

CREATING LINKAGES BETWEEN RESEARCH, ADVOCACY AND MEDIA

Pro-Poor Policy Development and Accountability

Convening Report - Lilongwe, Malawi, 17 June 2011



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1. Introduction

In October 2010, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (Gates Foundation) gave a grant to the Southern Africa Trust to implement a project aimed at creating linkages between research, advocacy and media. In the initial implementation of the project, a scoping study and a baseline survey were conducted from the end of March to the middle of April 2011.

During the month of June 2011, the Trust convened a series of meetings at both national and regional levels. The first regional meeting that brought together leaders and practitioners from media, research and advocacy and from the six project focus countries was held on 7 June 2011. The purpose of this regional meeting was to provide further information about the project concept including the proposed strategies as well as proposed project implementation arrangements and to share the emerging findings of the scoping study and the baseline survey conducted between March and April 2011.

The meeting of 7 June agreed that national meetings be held as scheduled and organisations were proposed to co-host the meetings with Southern Africa Trust and agreed to do so. These were Civicus for South Africa, Malawi Economic Justice Network (MEJN) for Malawi, Kenya Community Development Foundation (KCDF) for Kenya, NGO Forum for Uganda, Foundation for Civil Society (FCS) for Tanzania and STAR-Ghana for Ghana. The national meetings were held on 17 June in Ghana and Malawi, 20 June in Tanzania, 22 June in Uganda, 24 June in Kenya and 27 June in South Africa.

This report summarizes the deliberations of the meeting held in Malawi on 17 June 2011 in Lilongwe. Participants to the meeting were drawn from advocacy, research and media organisations in Malawi. The purpose of the meeting was to introduce the project to stakeholders in Malawi and to think together on how this project could be implemented in Malawi.

2. Opening Session

Peter Ngoma, the facilitator, welcomed all participants, requested for an opening prayer, self introductions and outlined the structure of the programme for the day.



The meeting was formally opened by Dalitso Kubalasa of the Malawi Economic Justice Network (MEJN). Mr Kubalasa of the Malawi Economic Justice Network (MEJN), welcomed the participants to the meeting and thanked them for making time to come to the meeting.. In his opening remarks, he emphasised the importance and need to strengthen linkages between researchers, media and civil society groups as they are key and important stakeholders in development. He further said that Malawi has a unique context and challenges and that home grown solutions are required to achieve development results.

3. Findings of Scoping Study and Baseline Survey

Ashley Green-Thompson, the Grants Manager at the Southern Africa Trust presented findings of the scoping study and baseline survey undertaken by the Trust with the assistance of two external consultants. Reference was made to a colloquium held in Dar es Salaam in October 2010 on linkages between research, advocacy and media where there was a vibrant discussion about the state of collaboration



including challenges and opportunities. At the colloquium, it was agreed that there was insufficient collaboration between research, advocacy and media to add value to policy making and implementation processes and to maximise available resources. It was also agreed that this should be explored further hence the project scoping study and baseline survey in the six project focus countries.

Regarding one of the findings that there is a residual conservatism of Malawian society and traditional culture as well as resistance to innovation and new ideas, it was commented by participants that it was important to acknowledge that every society has its own culture, traditions and values and that these cannot really change and are often incorporated in legislation.



On the issue of capacity of civil society policy advocacy organisations, participants raised the issue of turnover of civil society leadership to other sectors.

In the discussion, participants expressed a general agreement with the findings but pointed out those important stakeholders such as ministers, policy makers and ordinary citizens were not covered in the study.

The Southern Africa Trust informed participants that the external consultants who conducted the scoping study and the baseline survey were currently working on a final draft of the above scoping study based on initial feedback provided to them by the Trust. This final draft will be made available to stakeholders and an opportunity will be given to comment. Participants proposed that a popular version of the findings be developed and made available to all.

4. Discussion on Collaboration, Challenges and Trends

Participants debated the role of media and how media operates at some length. One of the issues raised was that levels of quality of media were varied in Malawi. Participants



however, noted that efforts were being made in Malawi to improve the quality of media. The Media Council of Malawi for instance said that there is drive to improve the quality of media through accreditation of journalists to address this issue. Still on the same issue, the National Media Institute of Malawi said that media awards have been introduced in Malawi to inspire journalists to focus on millennium

development goals as part of developing professionalism and coverage of poverty and development issues.

One other issue that participants raised concerning media coverage was that there was lack of proper and trustworthy statistics and that in some instances information and data from different sources was contradictory.

Another issue raised was that there was limited access to information but still the participants were of the view that media could be more proactive in sourcing information. The issue of media requiring payment in order to run stories was cited as a key constraint that negatively affects media coverage of policy advocacy issues in Malawi. Some participants were however quick to say that this was not always the case



and that some enjoyed good relations with the media. One other key concern raised on media was the lack of diversified media voice in Malawi.

With respect to research, participants said that advocacy organisations were in general using evidence-based research but that there were a number of concerns on this. These were that -

- Available research was often shallow consultancy research;
- Research / studies were conducted in very short timeframes;
- More resources are required to enable deeper research to be conducted; and
- Advocacy organisations did not have time to go through bulky research reports.

Further, with regards to research, participants said that research reports were often bulky and recommended that these should be packaged in a more condensed format so that end users such as media and policy advocacy groups can easily use which participants agreed could help. The Malawi Congress of Trade Unions (MCTU) informed participants that the organisation produces popular versions of research findings that are disseminated to end users, including the media.



Concerning collaboration between research and advocacy groups, participants lamented timing as a key constraint. This was in relation to the fact that sometimes the research takes too long to finalise and that by the time the results are available, they are no longer helpful for policy advocacy.

5. Project Overview

The Southern Africa Trust gave an overview of the project whose aim is to create opportunities and platforms that build innovative, scaled-up, more coherent and value-adding working relationships between different types of critical non-state actors including researchers, civil society advocacy groups, platforms of affected people, the media and policy makers. The purpose of the project is to create and strengthen cooperation and linkages between research, advocacy, and media partners for more effective policy advocacy in six countries. These countries are Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi, Ghana and South Africa. Also presented were the project outcomes, proposed strategies and proposed project implementation arrangements. The project players are represented in the diagram below. It was also explained that the circles were deliberately presented as broken lines to illustrate that although the different groups are unique and have particular character, some of what they do overlaps to an extent.

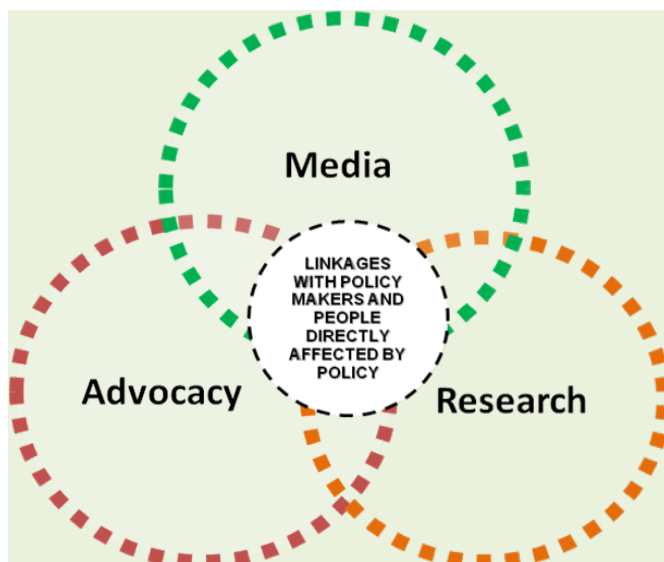


Figure 1 Key Project Role Players

The project thematic areas were also presented as follows:

- Agricultural productivity for household-level food security,
- Resource mobilization and better allocation and distribution of resources (optimizing financing for development),
- Delivery of basic and social services, and
- Inclusive, participatory, and transparent governance for better development results (cross-cutting).

Also presented as part of the project overview, was a value chain diagram (Figure 2 below). The diagram is a simple illustration of the value-adding relationships that are required amongst research, advocacy and media to achieve better policy outcomes and does not any suggest that this is linear process.

Each arrow in the diagram depicts key functions in the chain of value starting from knowledge generation, translation and packaging of research finding into policy-relevant policy advocacy materials and on to dissemination, involvement and engagement with stakeholders towards achievement of desired policy change.

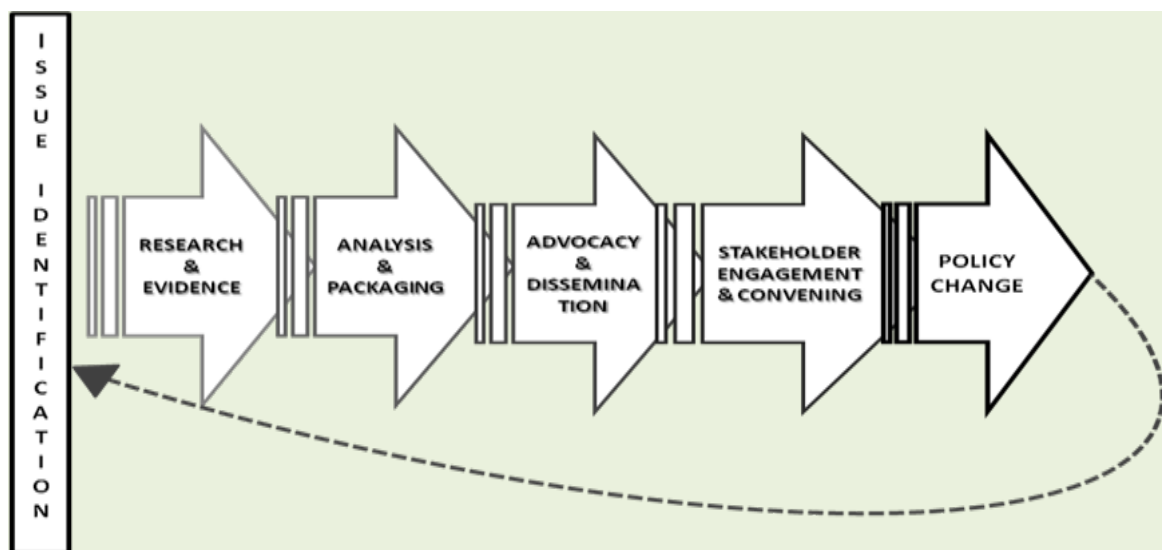


Figure 2 Policy Advocacy Value Chain Model

Participants were in agreement with the overall project concept, and committed to take it forward in Malawi. They however requested for more time to allow them to consult with their constituencies and other stakeholders who were not at the meeting to ensure consensus. On the thematic areas, participants unanimously agreed that these were relevant for Malawi but that they needed to be interpreted to reflect the situation in Malawi. Also agreed was the idea of having thematic coordination arrangements.

6. Project Implementation Arrangements and Way Forward



The project implementation arrangements were debated. Participants agreed that it was important that there is a structure at country level to implement the project. On thematic coordination, participants said that there were existing coordination structure that should also be considered in coming up with coordination arrangements at country level.

Following debate on project implementation, participants agreed to nominate one organisation to take a lead as a coordinator. The Malawi Economic Justice Network (MEJN) was nominated as the interim coordinator. In addition, the idea of an interim steering committee was recommended being comprised of two organisations each from media, research and advocacy. The role of the interim committee will be to act as joint convenors and have an advisory role.

The interim committee was agreed as follows:

Research

- Southern Africa Institute for Economic Research (SAIER)
- Centre for Agricultural Research (CARD)

Advocacy

- Civil Society Agricultural Network (CISANET)
- Human Rights Consultative Committee (HRCC)

Media

- Media Council of Malawi
- Media Institute of Southern Africa (NAMISA)

On the way forward, participants discussed and agreed to proceed as follows:

- Discuss and agree on Terms of Reference for national lead organisation; The Trust will provide the template for the terms of reference;
- Circulate terms of reference to potential project partners in Malawi for comments;
- Develop project activities and implementation plan reflecting priority themes for Malawi;

- A preliminary meeting of the steering group to be held provisionally for 8 July 2011

With these agreements on the way forward, the facilitator declared the meeting closed. The Southern Africa Trust thanked all participants for their open and frank participation in the meeting.

Annex 1 - List of Participants

	Name	Organisation	Email
1	Ashley Green-Thompson	The Southern Africa Trust	agreenthompson@southernafricatrust.org
2	Aubrey Chikungwa	National Media Association of Malawi – NAMISA (MISA Malawi Chapter)	aubrey_chikungwa@yahoo.com
3	Beatrice Makwenda	National Smallholder Farmers Association (NASFAM)	dchibonga@nasfam.org
4	Chinyamata Chipeta	Southern Africa Institute of Economic Research (SAIER)	chipetac@sndp.org.zm
5	Dalitso Kubalasa	Malawi Economic Justice Network (MEJN)	dkubalasa@mejn.mw
6	Ellen Lusukwa	Human Rights Consultative Committee (HRCC)	hrcc@malawi.net
7	Floris van Woudenberg	Malawi Milk Producers Association (MMPA)	vanwoud@yahoo.com
8	Henry Kamata	Farmers Union of Malawi (FUM)	info@farmersunion.mw
9	Lusungu Kanchenche	The Southern Africa Trust	lkanchenche@southernafricatrust.org
10	Mathews Madola	Centre for Agricultural Research (CARD) – Bunda College of Agriculture	madolam@yahoo.com
11	Ndidza Chisanu	CISANET	nchisanu@cisanetmw.org
12	Noria Unyolo	Lovellpark Consulting Group	
13	Osborne Joda-Mbewe	Malawi Council of Churches (MCC)	jodambewe@yahoo.co.uk
14	Paliani Chinguwo	Centre for Social Research	secretarygeneral@mctumw.com
15	Peter Ngoma	Lovellpark Consulting Group	peter.ngoma2002@gmail.com
16	Simekinala Kaluzi	Council for Non-governmental Organisations (CONGOMA)/GCAP Malawi	skaluzi@congoma.org
17	Tamanda Nkhono-Mvula	CISANET	cisanet@globemw.net
18	Tazona Sitamulaho	The Southern Africa Trust	tsitamulaho@southernafricatrust.org
19	Thembinkosi Mhlongo	The Southern Africa Trust	tmhlongo@southernafricatrust.org

Annexure – Event Evaluation

Evaluation report for the Malawi National Convening on linkages between Research, Advocacy and Media Work for Pro-Poor Policy Development and Accountability – 17th June, 2011

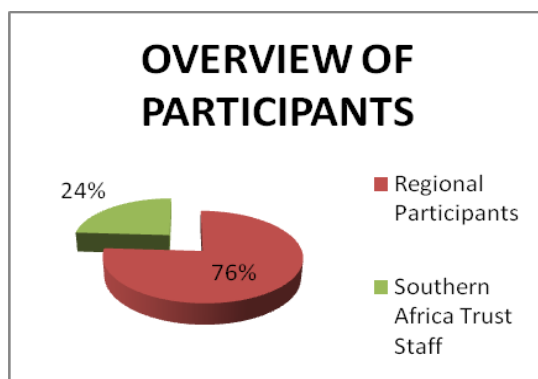
The Trust co-hosted a convening with the Malawi Economic Justice Network (MEJN).

The objectives of the convening were as follows:

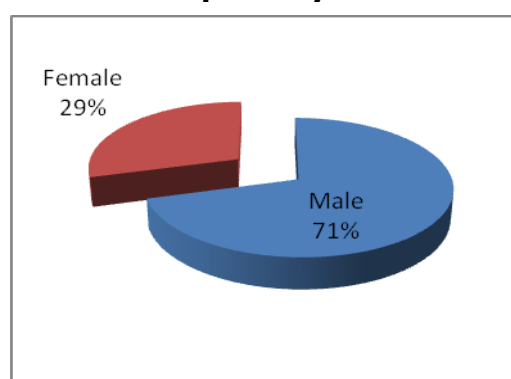
- Discuss the project implementation strategies
- Discuss the findings and the recommendations of the recently completed scoping study and baseline survey
- To discuss project implementation arrangements including country and thematic coordination
- Inform the implementation of the overall project for sustainability purposes

The convening was attended by 17 members including 4 members from the Trust (Graph 1). Of this, 5 or 29% were women and 15 or 71% were men (Graph 2).

Graph 1: Overview of Participants



Graph 2: Overview of Participants by Gender



Participants then evaluated the event by answering questions such as rating the achievements of the objectives for the convening as well as the content, process facilitation, learning, approach, venue and planning.

The results from the evaluation forms have been captured below are presented in graphs with comments captured directly from their responses.

The evaluation was in two sections. Section A (which participants were asked to rate the logistics, planning, facilitation process and whether they had learnt anything new) and Section B (which participants were rating achievement of objectives of the convening)

SECTION A:

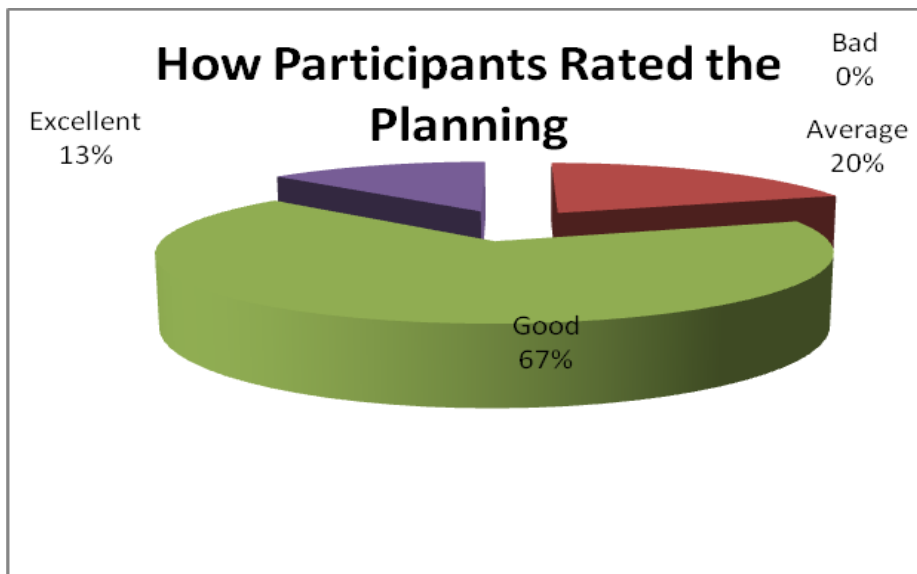
A four level scale rating was used as follows:

"Bad"	"Average"	"Good"	"Excellent"
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Planning

On planning done for the convening from their experience as participants, **67%** said it was good, **13%** said excellent, and **20%** said average. None said bad (see Graph 3 below)

Graph 3



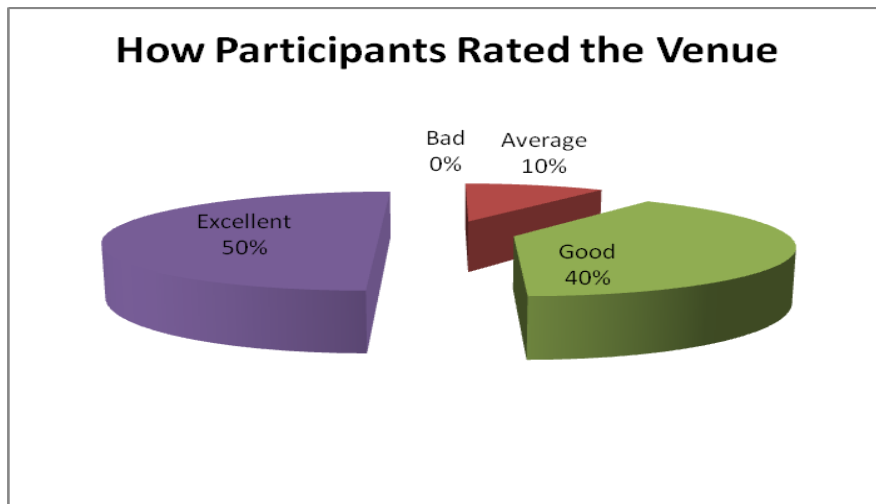
PARTICIPANTS COMMENTS

- Invitations were sent well in advance
- Good work / good show
- Good communication / good logistics
- Preparations not adequate
- Meeting started too late and ended very late. It was prolonged, it could have been shorter

Venue

On the facilities and venue, **40%** said good , **10%** said average and **50%** said excellent. None rated bad (see Graph 4 below)

Graph 4



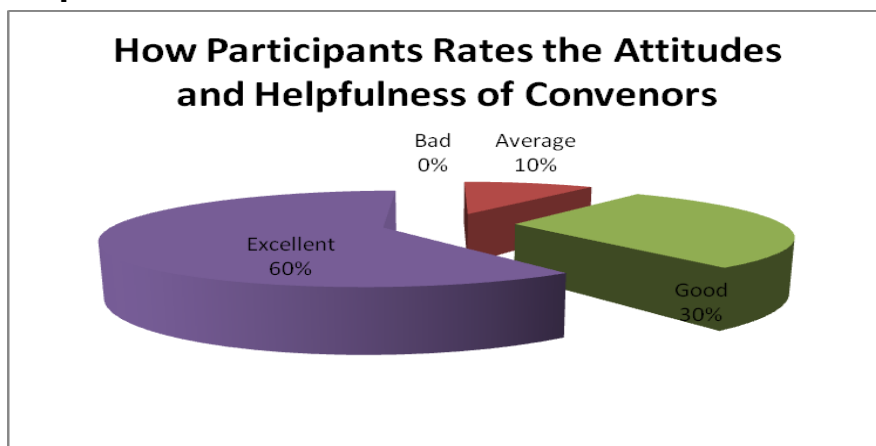
PARTICIPANTS COMMENTS

- On average they were good
- Convenient for the meeting
- Excellent! Quiet and convenient
- Excellent accommodation, excellent facilities
- All facilities were made available
- The facilities were perfect

Attitudes

With regard the attitudes, availability and helpfulness of the conveners, **30%** rated good, **60%** rated excellent, **10%** rated average. None rated bad (see Graph 5)

Graph 5



PARTICIPANTS COMMENTS

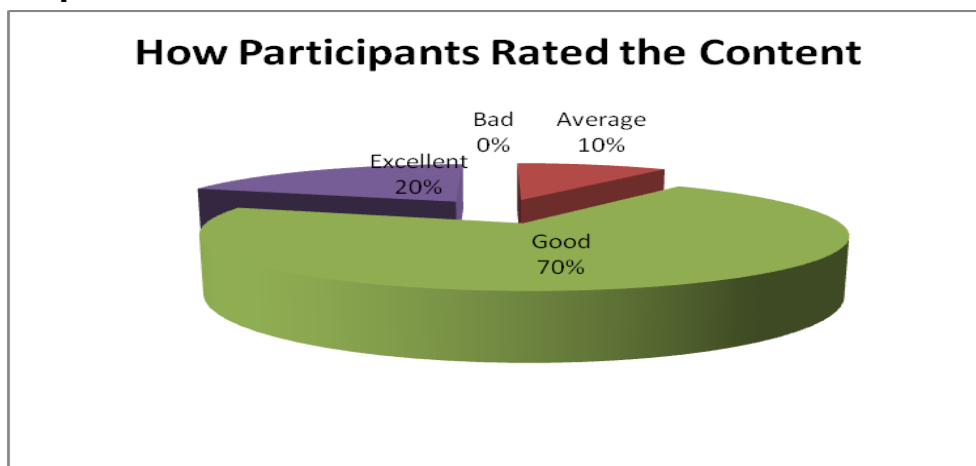
- Reception was fair and they were all friendly
- Creative and willing to support
- Quite insightful and useful

- Very helpful, paid attention to detail
- Considered every detail of the contributions throughout the process
- They made the team to focus of the thrust of the Project
- There should have been given more lee-way to propose business as it is carried out in the country

Content

With respect to quality of the event based on content, **70%** rated good, **10%** rated average and **20%** rated excellent. None rated bad as illustrated in graph 6

Graph 6



PARTICIPANTS COMMENTS

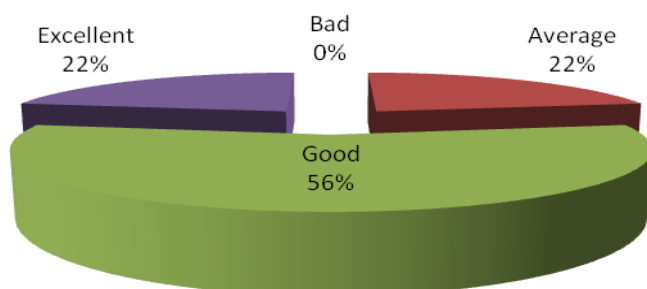
- We need more work of this kind, there is a lot that is going on but we lack coordination
- Good presentation, good discussion
- Quite adequately done
- There was need to circulate some documents prior to the meeting
- The presentations were not made available in advance

Process

On how the participants experienced the process used to facilitate the event, **56%** rated "good", **22%** rated excellent and another **22%** rated average. None rated bad (see graph 7)

Graph 7

How Participants Rated the Process (Overall)



PARTICIPANTS COMMENTS

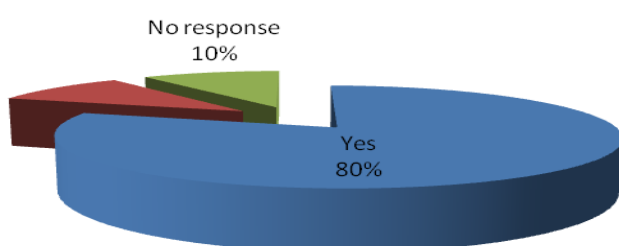
- The facilitation was too slow. It could have been better
- Okay
- The facilitator dragged proceedings towards the end
- Guided presentation well, guided discussion well
- Good
- There was need for a more lobbying facilitator
- Somehow the discussions were going off-direction

Learning

The question on whether the participants have learned anything new, **80%** rated "yes" and **10%** rated "no", while another **10%** did not respond (see graph 8)

Graph 8

Did Participants Learn Anything New?



PARTICIPANTS COMMENTS

- The information helped a lot. But the presentations should have been circulated earlier for better input. It could have been circulated in the meeting or even after
- There are different solutions to a problem
- Need to deepen coordination in project approach
- Nothing new
- How the media behaves and how we can handle the media.
- Linking work of the media, research and advocacy is possible
- Behaviour of media in Malawi
- Rationale of the project
- Need for collaboration
- Why researchers fail to disseminate research findings
- Challenges facing CSOs in Malawi regarding advocacy and successes

SECTION B:

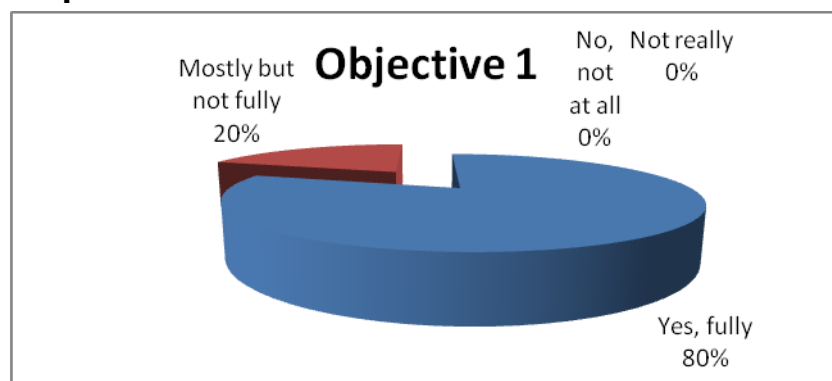
In this section of the form, participants were asked to rate the achievements of the objectives of the convening. The following four-level scale was used:

Yes, fully	Mostly but not fully	Not really	No, not at all
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Objective 1: To discuss the project implementation strategies.

80% of the participants rated "yes, fully" and **20%** rated "mostly but not fully". None rated "not really" or "no, not at all". See graph 9

Graph 9



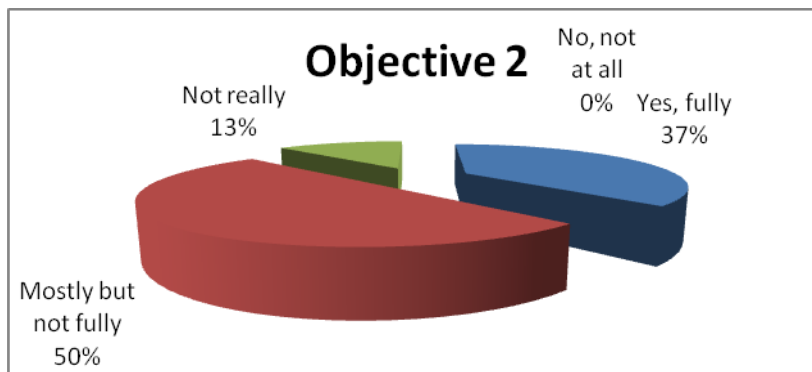
PARTICIPANTS COMMENTS

- Clear overflow
- Okay
- Stressed on linkages
- Adequate participation
- It was clear but needed more time to understand
- Other key organisations were not represented

Objective 2: to discuss the findings and the recommendations of the recently completed scoping study and baseline survey.

37% rated "yes, fully" and **50%** rated "mostly but not fully" and **13%** rated "not really" while none rated "no, not at all" as illustrated on Graph 10.

Graph 10



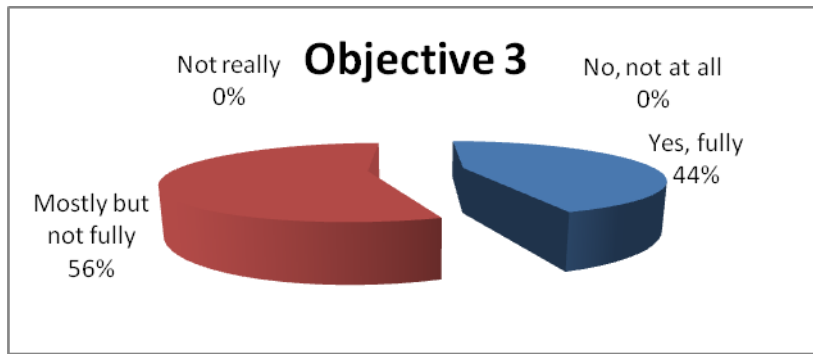
PARTICIPANTS COMMENTS

- Valuable information
- Left for the steering team to identify the recommendations
- Participants did not have opportunity to study report
- Valid
- The documents should have been sent to the participants prior to the meeting
- The presenter was not the actual consultant who conducted the survey

Objective 3: To discuss project implementation arrangements including country and thematic coordination.

44% rated "yes, fully" and **56%** rated "mostly but not fully". None rated "not really" or "no, not at all" (see graph 11)

Graph 11



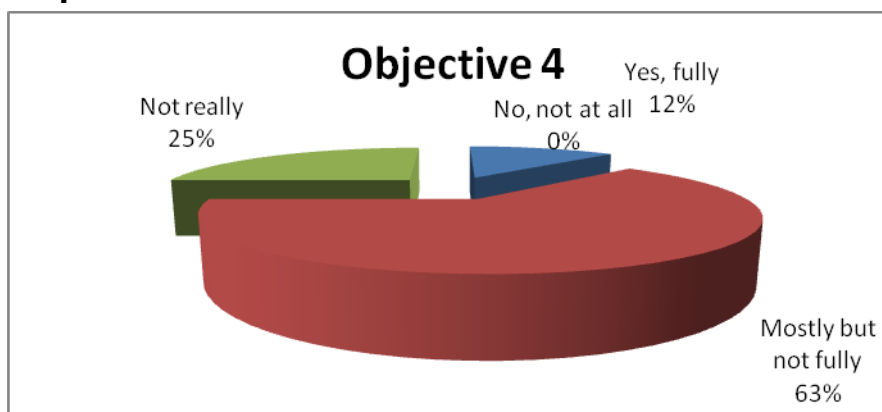
PARTICIPANTS COMMENTS

- It was prolonged unnecessarily, it should have been guided better
- Formed a steering committee that will take it forward
- Left for the steering team
- Members openly stated their positions
- It was tough, but people agreed on the positive way forward
- We did have ample time to go through the presentations in advance

Objective 4: Inform the implementation of the overall project for sustainability purposes.

12% rated "yes fully", 63% rated "mostly but not fully" and 25% rated "not really". None rated "no, not at all". (See Graph 12)

Graph 12



PARTICIPANTS COMMENTS

- Left up to steering committee
- Okay

- Left up to steering committee
- Abandoned
- Need to work on them further with the general membership
- There wasn't enough time

Summary:

Graph 13 below shows the overview of the rating of achievement of objectives. A small proportion indicated negative response of "not really" and neither indicated "no, not at all". This rating indicates a level of unsure understanding of the project.

Graph13

