departments as well as NGOs within the District Assembly. Hence, their commitment to communicating decentralisation to the local development committees is highly uncertain. The **six-member IEC sub committee** which is considered a technical arm of the DEC, has taken much pride in itself as being “technocrats”, with the best expertise for communicating messages to the grassroots. As a result, it does not engage the local people nor employ peoples' indigenous values and

traditional media in messaging and communicating decentralisation. It usually understaffed and needs funding to operate. As a result, it has failed to reach all the local communities and their development committees.

At the local community level, the AEC “technocrats” assigned to communicate decentralization at ADC level and take it further to the VDCs are hit by lack of staffing and funding to sensitize people through meetings, to design messages and to produce IEC materials. They face role conflict with local political leaders and (the councillors of the area). In addition, that about half of the VDCs and 70% of the HHs have poor or no knowledge of decentralisation shows that the AECs have failed to take decentralisation down to the VDCs and to the households.

The *IEC Strategy for Decentralisation in Malawi* has reduced the **Area Development Committees (ADCs)**, who are the natives of the area, with good appreciation of people’s cultures, experiences, and development needs, to mere “assistants” of the DECs and AECs in designing and communicating messages. The IEC strategy therefore, has left out the most appropriate key players who could take decentralisation to the doorposts of their fellow local committees and to the grass roots perhaps by using the common and accessible channels and media. This probably shows that the IEC strategy designated inappropriate people as main players of communicating decentralization down to the grassroots. At the village level, that only six (6) of the 18 VDCs, representing 33% communicated decentralisation while the remaining twelve (12) VDCs representing 67% never communicated decentralisation shows that the final and most appropriate key players, who are closer to the grassroots, who understand and share culture, values, indigenous knowledge, experience and needs, have not been empowered to take decentralisation down to the grassroots. Coming to political leaders,

most political party leaders, such as the MPs, though having the right mandate, have not played a major role in promoting decentralisation or participatory development in their areas. They only talk about the development they would personally bring, a move that has been seen as a ploy to obtain political positions or remain in power.

Finally, **mainstreaming decentralisation** in all development activities is a good idea as it brings decentralisation to the point of realization of development. However, making it as the only communication channel is a flimsy and indecisive approach. First, it presupposes that there must be an occasion where people have met to embark on a specific development project but these occasions are very rare in the communities and not many people may turn up to these functions. Second, participatory approach advocated by decentralisation starts at the point of deciding the development not only at the actualization of the project. Third, it is not a guarantee that all stakeholders will talk decentralisation every time they meet people.

### **5.1.2 The Processes and Structure of Communicating Decentralisation**

The downward and upward **processes** of communicating Malawi decentralisation are too long. Messages may get lost, distorted, or gate- kept. The absence of the designated “communication technocrats”, the IEC teams and the AECs, in some districts shows a loose structure of the downward communication process and the laxity of the decentralization secretariat to set up and ensure a smooth downward communication. Thus, the downward process of communicating decentralisation is a disjointed process that cannot successfully take decentralisation messages down to the grassroots. There is no uniformity of the structures for communicating decentralisation in terms of key players and media used. Some districts have not set up the IEC teams. Some ADCs do not have full members e.g. TA

Mthiramanja. The missing AECs in some areas have not been filled. This means that the secretariat and some DAs have not been committed to ensure good structures for communicating decentralisation. There is no participation of the local people in designing messages. Though prescribed in the IEC strategy, the VDCs themselves are not consulted at the pre-testing of the messages and IEC materials. Again, this shows that the IEC strategy and efforts to implement it do not espouse the participatory communication approach. Peoples' development proposals undergo heavy scrutiny at project evaluation meetings yet in the absence of the right beneficiaries, the people who have full knowledge experience and understanding of the development needs. The evaluations are done only in the presence of the TAs and ADC chairs who might have little appreciation of the development projects needed. Thus, the concept of the much-proclaimed participatory approach to development is greatly challenged and hampered by the same process and same stakeholders that proclaim it.

The downward communication process lacks impulse to spur key players at every relay point to take decentralisation messages to the next stage. Implementation of the strategy is arbitrary. Some main players can choose to implement it as they wish, depending on their good will and commitment. Other players in the process can stop it. This shows that there is no mechanism to monitor, evaluate, and ensure effectiveness in terms of use of appropriate media and channels, relaying the messages and attainment of desired results. That **67 %** of the VDCs confessed that they did not communicate decentralisation shows that the downward process is usually not complete.

### **5.1.3 Effectiveness in Raising Desired Awareness and Knowledge of Decentralisation**

Eighteen (18) households (HHs) representing 50 % of the 36 HHs, indicated that they had not heard about decentralisation. Twenty-five (25) HHs estimated at 69 % displayed poor or no knowledge of decentralisation. This means the IEC strategy and efforts to implement it have not been effective in bringing desired awareness, knowledge, and understanding. It ratifies the negative effects of not engaging the local people in designing communication strategies and encoding messages for the grassroots as has been done by the so-called “technocrats”, the DEC, IEC teams and even the AECs. That about half of the 18 **VDCs** manifested poor knowledge of decentralisation shows that the IEC strategy has not been productive in instilling knowledge into the designated players to empower them to take decentralisation messages and skills down to the grassroots. Again, this demonstrates the negative effects of lack of participatory approach by the upper committees that were assigned to take decentralisation knowledge and skills to the lower committees.

About half of the **ADCs** (4 of the 9 ADCs) who are the apex development institution at the local community level displayed poor knowledge of decentralization. This too does not only show failure of the IEC strategy to empower the main stakeholders of implementing decentralisation but also unveils that the IEC strategy is not strategic in terms targeting the right recipients.

Neno showed highest numbers of HHs, VDCs, and ADC with better knowledge and understanding of decentralisation. This is perhaps due to the use of interpersonal face-to-face

channels. Thyolo came second perhaps because of using another interpersonal face-to-face channel, the PRA. It came second perhaps because the PRA was conducted for a short time and was never taken to all the TA areas. Hence, face-to-face channels are one of the most appropriate media for effective awareness and knowledge sharing and empowerment of the local communities. Neno did not only use FGDs but also the **Department of Social welfare and Community Development**, which has the right expertise for community development to lead in the interpersonal sensitization and awareness campaigns. This shows that people with right technical expertise for community development can better help in communicating decentralisation.

Mulanje DA used **open day campaign** where songs, dance, drama, poetry and IEC materials were used to sensitise people in the district on decentralisation. However, they held the campaign only once and at the *boma* and Mulanje is the lowest on awareness and knowledge of decentralisation. Hence holding open days once and at a place far away from the local people has not produced good results in terms of complete awareness of decentralisation message, as many local people find it hard to travel to the *boma* just to attend the awareness campaigns.

#### **5.1.4 EMPOWERMENT TO PARTICIPATE IN DECIDING AND CHOOSING DEVELOPMENT**

That only ten (10) out of eighteen (18) identified development projects representing 36% were chosen by people and that only twenty nine (29) out of thirty-six (36) households representing (81%) said they had not been empowered to decide and choose the development

they wanted shows the majority of the villagers have not been empowered to choose the development they need.

### **5.1.5 EMPOWERMENT TO PARTICIPATE IN ACTUALIZING DEVELOPMENT**

Highest numbers of households and VDCs rated peoples' participation in the development they choose as *very good*. This shows that people are motivated or committed to participate in the development they have chosen. This proves that sense of ownership instilled through empowerment communication is the best motivator for local people's committed and sustainable participation in actualizing the developments they need. People are also committed to participate in development they have not chosen when the development is relevant to their needs. Empowerment is not only the provision of material resources but also the granting of chance and freedom for people to decide and communicate the development they want.

#### **5.1.5.1 Political Leaders and Empowerment Communication**

Most **political party leaders** in the local communities such as MPs have not motivated people into participatory development. They talked about development mainly during campaigns where they projected themselves as sole achievers of the development in order to be voted into, or maintain political positions. The few **political party leaders** who talked and brought participatory development demotivated people to participate because of selfish attitudes and usual tendencies to politicize the development including repeated failures to bring the development they promised. In the communities today, people have realized they cannot "eat politics" that is, politics cannot develop them. They participate in any development brought by any one as long as it is relevant to their needs. If they do not

politicize development, **political leaders** in the local communities have exclusive authority and advantage to motivate the local people into participatory development, because they are close to the people with whom they share values, indigenous knowledge, experiences, and development needs. **Personal ethos** such as good character, altruism, and good will of the **political leaders** are some of the factors that have motivated some people to participate in development brought by the political leaders, despite political differences.

#### **5.1.5.2     Government Leaders at National and District Level and Empowerment Communication**

The decentralisation **secretariat** is too distant from the local communities to be able to communicate decentralisation to them effectively and enhance them to participate in development. The DEC, IEC teams and AECs have not been very productive in motivating most communities into participatory development through communication because they are limited by poor staffing and poor funding to reach and orient the VDCs and the villagers. Besides, they do not consult the local committees in choosing the best channels and encoding messages for the grassroots.

#### **5.1.5.3     The Local Community leaders and Empowerment Communication**

The **ADCs** have not been given the total mandate to communicate decentralisation in Malawi and have not been fully trained and have therefore played little role in empowerment process. Though closer to the people, most **VDCs** have not been good motivators to participatory development because they are not fully empowered through training; they do not hold meetings, have tendency to choose development without engaging the villagers and

are highly influenced by selfish village heads who would like to have development close to their home.

Even though they were stationed in the local communities and within the cultural vicinity of the grassroots, most **councillors** did not motivate people to participate in development. Commonly seen as the best communication links between people and assemblies, councillors have not been effective motivators to participatory development in their areas. Most **NGOs** have tendency of bringing their own development often through CBOs, without offering chance to people to decide or choose the development they want. They bring their own conditions and development approaches most of which do not enhance people's participation. The case of EU and microfinance projects of animal husbandry, WFP and their projects of feeding children in schools.

## 5.2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.2.1 Media, Channels, and the Communication Processes of Decentralisation

**Interpersonal channels** **face-to-face channels**, such as FGDs, can be very effective media for raising awareness and empowering people to participate in development because they are cheap, persuasive, and accessible to the local majority. In addition, they are common traditional channels people use to reach consensus on matters of peace, unity, and development. **Open day campaigns** should be organized frequently and in the villages if they are to be effective in bringing desired levels of knowledge and understanding. Traditional cultural media such as **songs**, **dance**, **drama**, can be used as appropriate channels for communicating decentralisation at the grassroots because they easily accessible and commonly used in the communities. The **communication process** should be shortened

by allowing a direct or diagonal communication between the assembly and the local communities. This can be done by electing educated, non-political, well-mannered, and strong character representatives from the VDCs who should communicate development directly between the people and the assemblies. This should work hand in hand with the ADC chair

### **5.2.2 Main Players of Communicating Decentralisation in Malawi**

Much effort is needed to join all the structures or stages of the bi-directional processes of communicating decentralisation. There is need for sustained effort from all **key players** to communicate decentralisation continuously. Communicating once, cannot engender required awareness, knowledge, and empowerment. The **secretariat** should decentralize its communication functions to the districts and local communities. It should give power to the local communities as main players so that it can concentrate on setting structures for smooth communication processes, monitoring and evaluating the undertaking of communicating decentralisation. Furthermore, the **Secretariat** should ensure uniformity of coordinated structures for communicating decentralisation by seeing to it that all districts and local communities have all the relevant development committees and the IEC sub committees.

**Appropriate key players** for communicating decentralisation are those that appreciate and understand peoples, values, knowledge, experience, culture, perception, and development needs and utilize the same in the endeavours to communicate development. Power should be transferred from DEC and AEC to the **ADC** and **VDC** to be main players of communicating decentralisation at the local community level. If the ADCs and VDCs are well trained on decentralisation and given full mandate they can be productive in communicating

decentralisation and motivating people to participatory development because they are very close to the people which whom they share experience, perception, values, knowledge and development needs. They can use accessible local channels and design messages in the way understood by the local people. Thus, the IEC roles of **ADCs** should be revised from being “assistants” to being main players. This will replace the AECs who have not been very effective in communicating decentralisation due to insufficient personnel and lack of funding apart from not engaging the locals in designing and communicating decentralisation. To be very productive, the **VDCs** should be trained on offering people chance to choose the development the people want and where they want it to be.

Local communities can do without **councillors** to communicate development between the people and the assembly. The chairs of the ADCs who have already helped to bring development in most areas, should replace the councillors. However, these chairpersons should not be the TAs and they ought to be educated, non-partisan, morally integrated, development conscious and committed to serving others. **Assemblies and officials** that are committed to the cause of communicating decentralisation ought to be rewarded through increased funding, provision of material resources and promotion of dedicated officials.

Establishment of **IEC sub committees** is good but these need to swallow their pride and involve the local indigenous people in designing and implementing effective communication strategy where the natives are made to own the strategy through being given chance to participate in choice of appropriate channels and media for various cultural groups, encoding messages and actualizing the strategy. At least one member of each VDC should be represented in the IEC sub committee.

The **secretariat** for **IEC sub committees** should shift from Information Department to the Department of Social Welfare and Community development because the Community development experts are well versed in better communication approaches for community development unlike the information department whose staff are mainly journalists with expertise in mass media and IEC materials. However, the information department can be a member responsible for producing IEC materials. **Key players of every stage** of communicating decentralisation such as the IEC teams, ADCs and VDCs should be empowered and motivated to relay messages to the next stage and ensure that messages have been delivered. These can be empowered through periodical trainings and evaluations. That people are ready to listen or support political leaders they know perhaps stresses the need for **engaging native leaders** who are closer to the people, who understands people 's needs aspirations, in communicating empowerment for change and development. Evaluation of people's proposal should be made in the presence **representatives** of the beneficiaries if participatory approach is to be appreciated and sustained at every stage of the decentralisation process. Finally, **political party leaders** in the local communities have mandate and are well positioned to enhance participatory development and not taking themselves as sole achievers of development. They can motivate people to liberate themselves from poverty instead of depending on NGO and government funding which is usually delayed or insufficient unavailable.

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## **APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX 1: SUMMARY OF SCOPE OF WORK**

Area	Target Group	Number of Target groups	Data Collection Techniques and Tool	Data Collection tools	Number of interviews Meetings
Assemblies	<b>DDC/DEC</b> Key informants	<b>4</b> assemblies (from 3 districts)	Interview meeting	Checklist questionnaires and audio tapes	<b>4</b>
Local Community	<b>ADCs</b> ( key informants and FGDs)	<b>9</b> (3 TAs x 3 districts)	“	“	<b>9</b>
	<b>VDCs</b> (key informants) and FGDs	<b>18</b> (3 TAs x 3 districts)	“	“	<b>18</b>
	<b>Households (HHs)</b>	<b>36</b> (2 from each of the 3 TAs x 3 districts)	“	“	<b>36</b>
Supporting Organisation	<b>UNDP</b>	<b>1</b>	Desk Research, Documents Reviews & Analysis	Desk Research / Documents Reviews & Analysis	<b>1</b>
	<b>GTZ</b> Decentralisation Program	<b>1</b>	“	“	<b>1</b>
Government	Decentralisation Secretariat	<b>1</b>	“	“	<b>1</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>70</b>			<b>70</b>

### **APPENDICES 2: IEC FUNCTIONS OF DECENTRALISATION SECRETARIAT**

The Secretariat is the Custodian of the IEC Strategy. It should develop capacity to plan, manage and update the strategy as and when necessary. It should implement capacity building. The secretariat shall be responsible for;

- Identifying the overall needs for decentralisation
- Work with operational units to develop disaggregated IEC strategy for each of them
- Revise the IEC strategy for decentralisation and each specific component
- Preparing and managing the budget for IEC activities
- Designing messages
- Developing and producing IEC products
- Pre-testing IEC materials
- Distributing, disseminating and sharing information with stakeholders
- Media Relations
- Distributing, disseminating and sharing information with stake holders
- Monitoring and implementing IEC Strategy in collaboration with District Assemblies
- Organizing IEC related orientation workshops
- Collaborating with Government, Development Agencies and other relevant organisations on IEC
- Ensuring availability of materials on Decentralisation
- Ensuring that cross cutting issues are integrated in the IEC programme
- Producing periodic reports for decentralisation, government and donor requirements

- Facilitating consultative and collaborative interaction among key Decentralisation stakeholders consistent with Decentralisation guidelines and Policies

*Taken from IEC Strategy for Decentralisation in Malawi, p 16*

### **APPENDIX 3: DISTRICT ASSEMBLY**

Members of the Assembly include ward representatives, TAs, STA, MPs and five reps from special interest groups. Members of the Assembly will be responsible for the following IEC related activities

- Sensitizing communities on Decentralisation
- Providing feed back on action plans to community
- Distributing IEC materials
- Monitoring and reporting on IEC activities

*Taken from IEC Strategy for Decentralisation in Malawi, p 16*

### **APPENDIX 4: IEC ROLES OF THE DEC**

The DEC is composed of all heads of government ministries and departments as well as NGOs within a District Assembly. This is an advisory organ of the Assembly and its members are technically qualified people in their area of expertise. The roles and responsibility of DEC members in IEC include

- Orienting communities on Decentralisation principles and other development methodologies
- Facilitating the participatory project identification process
- Training project management and maintenance committees for Decentralisation
- Conducting and providing feedback on desk and field appraisal of project applications
- Facilitation launch ceremonies
- Facilitating handover ceremonies
- Distributing Decentralisation materials
- Disseminating messages
- Supervising monitoring and reporting on the IEC activities at district level

*Taken from IEC Strategy for Decentralisation in Malawi, 2001, p 15*

### **APPENDIX 5: IEC SUB COMMITTEE**

The IEC sub committee is to be regularized and established as sub committee of the DA. The Information Office is to act as the secretariat. Other members are Government Departments with high presence in the district.

- Conducting a training needs assessment for IEC at district level
- Organizing training for stakeholders at district level
- Distributing communication materials systematically to all interactive groups
- Developing and designing messages and materials
- Organizing thematic and cross cutting campaigns

*Taken from the IEC Strategy for Decentralisation in Malawi, 2001, p 15*

### **APPENDIX 6: IEC FUNCTIONS OF THE AEC**

The AEC is composed of extension workers representing all Ministries and Departments as well as NGOs operating in a Chiefs area. As such, it brings together individuals with different technical expertise to examine development issues and advise the local leadership accordingly. Its IEC related roles are as follows:

- Disseminating information about decentralisation to local people
- Sensitizing communities in prevailing community development methodologies and approaches
- Assisting the ADC in the identification and preparation of project proposals
- Reviewing all project proposals before submitting to the DEC for consideration
- Training the VDCs on decentralisation processes of development
- Providing feedback to District assembly staff and members
- Participating in message designing, recording and pre-testing
- Organizing and participating in community reporting meetings

*Taken from IEC Strategy for Decentralization in Malawi, p 14*

#### **APPENDIX 7: IEC ROLES OF THE ADC**

The Area Development Committee (ADC) is a representative body of VDC chairpersons and vice chairpersons, Members of Assembly, reps from business community religious faiths, women, and youth, reps from the business community as well as MPs. The ADC usually chaired by the TA, said to be politically neutral and is the apex development institution at the sub district level<sup>44</sup>. Its IEC related roles include the following.

- Assist in the identification, prioritization and preparation of community needs form the VDCs and submit them to the DEC
- Assist in sensitizing communities on Community Driven Development Methodology
- Assist in identifying, prioritizing and preparing community needs using the village participatory planning process
- Assist in disseminating of information on Decentralisation and other initiatives
- Provide feedback to Decentralisation field staff
- Participate in message design, recordings and pre-testing of decentralisation IEC messages
- Organizing and participating in community reporting meeting

*Taken from IEC Strategy for Decentralisation in Malawi, p 14*

#### **APPENDIX 8: IEC ROLES OF THE VDC**

The VDC is a representative body of village or group of villages chaired by group or village head. It includes prominent business people in the village, extension workers and civil leaders. It is charged with responsibility of facilitating planning and development at the grassroots level. Its IEC functions are as follows:

- Sensitizing communities on decentralisation
- Identifying prioritizing and preparing community needs using the village participatory planning processes
- Disseminating information on decentralisation and other development initiatives
- Providing feedback to ADC
- Participating in message design, recording and pre-testing of Decentralisation IEC materials

Organizing and participating in community meetings

*Taken from IEC Strategy for Decentralisation in Malawi, p 14*

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<sup>44</sup> *IEC strategy for Decentralization in Malawi*, p 14

**APPENDIX 9: DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS CHOSEN AND NOT CHOSEN BY PEOPLE**

DISTRICT	TA	VILLAGE	PROJECT	CHOSEN BY PEOPLE	NOT CHOSEN BY PEOPLE
THYOLO	Bvumbwe	Machemba / Light	Primary school Block		✓
			Bolehole	✓	✓
			Monjerera Bridge	(chosen by Chiefs, VDCs)	✓ just told participate
		Boidi & Mphezu	Boidi CBO- HTC Testing Centre		✓
			Ligowe Market		✓
	Nanseta STA		Bricks for Sch Block at Mphezu	✓ not yet constructed	
		Nyambalo	Bricks for School		✓
		Nanseta,	Mikalati Junior School	✓	
			Tioloke OVC	✓ (chosen by a few)	
		Mhura	Goats	✓ (by few, influenced by donor)	
	Kapichi		Food For Work Road	People just told	✓
		Kasalika	Bricks for Clinic near Mangunda		✓
			Mgunda school		✓
		Kapichi	Mikombe School	✓	
			Sand for Clinic		✓
MULANJE	Mabuka		Kapichi Nursery (Sand/ Brick s)	✓ (un completed, No cement, no doors, no windows)	
		Dombole	Bolehole (2007) brought sand & stones		
	Chikumbu	Chisinkha	Chisinkha Women's Diary Farming Project	✓	
			Tunthama School		✓
		Supuni / Sazola	Sazola Health Centre	✓ UNICEF supported	
			Supuni Junior Primary school	✓ UNICEF supported	
		Mabuka GVH	Brick for Clinic		✓
			Goats	✓ EU/Oxfam supported	
		TA Court	Bricks for Houses at TA court	✓ (ADC chose)	✓
	Chikumbu	Kachingwe – Nachapa	Namgoneka Bridge		✓
			Bole hole		✓
			Goats/ Chickens	✓	
		Kachingwe- Mmina	Food for work Road Mentenance		✓
			Chigayo for OVC CBO	✓ CB	
NENO	T'Chekutcheku	Zipangani	Food For work Roads by EU	✓ Not constructed yet	
		Majia	Food for Work road		✓
		Kulurira	Tree Planting & Watering		✓ Luchenza Assembly
			Nthiramanja - Chikhwaza Road		✓ (GTZ)
			Health Clinic, Lolo		✓
		Chirombo- Donda II	Kaponda Junior Sch	✓	
			Mbumba- Kaponda Bridge		✓
			Community Police Centre	✓	
		Donda 1			
			Nursey school 2006	✓	
	Dambe		Chikonde School	✓	
			Bolehole		✓ Brought by Baptist
			Food for Work Road		✓
		Donda 3	Onani OVC School & Cattle Dairy Farming	✓ (cattle died, School still functional)	
			Mjigo	✓ (near school)	
Simon	Chikalema - Kanangwayi		Bricks for Nursery 2006-2007	✓ Women Against Gender Based Violence Group)	
			Community based child care Centre 2007	✓ Through CBO	
		Kufule	M'bawa Nursery school	✓	
	Kandoje	Mankhamaba B			
			Maize Mill	✓(MASAF supported 2005, died)	
			Kadamsana Junior School		✓ WV supported
		Mwingitsa	OVC		✓
	Moffat		Goats and Cattle Diary farming	WV	✓

## **APPENDIX 10: Description of Mulanje District Open Day Campaign for Decentralisation**

(Given by Mr Michael Chimbalanga, the then of Mulanje District Assembly)

The Mulanje District Open Campaign was organized in 2004 at Chitsitu Primary school ground as a change of strategy from assembly centered capacity building trainings, which targeted DEC, AEC, IEC and ADC only to local development committees and the grassroots. The targeted audience invited to the function was local communities, which included four ADC members from each of the eight TAs in Mulanje, namely Njema, Nthiramanja, Juma, Chikumbu, Mabuka and Mkanda, executive members of the VDCs and the general public who were invited to the function through village announcements. Other targeted publics were the MPs, Councillors, NGOs and CBOs who are members of the DEC or AECs. The function attracted resource persons from the secretariat, such as Mr Stuart Ligomeka the Director of Local government responsible for Decentralisation, the IEC Coordinators and Mulanje District Commissioner.

The function was organized for three main objectives. First, to sensitise local communities and development committees on participatory approach to development e.g. 25% contribution from the local communities. Second, to sensitise district and area development committees on the decentralisation of development funding which took a new face through the District Development Funding (DDF). The last was to co-ordinate the TA, MP and the Councillor to avoid conflict of roles, for example, that the councillor is the “owner of the game” at local level, that is, responsible for taking peoples’ development needs to the assembly, the MP takes peoples’ needs to parliament. Hence, the MP and TA are ex-officio members of the District assembly meetings.

### **The Open Day Function: Channels, and Media Used**

A number of channels and media were used. Information Education and Communication (IEC) materials such as banners, which were hung at the Mulanje Boma and Chitsitu, T-shirts, leaflets and posters, displayed any of the following three messages:

***“Decentralisation: Mphamvu ku Anthu”***

(Decentralisation: Power to the People)

***“Decentralisation; Boma kutumikira anthu Mwachangu”***

(Decentralisation: Government Serving People Promptly)

***“Decentralisation: Kusankha tokha Chitukuko Chofunika Madera lathu”***

(Decentralisation: Freedom to choose development we want)

The function started around 8 o'clock on the morning with a *big walk* from Muloza Border and whistle stops at Limbuli, Muloza telephone exchange, Mimosa, Lauderdale, Mulanje Boma, Chitakale before reaching Chitsitu where the function took place. As people walked toward Chitsitu, songs were song by selected choirs, dances were performed, and people were called to come to Chitsitu using the mobile public announcement car from information department. At each whistle stop, songs and dances were performed and short plays were staged.

Arriving at Chitsitu and after introductions, **Speeches** on the three themes were given first by the TA of the Area (TA Chikumbu), IEC Coordinator who was the Information officer for Mulanje, the DC and finally by Mr Stuart Ligomeka the Director of Local Government Decentralisation Secretariat. In between speeches, **songs** and **dances** were performed and **poems** were recited depicting messages on the three objectives. The common dance was *Tchopa*, which is usually performed amongst the Lomwe people who live in the southern part of Malawi.

According to village headwoman *Zipangani* of TA Chikumbu who attended the function and her village is about half a kilometer said there were many **songs** she could not remember which were sung on that day by different choirs from Mulanje. She said the only song she could remember was sung by the youth / students of Chitsitu schools. The little she could recall about the relic of the song included the following

<i>Decentralisation ikutipatsa mphamvu</i>	Decentralisation gives us power
<i>Mphamvu kusankha tokha</i>	Power to choose on own
<i>Chitukuko chomwe tikufuna</i>	The development we want
<i>Tigwire ntchito limodzi</i>	Let's work together
<i>Kutukula Boma ndi dela lathu...</i>	To develop our country and our area

Five selected **drama** groups staged plays on encouraging community participation. The main play, which was performed by Juma Drama Group from TA Juma, marked the peak of the function. Chimbalanga reported that Juma had emerged the best drama group at a festival where all drama groups from the TAs in Mulanje were invited for audition and interviews. Prior to the interviews, drama groups had been trained on decentralisation, messages delivery, and propaganda. Juma drama group had also travelled to various places in the district to disseminate messages on decentralisation.

### **The play**

The climax of the day was marked by a play entitled "*Power to the People*" which was performed by the Juma Drama group just before speech by the guest of honor. The play depicted male character

who after hearing about “power to the people” conceived it as being given power by government to do any thing that would help him and his family to develop. With his “power”, he took a heavy hammer and went to a strong bridge that was constructed over one of the rivers in the village, removed the hard pieces of wood, and sold them. Two days latter, his wife fell sick and an ambulance was called for to pick her to the hospital. However, since it had rained heavily the previous night and the river overflowed, the ambulance could not cross the river. His wife died. He was then advised by the village head person and his counsel that *power to the people* did not mean irresponsible use of the power but ability to chose and participate in development people need.

The function was aired live on Radio 1 between 2:00 pm and 3:00 pm, covering speeches, interviews and the plays. Mr Chimbalanga claimed that about 15,000 to 20,000 people turned up for the function.

**APPENDIX 11:** Case 1, Radio Play: “**Tidziwe za Mphamvu ku Anthu**” (Let us know about Power to the People)

<b>Programme</b>	:	Mphamvu ku Wathu
<b>Presenter</b>	:	Chancy Muloza
<b>Date</b>	:	3 September 2006
<b>Time</b>	:	19: 30 hours
<b>Language</b>	:	Chichewa
<b>Producer</b>	:	Loveness Chintsanya
<b>Sign Tune</b>	:	<b>Power to the People!</b> ( <i>Followed by African drumming: 2 seconds</i> )

Good evening listeners. Am Chancy Muloza and have come again with another Programme of *Power to the People*. In today's programme, Anyoni Group will bring to you laws of the country particularly by-laws which are used to run assemblies. Let us not forget that this programme is brought to you by the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development with funding from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Stay tuned in so that we listen together.

<b>Jingle Song</b>	:	<i>Band Drumming and electrical guitars</i>
<i>Tikamanena kuti Mphamvu ku anthu</i>		<i>When we say Power to the people</i>
<i>Tigwire ntchito ndi makhansala</i>		<i>We mean we should work with councillors</i>
<i>M'mizinda, matauni ndi m'maboma</i>		<i>In the villages, cities/towns and assemblies</i>
<i>Kusankha chitukuko chomwe tifuna</i>		<i>To choose the development we want</i>
<i>Kudera kwanuko</i>		<i>In the areas where you live</i>
<i>Mphamvu, Mphamvu kwa Anthu</i>		<i>Power, Power to the People</i>
<i>Mphamvu kupita kwa anthu</i>		<i>Power going to the People</i>
<i>Kusankha chitukuko chomwe tifuna</i>		<i>Choosing the development we want</i>
<i>Kumadera komwe ife tikhala</i>		<i>in the areas where we live.</i>
<i>Musankhe ngati mukufuna misewu</i>		<i>chose if you want a road</i>
<i>Zipatala, sukulu pena milato</i>		<i>Health clinic, school or bridge,</i>
<i>Malingana ndi zosowa zathu</i>		<i>According to your needs</i>

**Man's Voice:** “**Decentralization! Mphamvu ku Anthu**” (**Power to the People**)

**Play Starts      African Drumming**

Anyoni:	Eeh! Today, don't be tired
Wife:	Eeh, No!
Anyoni:	But don't be tired today

*Wife:* Eeh, No don't say that. Am tired, I've been drawing water since morning. I need to go home and start cooking.

*Anyoni:* No, when you are getting hungry, you become difficult. Please let's just finish building this wall

*Wife:* No! Anyoni, I need to go and start cooking.

***A man comes***

*Man:* *Waawa (Greeting)* How are you *Bambo* (show of respect for a man)? How are you *Mai* (respect for a woman)? *Tsono Zikatere?* (Now what is this that you are doing here?)

*Anyoni:* Pepani bambo palibe ganyu pano. (Sorry Bambo, we have no piecework here)

*Man (Continues):* I say, what is this is?

*Wife:* *whaaat?*

*Anyoni:* Eeh, there is no piecework here. We are doing it alone. Thank you

*Man:* Ei, Stop. Am not looking for piecework. Listen carefully, What is this?

*Anyoni:* Eh Eeeh? Zikatere? (What is this?), you mean you can ask us that question?

*Wife:* I thought you have been answered already

*Man:* I say, What exactly are you doing here?

*Wife:* Aaaaah! Ndiye kufunsa chinyezi m'bafatu. (That is the same as asking why there is moisture in a bathroom. You are asking an obvious question)

*Anyoni:* Can you ask what water is doing in the bathroom?

*Man:* OK. All right. briefly. I am *Chigumu Pusi Pusi*

*Anyoni* Oooh Yes, True, You look like Pusi pusi (derogatory)

*Man:* I don't care but here is my ID. I have come from the Assembly. You are breaking the laws of the assembly by building a house here.

*Anyoni and Wife:* Aaaaaah!

*Wife:* Which law?

*Anyoni:* Whose Law?

*Chigumu:* (The man has now been identified as *Chigumu Pusi Pusi*). Ndi malo oletsedwa. This is a prohibited, protected land

*Wife:* (Analetsa ndani?) Who prohibited it ?

*Chigumu:* It was protected by ... (*Anyoni* interrupts)

*Anyoni:* This is God's land! Who else can protect it?

This is God's land! Who else can prohibit us?

*Chigumu:* I am from assembly and I have been told that you are constructing a bar here and you must stop

*Anyoni:* Go and tell your Assembly that, I can't stop.

*Wife:* By the way, who has sent you?  
*Anyoni* This land was given to us by....  
*Chigumu:* Then you will explain this at the assembly  
*Wife:* Aaaaaah, where? (Scornfully)  
*Anyoni:* We should explain this at the assembly? Who? Me? No way!  
*Wife* No way! We can't do that  
*Chigumu:* Am doing my job. Aren't you Mr Nyoni?  
*Anyoni:* Not that I am not Anyoni. I am *Samva Nkuntho*..  
*Wife:* Auzeni bambo! Tell him!  
*Chigumu:* No Problem. As long as it is my duty. We are coming tomorrow to demolish this building  
*Wife:* Demolishing? Try it. Try it and you will see..!  
*Anyoni:* No! Go ahead and demolish it!  
*Wife:* (Kodi uyetsa tikukunyegerera kapena kukuopa?) Do you think we are afraid of you?  
*Anyoni:* Wife, go ahead, poor the water on the soil and we continue constructing!  
*Wife:* Aaaaah, let's not be afraid. (Ukudalira ndani?) Who are you depending on?  
*Anyoni:* On whom are you depending? We are not afraid of any one. Let's go where you want us to go. We are continuing to build our *bear hall* here. You! Let's go. Let's go to the assembly.  
*Chigumu:* You will not build here.  
*Anyoni:* (Jelasi Baasi), You are jealous. Let's Go!  
*Chigumu:* No Problem!. However, you cannot threaten me!. You will not construct your beer hall here  
*Anyoni:* Let's go!  
*Wife:* Yes! You came here ting'ating'a (walking) to threaten people! Today you have found us face to face. We cannot be afraid of you.  
*Anyoni:* He was writing small letters to threaten us. Let's go there at the Assembly!

***Interlude :*** ***Another Jungle in Chiyawo language***

Ma Assembly.. : (Assemblies)  
 Response : Akwete machili (have powers)  
 Kuchochera... : (from)  
 Response : Kulikulu lya Maunduna (ministerial headquarters)  
 Gakulekangana-lekangana. (different powers)  
 Repsonse : Akomboleje kusagula a (so that they have rights to choose)  
 Chitukuko... : (the development)  
 Response : (Yakuisosaaaa... (they want)

*Knock at the DC's Office, three Times*

*Anyoni:* Do not knock at a different office. We want the DC  
*DC:* Come in!

*All enter and Anyoni speaks as they are entering*

*Anyoni :* Can this man threaten me? You, can you threaten me( Meaning Chigumu)  
*Chigumu:* This is the DC's Office!  
*Anyoni:* Oooh?  
*DC:* You have come to me in order to be assisted. If you behave like this, you will be sent out.  
*Anyoni:* Sorry boss, (kungoti ndinabadwa wothamanga magazi). I was born an impulsive character  
  
*Chigumu:* Boss we have come to report that this family is constructing a bar at Mphamba near the road. After checking our laws, we have found that they are breaking the laws as they are raising the building at a protected area. If you remember we sent letters to these people to stop them from building but they have gone ahead to build a bar. I went to stop them but they were opposing and were very rude to me. I could have come here in a pool of blood.  
  
*DC:* Oooh, is it this serious?  
*Anyoni:* And if my child were here, he could have beaten this man terribly!  
*DC:* Bambo Nyoni, it was better if you listened. This man (Chigumu) represents the Assembly  
*Anyoni:* Land is land. He did not create any land.  
*DC:* No, I have seen your building. You are constructing very close to the road. You are breaking by-laws of our Assembly.  
*Anyoni:* Let me answer you. Am constructing because I want to do business to the people who pass along that road. If you want to sell your goods, do you hide them? I want people who pass by in the road to see clearly what is inside. So what wrong have I done since am building near the road near my customers? When people pass by, they will just turn, see what they want and buy it. What wrong have I done?  
  
*Wife:* Even the letter he is talking about was just sent today and expect people to act. May be if it was sent earlier before we had gone very far with the building....  
*Chigumu:* The letter was to inform you that you are constructing at a protected place  
*Wife:* But the letter came the day before yesterday and today you expect us to....

*Chigumu:* Look! You are building your bar near the road. If a car misses the road, it can kill people at your bar

*Anyoni:* Please don't foretell about accidents at my beer hall

*Chigumu:* No. am telling you the truth. What you should know is that every assembly has its plans on how each assembly can be. It is called "Town Planning "

*DC:* We plan where the factories, churches, garages would be. Look at what happens at Nkolokosa, Chitawira, Zorozoro, Areas 18 and 49 locations, how trucks are passing in small roads but we did not construct the roads for trucks.

*Chigumu:* You should know that place is not where a bar can be. It is a residential area. You will be disturbing people at night with music from your bar

*DC:* There are laws guiding the construction of roads. There is a certain distance from the road where you cannot build anything. You cannot just say you want your customers to be near your bar, no!

*Chigumu:* Boss, in addition, when you build a house near the road and you bring electricity, to the house, this can cause an accident. We consider these things when we allow people to construct any buildings

*DC:* In addition, did you get or bring the plan for the house? Did you accept it. We do not construct anyhow in the assembly. We have a plan

*Anyoni:* We bought the land from another man who was migrated to another place.

*Chigumu:* That's another problem. When you buy a land from anyone, you are supposed to notify us and show us your building plans for approval before you start constructing your structure.

*DC:* What happens when you build a house without consulting us. You construct a big house on a small land but you will need a septic tank. When your septic tank is not working and you invite the city to pump out the content, we will not be able to reach your house. Instead, we stop at your neighbour's house to pump your septic tank thereby inconveniencing your neighbours with bad smell.

In addition, if you construct without consulting us, and we demolish it, you will in the end say we are violent on you and we are wrong, when it is you who starts it.

*Anyoni:* Ooooh, I see !

*DC:* Similarly if we pump your septic tank at your neighbours and your refuse drops at their house, they will take a case against us because of you for not following the rules

*Anyoni and Wife:* Oooooh! Is that so?

*DC:* That is why we say go and demolish the bar

*Anyoni:* It is not a bottle store. It's a bar, a beer hall

*Chigumu:* Bwana DC I also want to ask you that in areas where big trucks are not allowed, we should put "sleeping truck officers" to prohibit big trucks from passing.

*Anyoni:* Sleeping officers? I though sleeping mean lying down? You them to sleep there?

*DC:* No..... What you should know is that the law is more powerful and ignorance is not a defense.

*Anyoni:* So you mean what ever we do in the assembly must be guided by laws and that laws must be followed?

*DC:* Yes. That is why in the assembly before we do anything we notify people 14 days before.  
You should also know that assembly makes by-laws and by-laws of one assembly may not be applied in another assembly. Thyolo by-laws may not be applied in Dedza and vice versa. Thyolo will formulate by-laws according to the needs of the assembly and they want it to be. For Example in Mangochi town assembly can say "No fishing this month. This cannot be applied in Dedza because there is no fish in Dedza. Dedza may better talk about mice.

*Anyoni and wife:* Ooooh

*Anyoni:* So Dedza can make by-laws about mice?

*Wife:* Yes. Therefore, ignorance should not be an excuse.

*DC and Chigumu:* Eeeeeeh

*DC:* So we are going to give stiff penalty to people who break laws like you.

*Anyoni:* No! We are sorry bwana. We are not disobedient. That is why we came to explain...We are not deaf. We have taken heed of what you have said.

*Wife:* And if we had not started constructing our beer hall, would we have known what you are telling us?

*DC and Chigumu:* No!

*Chigumu:* You see bwana, another bad thing these people have done is to close the waterway

*DC:* We are demolishing your building!

Anyoni and Wife:

No! No!

Anyoni:

We will demolish the house ourselves. "Power to the people"!

### Sign out Jingle

*Tikamanena kuti Mphamvu ku anthu*

*When we say power to the people*

*Tigwire ntchito ndi makhansala*

*We mean we should work with councillors*

*M'mizinda matauni ndi m'maboma*

*In the villages, cities/towns and assemblies*

*Kusankha chitukuko chomwe tifuna*

*To choose development you want*

*Kudera kwanuko*

*In the areas where you live*

*Mphamvu, Mphamvu kwa Anthu*

*Power, Power to the People*

*Mphamvu kupita kwa anthu*

*Power going to the People*

*Kusankha chitukuko chomwe tifuna*

*Choosing the development we want*

*Kumadera komwe ife tikhala*

*in the areas where we live*

*Musankhe ngati mukufuna misewu*

*choose if you want a road*

*Zipatala, sukulu pena milato*

*Health clinic, school or bridge*

*Malingana ndi zosowa zathu*

*According to your needs*

**Man's Voice: "Decentralization! Mphamvu ku Anthu" (Power to the People)**

### Presenter

You have heard from Anyoni group telling us about by-laws for running the assemblies. Let us remind you that this programme is brought to you by the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development with the aid from United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Be there next week to hear about how the vendors can be transferred to their flea markets which government has constructed for them. So on behalf of my producers, am saying, "Power to the People"

## **APPENDIX 12: Case 2 Radio Play: “Children in the Malawi in the Village”**

**Programme** : Mphamvu ku Wanthu  
**Presenter** : Chancy Muloza  
**Date** : 3 September 2006  
**Time** : 19: 30 hours  
**Language** : Chichewa  
**Producer** : Loveness Chintsanya

**Sign Tune** : *Power to the People!* (Followed by *African drumming*: 2 seconds)

Good evening listeners, am Chancy Muloza and have come again with another programme of *“Power to the People”*. In today’s Programme we shall learn about procedures NGOs and CBOs are supposed to follow before they start working in the communities. Let’s remind each other that this programme is brought to you by the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development with funding from UNDP.

## Jingle

<i>Tikamanene kuti Mphamvu ku anthu</i>	<i>When we say power to the people</i>
<i>Tigwire ntchito ndi makhansala</i>	<i>We mean we should work with councillors</i>
<i>M'mizinda matauni ndi m'maboma</i>	<i>In the villages, cities/towns and assemblies</i>
<i>Kusankha chitukuko chomwe tifuna</i>	<i>To choose development you want</i>
<i>Kudera kwanuko</i>	<i>In the areas where you live</i>
<i>Mphamvu, Mphamvu kwa Anthu</i>	<i>Power, Power to the People</i>
<i>Mphamvu kupita kwa anthu</i>	<i>Power going to the People</i>
<i>Kusankha chitukuko chomwe tifuna</i>	<i>Chosing the development we want</i>
<i>Kumadera komwe ife tikhala</i>	<i>in the areas where we live</i>
<i>Musankhe ngati mukufuna misewu</i>	<i>chose if you want a road</i>
<i>Zipatala, sukulu pena milato</i>	<i>Health clinic, school or bridge</i>
<i>Malingana ndi zosowa zathu</i>	<i>According to your needs</i>

## **Man's Voice: "Decentralization! Mphamvu ku Anthu" (Power to the People)**

**Play starts**      **African drumming** (2 seconds)

*Anyoni is groaning in pain*

*Knock at the DC office and the voice is heard from inside*

PC: Come in!

Chief (who is also woman): Zikomo Bwana DC (Thank you Boss DC)

*She enters with Mr Nyoni who is groaning in deep pain)*

DC: Thank you, Please, take a seat

Chief Sorry Bwana DC for coming without notice. (*Nyoni continues to grunt*)

Nyoni: Iiiiiiih, ooooh, Mayooo! (expression of pain)...fading

Chief: This man is a Non Governmental Organisational (NGO) leader who comes to our area to help us. He came first time and things were Ok. He came the second time but you know it's very common in the village, these rude children. They started stoning his car. They wanted to deflate his car's tyres but he went back.

*Nyoni continues whimpering*

Now this time when he came to give us help, the children started scrambling for the things and claimed that he was sharing them unfairly. In the process, as you can see, they injured him.

DC: Oooh sorry !

Chief: He has come to help us but now he has been injured

DC: Oh sorry, let me say sorry. By the way, what is the name of your NGO?

Nyoni :(*grunting*) **The children in the Malawi in the Village...** iiiih! Aaaaah! Aaaaaah!

DC (*speaks to his Assistant*) Oh sorry! Please bring me the files for our organizations to see if we have this organization

Nyoni: Now I have realized that *chisoni chidapha nkhwali* (you can lose your life by trying to save others)

DC's Assistant: Sorry, the name of the organizations does not exist

DC: It's not there?

DC's Assistant: No!

DC: When going to the area, did you go through the DC's office?

Nyoni: May be, I have forgotten since I am so injured

DC: Amayi Fumu (Woman Chief) Look at this! You just welcomed them

Chief: He came by car. In addition, we always welcome them as good organizations

DC: A Car is not a sign that the person is coming from the DC.

Chief: What could have we done?

DC: You as a chief you also need to be clever. Yes, decentralization is giving us power but we are supposed to follow procedures. You don't skip one stage in the procedure. You know as chiefs we need to work in accordance with certain

regulations and procedures. Here at the DC we have a book called *Social economic Profile*

*Chief:* Zonna?

*DC (continues)* And this book shows every detail about the assembly, how many schools we have.

*DC Assistant:* Let me help you Bwana. The book give details of each area, what language they speak, their population, number of chiefs, their culture and behaviour. If this man had come to us, we could have advised him about the culture and the behaviour of the people in the area.

The book also shows number of schools, teachers and children. When the children are sick, how many hospitals does the areas have, nurses, doctors, health facilities. Which health facility needs medicine? How about agriculture and farming? Do we have extension workers? How about dip tanks?

When CBO people like these come, we get another book called *District Development Planning (DDP)* which shows details of how the assembly will operate in five years including evaluations.

In fact, every year we choose and prioritise the developments needed. Therefore, when NGOs come with help we advise them where the priority is according to the DDP. We advise the new NGO not to go to this area because there is another organization. Where this man went with his NGO there is another NGO, Malawi Today Orphanage. When an NGO comes to bring e.g. boreholes, we also invite other partners such as those advocating gender issues, community development to witness the allocation of the new NGO and the launch of their projects. The partners also help in deciding the allocation of the new NGO to avoid duplication.

*Chief:* True. In my area, we have many boreholes. As a result, people just come to steal. Like mine, they came to steal it.

*DC Assistant:* The problem is that you want to have the development alone. Development has to be shared.

*DC:* The problem is when you are injured like this, it's when you come to us, remembering that the right person to be seen at the assembly is the DC. If you had come through us, we could have sent somebody to introduce you to the community and say, "This group is The Children in the Malawi, in the village"

*Nyoni:* But Bwana I am losing lots of blood. How can you help me please?

*DC:* The only things we can do is to write a letter to the hospital. After you are assisted come back. We need to sit down and tell you in detail

*Chief:* Even me, I will never do such a thing again. I tell you there was pandemonium. The way you have explained is clear.

DC: We are happy that you as a leader you have accepted what we are saying. If you doubt people who come to your area don't just accept them. Bring them here so that, together we can introduce them to the village

Chief: If they come, I will be asking them. Have you come through the DC?

DC: Yes

Chief: If they don't come through here, the DC, I will tell them "Go back!" Oh, it was very sad

DC: Things will work well if we follow plan for the district and those plans are here at the assembly. So next time, came to us and ask. "Bwana DC these people are doing *Children in the Malawi in the Village*, are they supposed to be in my area?" If we welcome them, you have welcomed them. They can start work and on the first day of their work, me as DC, I will be there.

Chief: Thank you

DC: Don't just be taken by the goods brought by the NGOs

Nyoni: Bwana DC, please listen, they way you have explained it, I have understood. You are saying before entering somebody's house you knock so that someone should say, "come in" . If you enter without being welcomed, you can meet what I have met today. It is good to know and follow procedures. This does not apply to me alone but to all..

(As Nyoni and the DC are talking, the rest of the group is expressing agreement, by saying "Yes!" or "True")

DC: In decentralization, different ministries work together under the DC. When people like you come, we put you under appropriate department,... We invite the head of the department and ask him where a group like yours would be allocated. Therefore, the ministry helps us to allocate the NGO, we go to the VDC to introduce the NGO and by so doing, our relationship is good.

Nyoni: Oooh?

DC Assistant: The other problem is that some NGO are selective. They say they cannot work in a certain area because the area is hot... You chiefs, do not just accept things you do not know. If you had brought this person here before beginning his work, he could not have been injured.

Nyoni: Ooh Sorry, Sorry, Thank you, Thank you Bwana DC

DC: I will now write you a letter to the hospital

Nyoni: Thank you Bwana, Thank You

### **Jingle**

<i>Tikamanene kuti Mphamvu ku anthu</i>	<i>When we say power to the people</i>
<i>Tigwire ntchito ndi makhansala</i>	<i>We mean we should work with councillors</i>
<i>M'mizinda matauni ndi m'maboma</i>	<i>In the villages, cities/towns and assemblies</i>
<i>Kusankha chitukuko chomwe tifuna</i>	<i>To choose development you want</i>
<i>Kudera kwanuko</i>	<i>In the areas where you live</i>
<i>Mphamvu, Mphamvu kwa Anthu</i>	<i>Power, Power to the People</i>
<i>Mphamvu kupita kwa anthu</i>	<i>Power going to the People</i>
<i>Kusankha chitukuko chomwe tifuna</i>	<i>Chosing the development we want</i>
<i>Kumadera komwe ife tikhala</i>	<i>in the areas where we live</i>
<i>Musankhe ngati mukufuna misewu</i>	<i>chose if you want a road</i>
<i>Zipatala, sukulu pena milato</i>	<i>Health clinic, school or bridge</i>
<i>Malingana ndi zosowa zathu</i>	<i>According to your needs</i>

### **Man's Voice; Decentralization! *Mphamvu ku anthu (Power to the People)***

#### *Closing (in Chichewa)*

Friends who are running Non Governmental Organizations, you have heard about the right procedure you are supposed to follow if you want to work in the assemblies. Therefore, until next week, me Chancy Muloza, on behalf of my producer, Loveness Chitsanya, I say “*Power to the People!*”

#### **Jingle continues.....**

<i>Mphamvu, Mphamvu kwa Anthu</i>	<i>Power, Power to the People</i>
<i>Mphamvu kupita kwa anthu</i>	<i>Power going to the People</i>
<i>Kusankha chitukuko chomwe tifuna</i>	<i>Chosing the development we want</i>
<i>Kumadera komwe ife tikhala</i>	<i>in the areas where we live</i>
<i>Musankhe ngati mukufuna misewu</i>	<i>chose if you want a road</i>
<i>Zipatala, sukulu pena milato</i>	<i>Health clinic, school or bridge</i>
<i>Malingana ndi zosowa zathu</i>	<i>According to your needs</i>

### **Man's Voice: Decentralization! *Mphamvu ku anthu (Power to the People)***

**APPENDIX 13: Case 3: Radio Programme: Panel Discussion and Call - In Programme:  
“Let’s Talk About Decentralisation”**

Programme : *Let’s Talk about Decentralisation*  
Producer : Eliza Kachale Kaunda  
Presenter : Chancy Muloza  
Duration : 30 minutes  
Time : 9:30 am  
Date of Broadcast : 21 July 2007  
Language : English and Chichewa  
Sponsor : GTZ: Malawi German Programme on Democracy and Decentralisation

***Sign tune*** : ***Instrumental song***

“On behalf of the Malawi German Programme on Decentralisation and Local Government and the Ministry of Local Government I am Chancy Muloza and I welcome you to another edition of “Let’s talk about Decentralization”. This is a programme with an aim of looking at the concept of Decentralisation and how Malawians have understood this concept. In addition, in our past programmes we have looked at the Effects of Decentralisation in Malawi and the Roles and Functions and the set up of the assembly. One of the key functions of the Local government is service delivery and the importance of service delivery cannot be overemphasized. This morning, we will look at Service Delivery and am joined by Felix Kadewere from the National Local government Finance department, Henderson Jaka, Deputy Director of Rural Development in the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development. Thank you for joining us and once again welcome to this programme of decentralisation

***Jingle Song*** : ***By Eliza Kachale Kaunda***

*Be champions for Decentralization  
This is for improved services  
In your Locality  
This is for you  
This is for all*

***Man’s Voice***

"Yes, Decentralization is the transfer of political powers, service responsibility, and financial resources from central government to Local government. Decentralisation is so beneficial in that it strengthens democracy at grassroots by enabling people to elect councillors to represent them in the assembly, it empowers, it gives authority and independence to the people to make decisions concerning the delivery of public services that respond to their local needs. Unlike the central government, local government is better placed to know whether a community needs, clinic, school, roads etc. Decentralisation makes it possible for communities local and civil servants accountable for delivering the services as expected with such a wonderful system. What central role can you play as citizens? Yes as good citizens, you have an obligation to support and effectively participate in all development work for the development of your area

This message is brought to you by the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development with the support from GTZ Malawi German Programme for Democracy and Decentralisation

***Song continues***

*It is for you*

*It is for all*

***Narration: Chichewa version of the introduction by the presenter***

Good Morning... Today we will see the Role on the Assembly in serving people. Today you are with me Chancy Muloza and.. (*the panelist introduce themselves in Chichewa*)

***English version continues:***

We should start by looking at service delivery and Mr Njaka will tell us about this issue.

***Presenter: What is service delivery?***

***Mr Njaka:***

"Service delivery refers to services which are to be provided by the local government themselves or the assemblies to service users or communities in their local government. There are a number of services that are supposed to be provided. Some of them are roads provided by the ministry of works, some in the Ministry of Health, Education, Agriculture, Lands and others that are available at the assembly level. Others are environmental, sanitation. People demand these services in the assembly with the resources that the government provides to assembly and those the assembly mobilizes from within the assemblies

**Presenter** : *What is the difference between services provided by central government and those by local government?*

**Mr Njaka:**

Central Government provides services through their line ministries available at the local government. When we say local government, we mean district assembly that includes city assemblies and municipalities. There are services like agriculture, irrigation and food security, home affairs, education, internal security, health, trade and industry, science and technology, transport and public works. Each of these sectors provides a number of services at the local level by these line ministries. However, the assembly itself is supposed to provide services such as managing nurseries and kindergarten schools, primary schools, distant education centres, running health centres, dispensaries and maternity services, control of infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS, Cholera, leprosy and tuberculosis. Assemblies are also responsible for sanitation and waste management in their assemblies, roads and street services, agriculture and livestock extension in control of diseases, land husbandry, food and nutrition, construction and maintenance, building of small dams, provision of waters supply, promotion of recreation, culture and maintenance of playgrounds. The assembly also responsible for providing and regulating a business environment for people to conduct business profitably, promoting tourism, looking into birth, marriage, and death certificates.

**Presenter;** *What Mr Njaka has said requires planning. How is planning done at the assembly?*

**Kadewere:** First planning is important because resources are scarce but we need to share them. Planning is *bottom up*, meaning that people have to indicate what they want and demand what is required. It starts at the VDC level and the *approach is participatory*. The assembly is only supposed to facilitate the identification of the problems and solutions to those problems in terms of projects. These are taken to the ADC, which takes them to the assembly where the projects are prioritized according to the resources.

**Presenter.** *Coming from the finance section, tell us who is supposed to come up with the budget, to local government, central or the people*

**Kadewere:** When the VDC identifies a need e.g. a hall, they leave it at that. They ADC takes the need to the assembly where costing is with assistants from technicians that work for the assembly, e.g. Director of Planning, Director of Works. Community assistant also helps in costing. They take the costs of the projects and include them in the budget that comes from the central government and what the assembly itself has collected.

**Presenter.** *Now who sees the implementation of the project?*

**Njaka:** This is done by the projects implementation committee comprising traditional leaders and some reputable members of the community in collaboration with the assembly Director of Planning and Development, Director of Public Works and their technicians who go to supervise the projects

**Presenter:** *There have been concerns from people that some projects are given priority and other not. How do you weigh projects...?*

**Kadewere:** There are criteria. The community is requested to prioritize, so is the assembly. The communities are empowered to rank the projects to say out of these projects, should money be available, we should start with the following. The assembly is supposed to follow this otherwise it will be against the rules of decentralisation itself.

**Presenter:** Thank you so much

**The Jingle:**

This was followed by a Chichewa version of Njaka description of the role of the assembly. Then listeners called. The following questions were asked.

**Caller 1. Mr Nkhambule from Bangwe:** *I want to know, why don't we have councillors?*

**Answer:** The assembly has been empowered to hold meetings together with community members such as chiefs who represent the people in projects needs, discussion and prioritization. So although we do not have councilors, local people are represented at the assembly

**Caller 2:** *Lost, Line was cut*

**Caller 3:** *The line was cut*

**Caller 4** *Just made comment that the MP should work with the people. However, the caller could not finish because the line broke before he finished.*

(Finally, the presenter just asked the panelists to give Chichewa version of their presentation)

**Jingle**

**Close**

Those were officials from Local Government Decentralisation.

You were with me Chancy Muloza. Thanks for being with me.

**Sign-out Tune:** *Instrumental*

## **APPENDIX 14: Case Study: Tioloke Orphanage and Vulnerable Children (OVC) Dairy Farming**

“I keep cattle at my house. After hearing about decentralisation on the radio in 2005, I led the formation of a 20-member group to start daily cattle farming to improve our economic status. Supported by the STA Nanseta and two surrounding villages, we moulded bricks and brought sand.

When we went to the assembly to tell them about the initiative and to ask for funding, they told us to go to MASAF people who advised us to reduce the number of our group to ten (10) so that we become a development committee. To our surprise, they also told us that the benefits should go to orphans and the elderly. This was the first thing that discouraged people because the assembly through MASAF decided to change the primary objective of the project from poverty reduction for the village who were the owners of the project to care for orphans and elderly. Some of the ten members withdrew.

In 2006 MASAF gave us about One million and two hundred thousand (MK 1,200,000:00) for labour, cement, iron sheets and for buying the dairy cattle. The MASAF people did not want to listen to me as a person who lives in the village and keeps cattle. They brought their own labourers and extension workers, those who are educated and read things in the books, who told us to build a *khola* with an opening on the roof. I told them to listen to me as person who lives in the village and who keeps cattle but they forced the builders to construct a *khola* with an opening on the roof. (As can be seen from the picture below).

Coming to buying the dairy cattle, we realized they were very expensive and we decided to buy local cattle. We therefore bought three.

When it came to care for the cattle, most people were unwilling to participate because they were discouraged about the reduction of the committee team and particularly, the change of the primary objective of the project. They were also not happy that the project was located at my house.

As a result, the cattle started dying last year and only one is left. This is because of poor feeding as only two people including myself are left feeding it now. Another reason is rain. As the roof is open, more water came in and entrench the *khola*.

We have not benefited from this project despite our effort and the money that was spent on it. The future of the project is bleak. The MP has never come. The veterinary extension workers are very expensive and rarely come. People do not come to help feed the cow. I will try to feed it and exchange it with a new one...”

## **APPENDIX 15: Case Study: *Kaponda Junior Primary School Project***

We did not choose the project. We were just told to start moulding bricks for the school and we participated actively because it was relevant.

“First, there was no good school in our community. Children were learning in a school made of grass (as can be seen from the right side of the picture)

Second, children from this area used to travel long



distances, crossing rivers to get good school. As a result, Neno district assembly did not only construct a bridge over Mfumba River but also funded the construction of a Kaponda school in Chiromo 2 village.

In 2003, people from this village together with those neighbouring villages started to mould bricks. According to village head and the chairperson of the VDC, Mr Goliati, all the villagers were very committed. Those from other villages came in turns and participated with high degree of commitment such that the work lasted in less than a month. The assembly funded the construction of one block with two classes and six toilets the same year followed by a headmaster’s house in 2007. Some bricks are left for construction of more blocks.



***Full view of New Kaponda Junior School***

#### **APPENDIX 16: Case Study: Sazola Heath Clinic Project**

"We got messages about decentralisation, first from the Assembly because I work for Mulanje Magistrate Court. We also appreciated the fruits of *power to the people* messages in Supuni village. Though we did not have councillors, we organized ourselves and chose a Clinic to ease the problem of traveling long distances to Mulanje district. When we reported to the assembly about the development we wanted, they came to investigate and they discovered that the clinic would also be very useful for under five services which were previously done anywhere in the village.

In 2003, we started moulding bricks and everybody was very committed to the work. We were also supported by the surrounding villages such as Chisinkha, Supuni and Makupiza who came in turns. People were very committed because this is one of the developments we needed, we chose it ourselves, and it was very relevant. They took it as their project. Within two weeks, we moulded bricks enough for the clinic. Though we waited for money for one year, people in 2005 were very excited and committed to bring sand within a week when they heard that the money had come for the construction of the clinic.



*Mr Ntaulo & Mr Tebulo standing at the Entrance of Sazola Health Clinic*

In 2006 all the needed materials were provided and the clinic was completed and opened in 2007. Now it operates during the day only but doctors and nurses come to provide the needed services. People were very committed because not only was it relevant but also because they chose it and was located where they wanted it to be. We are now planning to start moulding bricks for two doctors' houses.

We are really benefiting from the *power to the people* program..."

## APPENDIX 17: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR HOUSEHOLDS (HHs)

(NB: All interviews are Semi structured)

### Assessing awareness, identifying media and directions of communication

1. *Have you heard about decentralisation?*

No,

YES,  Go to 2

2. *From which sources (players, channel /media) did you hear about decentralisation?*

Communicator/Player	Community Media	Radio	Print	Others
	Songs			
	Drama			
	Meeting VDC			
	Meeting ADC			
	Meeting NGO			

### Assessing levels of Knowledge

3. *Have you heard about decentralisation, the power to the people?*

NO:  Give Reasons

i)	ii)
iii)	iv)

YES:  Go to question 4

4. *What does power to the people mean to you? (Interviewer to tick appropriate answer)*

(i) Participating in deciding and carrying out development work	
(ii) only participating in development work already decided	
(iii) Participating in deciding and carrying out development work including being given skills and financial resources to carry out the development	

(iv) Being given skills and financial resources to carry out development work	
<i>Other definitions</i>	
(v)	
(vi)	
(vii)	

**Assessing ability to empower (motivate people to participate in development)**

5. *Have you participated in any decentralisation project in your area?*

NO:  Give Reasons

a)
b)
c)
d)
e)

YES:  Go to question 6.

6. *How did you participate?*

(a) Physical participation only?  *GO to question 7*

(b) Deciding, choosing and Physical Participation?  *Go to question 8*

7 (i) *Why did you participate physically and (ii) How actively did you participate*

(i) Reasons for participating physically only

1)
2)
3)
4)

(ii) Degree of participation /Commitment: (present/turn ups, active)

<i>Very active/committed: Give Reasons</i>
1)
2)
3)
<i>Active/ Committed: Give Reasons</i>
1)
2)
3)
<i>Not Active /Committed: Give Reasons</i>
1)
2)
3)

8 (i) *What factors made you free to choose and (ii) How did you participate in the development (you chose yourself)?*

(i) Factors that enhanced free participation

1)
2)
3)
4)

(ii) Degree of participation /Commitment: (present/turn ups, being active)

<i>Very active/committed: Give Reasons</i>
1)
2)
3)
<i>Active/ Committed: Give Reasons</i>

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

*Not Active /Committed: Give Reasons*

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

9. *Describe the effects, if any, of involving the following in communicating decentralisation, the power to the people.*

(a) Political party Leaders (such as the MP)

### *Positive Effects Negative Effects*

1)	5)
2)	6)
3)	7)
4)	9)

(b) Government Officials ( such as the DA, and DEC)

### *Positive Effects*

### *Negative Effects*

1)	5)
2)	6)
3)	7)
4)	8)

## The Local community Leaders as Players of communicating Decentralisation

10 *Describe the effects, of any, of involving the following in communicating decentralisation, the power to the people.*

(a) The Area Development Committees (ADC) including the TA

### *Positive Effects*

### *Negative Effects*

1)	4)
----	----

2)	5)
3)	6)
4)	8)

(b) The Village Head and the VDCs

*Positive Effects*

*Negative Effects*

1)	5)
2)	6)
3)	7)
4)	8)

11. A **ward councilor** is said to be a very important link between communities and the Assembly on matters of communicating development.

i. *Are there any drawbacks you have experienced due to the absence of Ward councilors?*

a)	b)
c)	d)
b)	c)

ii. *Outline any advantages or positive things you have benefited due to the absence of Ward Councillors in your area.*

a)	b)
c)	d)
e)	f)

12. *Explain any challenges that hinder the communication and actualization of the power to the people programme in your village*

a)	b)
c)	d)
e)	f)

13 *What do you think must be done to make the task of communicating decentralisation a success?*

<i>a)</i>	<i>e)</i>
<i>b)</i>	<i>f)</i>
<i>c)</i>	<i>g)</i>
<i>d)</i>	<i>h)</i>

**APPENDIX 17: Questionnaire for the VDCs (FGD- Semi structured interview)**

**Composition and functions of the VDC**

1. Could you please describe the composition of your VDC or who is in the VDC

a)	d)
b)	e)
c)	f)

2. What are the functions of your VDC?

a)	d)
b)	e)
c)	f)

3. How many times do you meet people?

- a) Weekly
- (b) Monthly
- c) When need arises
- d) No meetings  Reasons?

5. If you organize meetings for people of the village, how committed are people in turning up for the meeting?

a) Very committed: Reasons

a)	d)
b)	e)
c)	f)

b) Committed: Reasons

a)	d)
b)	e)
c)	f)

c) Not Committed: *Reasons*

a)	(d)
b)	(e)
c)	(f)

### Assessing levels of Awareness and Understanding

6. *Have you heard about decentralisation, power to the people*

(A) NO, *Give Reasons*

a)	e)
b)	g)
c)	h)
d)	j)

(B) YES  *What does power to the people mean?*

(i) Participating in deciding and carrying out development work	
(ii) Participating in development work (already decided by assembly /boma)	
(iii) Participating in deciding and carrying out development work including being given skills and financial resources to carry out the development	
(iv) Being given skills and financial resources to carry out development work	
<i>Other definitions</i>	
(i)	(iii)
(ii)	(iv)

## Assessing the Media/Channels and Direction of communication

7. Do you have responsibility to disseminate messages about decentralisation?

(a) YES  Which media / channels do you use?

Community media		Radio	Print	Others
<i>Songs</i>				
<i>Drama</i>				
<i>Meetings</i>				
<i>FGDs</i>				

(b) NO  Who is responsible for communicating decentralisation. Give Reason

*Responsible Person*

*Reasons*

a)	d)
b)	e)
c)	f)

8. What does participation mean?

(a) participating in deciding and carrying out development of your area	
(b) participating in carrying out development already decided	
<i>Others</i>	
(a)	
(b)	

9. Name things /activities that people are expected to participate

(a)	(d)
(b)	(e)
(c)	(g)

## Assessing empowerment to participate in Development Project

**10.** Name any two development works that have taken place in your area and who chose them

Development Project	Who chose it?
(i)	
(ii)	

**11.** Would you say that people in your village are Empowered enough to choose the development they want?

(A) YES  Reasons

(a)
(b)
(c)
(d)

(B) NO:  Reasons

(a)
(b)
(c)
(d)

**12.** Would you say people in your village have been empowered enough to physically participate in actual development even chosen by others?

A) YES: Reasons

(a)
(b)
(c)
(d)

B) NO: 

Reasons

(a)
(b)
(c)

12. How committed were your people in participating the project the

(a) **Chosen by themselves**

Response	Reasons
Very Committed*	
Committed	
Not committed	

\* committed to mean coming in large number, working freely.

(b) **Chosen by others (village head, NGOs, CBOs or Government**

Response	Reasons
Very Committed	
Committed	
Not Committed	

13. A **ward councilor** is said to be a very important link between communities and the Assembly on matters of communicating development.i. Are there **any drawbacks** you have you experienced due to the absence of Ward councilors

d)	b)
c)	d)
e)	f)

ii. Outline any **advantages or positive things** you have benefited due to the absence of Ward Councillors in your area.

a)	b)
c)	d)
e)	f)

14. *Outline the **other challenges** that hinder the communication and actualization of the power to the people programme in your village*

a)	b)
c)	d)
e)	f)

15. *Give any **Positive effects**, you have experienced when political and government leaders are involved in communicating development*

a)	b)
c)	d)
e)	f)

16. *Give any **Negative effects**, you have experienced, of involving political, government and community leaders in communicating decentralisation*

a)	b)
c)	d)
e)	f)

17. *Outline what must be done to make decentralisation a success*

a)	b)
c)	d)
e)	f)

**APPENDIX 18: AREA DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (ADC) *FGD and Key informants*)**

**Composition and general functions of the ADC**

1. Could you please describe the composition of your ADC?

(a)	(b)
(c)	(d)
(e)	(f)
(g)	(h)

2. What are the duties of your ADC?

(a)	(b)
(c)	(d)
(e)	(f)
(g)	(h)

3. How many times do you meet as an ADC?

a) Weekly

(b) Monthly

c) When need arises

d) No meetings.  Reasons? (to be filled in the box)

(a)	(e)
(b)	(f)
(c)	(g)
(d)	(h)

**IEC Functions of the ADC, Media Channels, and Directions of Communications used**

4. Do you have responsibility to disseminate messages about decentralisation?

(a) YES  Which media / channels do you use?

Community media	Radio	Print	Others
Songs			
Drama			
Bwalo la mfumu (VDC meetings)			
Trainings			
Community Open Days			

(b) *NO*  *Who is then responsible for communicating decentralisation? Give Reasons*

Who is Responsible	Reasons
(b)	(f)
(c)	(g)
(d)	(h)

#### Assessing levels of Awareness and Understanding

5. *That the ADC has duty to sensitise people about decentralisation, What does decentralisation, “power to the people” mean?*

(i) Participating in deciding and carrying out development work	
(ii) Participating in development work (already decided by assembly /boma)	
(iii) Participating in deciding and carrying out development work including being given skills and financial resources to carry out the development	
(iv) Being given skills and financial resources to carry out development work	
<i>Other definitions</i>	
(i)	(iii)
(ii)	(iv)

6. *What does participation mean?*

(a) participating in deciding and carrying out development of your area	
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(b) participating in carrying out development already decided	
<b>Others</b>	
(a)	
(b)	

7. *Name things /activities that people are expected to participate*

(a)	(d)
(b)	(e)
(c)	(g)

#### Assessing empowerment to participate

8. *Name any two development projects that have taken place in your area and who chose them*

Development Project	Who chose it?
(i)	
(ii)	

9. *How committed were your people in participating the project*

(a) *chosen by people themselves ?*

Response	Reasons
Very Committed*	
Committed	
Not committed	

\* committed to mean coming in large number, working freely and actively.

(b) *chosen by others (village head, NGOs, CBOs or Government)*

Response	Reasons
Very Committed	
Committed	
Not Committed	

10. Would you say that people in your village are EMPOWERED enough to choose the development they want?

(A) YES:  Give reasons

(a)
(b)
(c)
(d)

(B) NO:  Give reasons

(a)
(b)
(c)
(d)

7. Would you say people in your village have been empowered enough to physically participate in actual development even chosen by others?

A) YES: Reasons

(a)
(b)
(c)
(d)

C) NO:  Reasons

(a)
(b)
(c)
(d)

8. A ward councilor is said to be a very important link between communities and the Assembly on matters of communicating development.

i. Are there any **drawbacks** you have you experienced due to the absence of Ward councilors ( we need councilors)

A	

ii. Outline any **advantages or positive things** you have benefited due to the absence of Ward Councillors in your area.(we do not need them)

a)	b)
c)	d)
e)	f)

9 Outline the **challenges** that hinder the communication and actualization of the power to the people programme in your village.

a)	b)
c)	d)
e)	f)

**10** Give any **positive effects**, you have experienced when political, and government and community leaders are involved in communicating development.

<i>a)</i>	<i>b)</i>
<i>c)</i>	<i>d)</i>
<i>e)</i>	<i>f)</i>

**11** Give any **negative effects**, you have experienced, of involving political, government and community leaders in communicating decentralisation

<i>a)</i>	<i>b)</i>
<i>c)</i>	<i>d)</i>
<i>e)</i>	<i>f)</i>

12. Outline what must be done to make decentralisation, power to the people, a success.

<i>A</i>	<i>E</i>
<i>B</i>	<i>F</i>
<i>C</i>	<i>G</i>