

“EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES IN SIERRA LEONE”

FINAL PROJECT EVALUATION

for MAPCO and APT



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List of abbreviations

APT	Action on Poverty
Bu	bushel
BLF	Big Lottery Fund
CBO	community based organisation
CHO	community health officer
DPO	disabled person's organisation
FGD	focus group discussion
GBP	Pounds Sterling
KII	key informant interview
MAPCO	Movement for Assistance and Promotion of Rural Communities
PWD	person/people with a disability
SHG	self-help group
SL	Sierra Leone
WHO	World Health Organisation

Executive Summary

The 'Empowering Communities In Sierra Leone' project is the latest in a long period of collaboration between MAPCO and APT going back many years, and its design captures mutual learning and reflection. It covers 12 rural communities in six widespread districts of the country, delivering livelihoods, WASH and human rights activities to a total of 12,000 vulnerable people. In addition to reading extensive project documentation the evaluation was able to visit half of all the target communities and meet hundreds of beneficiaries as well as many other key stakeholders.

Overall the findings are very positive. The evaluation found the project to have met virtually all its objectives, to be very highly rated by beneficiaries and to be relevant, cost-effective and likely to be sustainable. All three outcomes are regarded as having been met; five of the nine outputs to have been met (including two that were significantly exceeded) while the remaining four were substantially – but not wholly – met. It should be noted though that the evaluation took place five months before the end of the project, so it is likely that further progress will be made towards those targets not met at the time of writing. Many thousands of vulnerable people now have opportunities, choices and control in their lives where

previously they had little or none; there are 12 CBOs set up with skills and confidence to continue serving their members; and networks and linkages established to help fill the gap left when the MAPCO project ends. The weakest element, in an otherwise very successful project, was the limited inclusion of PWDs given their particular vulnerability. Only one of the three outcomes included a specific target for PWD inclusion, when ideally all three should have done, and even here the aspiration was too modest.

A number of recommendations are made for future programming. These are made however with the aim of building on success rather than addressing failings. Both MAPCO and APT are to be complimented on their efforts, whose staff skills, commitment and experience played a key role in the project's success.

Evaluation approach

The evaluation used a range of tools to gather input and data and to triangulate findings, namely focus group discussions; key informant interviews; review of project data and documentation; direct observation; and case studies. FGDs were held with six of the 12 CBOs, during which hundreds of beneficiaries were involved, while many of the key informants were included informally in this process rather than in separate KIIs. In all this, a participative approach was adopted, to enable reflection, engagement and involvement so as to facilitate internal learning and appreciation. The specific tools used are set out in the appendices, though these were used as guides rather than straitjackets. An appreciative enquiry approach was adopted for two sub-component activities, namely adult literacy and human rights. Volunteers were asked to recite the alphabet, count from one to 100, or spell minor business transaction related words (names and surnames of people, villages) and do simple arithmetic; and to narrate basic human rights.

A total of 378 participants including beneficiaries, project staff, stakeholders and other categories participated in the discussions, of which 186 were men and 192 were women, corresponding to 49% and 51% respectively. These categories included people with disability - albeit less than 1%. A broad overview paraphrasing the evaluation findings will be given as main findings followed by a more detailed analysis of performance by project component. Tables and charts will be used to complement some of the narratives.

Summary of Recommendations

- 1: Establish processes for oversight of CBO loan systems and decisions so as to ensure independence and sustainability
- 2: Develop multiplier plans to facilitate and encourage uptake among non-beneficiary communities of project approaches

3: Increase the focus on PWDs, including support for creation of PWD self-help groups in addition to CBOs.

4: Improve water point maintenance and create spare-part centres or hubs so as to make parts more readily available

5: Develop a greater project geographical focus to the project, so as to maximise economies of scale and reduce logistical costs

6: Talk about numbers of *people*, not families, when preparing fundraising proposals

7: Move away from a one size fits all approach and develop bottom-up planning with groups rather than a centralised model

Findings

1. TOR 1 Project Impact: To evaluate the impact of the project to date on individual beneficiaries, their households and communities

The project was found to be very effective and has been working with the most vulnerable people in hard-to-reach areas, empowering them with life-changing outcomes. Access to project benefits depend on individual needs and vary across the components: while some beneficiaries participated in only one component e.g. farm inputs, or cash loan or skills training, others participated in two or more components. Notwithstanding, the impacts are more or less of the same nature. These impacts are many and varied, majority of which cut across all the project components and are clearly demonstrated by individuals and their families and communities at large.

Farm Inputs

Over the project life each of the 12 community based organisations (CBO) has built strong assets categorised as entrepreneurship skills, farm inputs and income, with each creating cross-cutting change in the financial status and self-esteem of their individual members.

Generally, the size of a farm is dictated by the amount of seed inputs a farmer has for planting. Before the project, the average farm input was one bushel, with many farmers unable to cultivate a larger area because of the unavailability of sufficient seed, and hence farmers had plots left uncultivated. As a result, yields were always very low, leading in turn to insufficient food throughout the year. The provision by the project of farm inputs therefore assured farmers of the availability of adequate seed input, and hence cultivation areas are now larger and more food is therefore available for families. This has led to a significant reduction in the number of hungry months, in some cases to nil, and families including children are much happier particularly during the hungry period.

Another benefit relates to loans. Over the years those farmers who lacked enough seed input have taken loans from seed hoarders who exploit them with high interest rates that range

between 50% and 100%. Repayment of these seed loans is during the harvest. Those who could not meet their loan repayment commitments faced humiliation and hardship. The creation of seed input banks by the project therefore has not only removed the need to use these loan sharks, but also revitalised the self-esteem of CBO members who are no longer worried about seed inputs during planting seasons.

With the establishment of strong executive committees and byelaws instituted and enforced, each CBO is able to raise very strong community assets (see figure 1 below). This has in turn increased the confidence of communities and their members in making a viable, productive farm the following year. When a community lacks food in enough quantity peaceful wellbeing is threatened among school children, who can be forced to employ dangerous coping strategies such as scavenging from garbage bins – with the attendant risk of children contracting diseases such as cholera. Many families demonstrated that their children are now assured of food and that there has been a reduction of contamination-related diseases. As a result of the strong foundation (assets, strong executives, byelaws etc.,) these benefits are likely to sustain.

Loan Scheme

The loan scheme was found to be effectively run and appropriate to a range of people within the target group, particularly as it reaches those who have very little and feel unable to take out other loans or participate in other enterprises such as skills trades. Cash loans range from SLL500,000 (approx. GBP60) to SLL1 million, paid back with 10% interest after three (3) months. These meet the needs of those undertaking micro-enterprises, particularly trading, and those managing the pressure on cash-flow at certain times, such as the beginning of the school year. Loans are disbursed by the loan officer together with the financial secretary and follow CBOs' loan system bylaws established with MACPO's guidance. MAPCO also provides training for these executive committees on simple loan management policies, procedures for loan disbursement such as a loan application – assessing the enterprise, the level they could pay back, follow up and assessing progress/ challenges and securing repayment.

Although communities have large numbers of children in school, the number not in schools is also high, for reasons connected with the lack of income and income generating opportunities to meet the basic needs of children in school. The loan scheme therefore usefully increases families' ability to support children in school and other basic family needs, particularly during the reopening of schools and buying new dresses for children either during Christmas or New Year (the only seasons when most people can afford new things for their children).

Before the project, informal loan merchants would provide cash loans (33% of the actual cost of a five gallon container commonly called 'bata') by exploiting farmers' vulnerability and their need for cash, thereby reducing their actual income from the farm proceeds. The advent of the project was found to have empowered those beneficiaries, enabling them to earn enough income to reduce rates of indebtedness and evade such loans. Many people gave testimonies of how the project in general and the loan scheme in particular helped free them from such invasion and humiliation (see case study of Selina Tucker below).

One's economic standing in the community has always been a strong determinant of one's participation and/or consultation in decision-making process on matters affecting the community. In this context, the project was found to have empowered the most vulnerable women and youth to have their voices heard and to have reduced levels of vulnerability. It has also increased the esteem of the most vulnerable, promoting family ties between youth (who generally are poor) and their families etc. due to adequacy of support, while women are empowered to assist husbands in addressing family responsibilities.

Training in Entrepreneurship Skills

The project supported communities with entrepreneurship training in a number of areas including soap making, carpentry, weaving, tailoring and blacksmithing, all geared towards increasing the income opportunities among youth, women and the most vulnerable. Besides increasing the income of the most vulnerable, this had the benefit of empowering trainees to participate in community decision processes and hence also improved their esteem. It also increased family care opportunities and hence ties with family members and relatives etc. In addition the evaluation found there to be a number of unintended impacts created by the project in communities.

Mariama Lahai, 34 is a single parent living in Levuma, Kandu Leppiama chiefdom. Mariama now makes soap, her bars being stamped with her name and community. Asked how she felt, Mariama said that the enterprise had empowered her such that she is now assured of a daily income and has increased the number of meals she and her two children have per day from one to two. She feels proud of her achievement and can boast of passing on training to people in not only her own but also other communities. "My children are cleaner than before. I always use the (soap) remnant from the production to wash their and my clothes, so that increases my savings." She ended by mentioning the challenges experienced in her enterprise: "I am constrained by the increasing cost of the raw materials, the palm oil and caustic soda". Many other people had similar testimonies of the impact of the project.

For instance, when schools reopen at the start of the year parents have to sew or buy children's uniforms, but the absence of a tailor in their community had been a major problem. In this situation parents are obliged to travel to another community - most often a bigger town with high transport costs as well as the higher cost levied by town tailors and the waiting period before the uniform is ready. The advent of the project eliminated these burdens, as skilled people are now available within reach and at a cheaper cost. Among the other impacts created by the project include the availability of skilled people within community reach to provide social services not only for project beneficiaries, but other community members as a whole etc.

Story of Change



Selina Tucker (38) lives in Motuo village. Motuo is the headquarter town of Kpanda Kemoh Chiefdom situated about 42 miles from Bo in the Southern Province. She and a host of friends are traders who had no initial business capital, because of which they had been constantly indebted to a woman, Isha Kabba.

Isha Kabba is a Guinean trader who transacts business in Sierra Leone. She comes monthly to give cash loans to traders in exchange for bags of gari (processed cassava). Whenever Isha returns from Guinea she had constantly used the service of the police to retrieve her goods. This act often results in

harassment and humiliation for her customers and often people had to run away for fear.

The arrival of MAPCO brought a sigh of relief for Selina. Selina joined the Community Empowerment Project in 2015 and took a loan. She worked very hard and before the time for repayment had made enough profit to pay it back. She continued working hard and after a year had enough capital to stand on her own. Her friends too joined the project and today, neither Selina nor her friends take loans from Isha. This has forced Isha to abandon their village for elsewhere, while Selina and her friends are very grateful to APT and MAPCO for the support that made them breathe a sigh of relief.

Adult Education

During the start-up of the project, it was generally agreed to use enrolment in the adult literacy as a condition for accessing loans. This prompted those interested in taking loans to enrol in the scheme (either willingly or reluctantly). Over time, its actual importance became obvious and embraced as its multifaceted benefits were appreciated. The ability to read and write was seen as a giant leap in business transactions and realising profitability of businesses. All the respondents reported that they were able to record names of customers who owed them money, especially when it was common practice for people to loan an item and effect later payment on a daily basis.

Among those who weren't literate, interest in monitoring the performance of their children in schools had always been difficult and unusual. The introduction of the adult literacy scheme though led to a new inspiration with many parents vesting more interest in the affairs of their children. The evaluation found that 30% of parents enrolled in adult literacy classes report they have been prompted by these classes to start visiting school to monitor their children's performance. Children, particularly those in classes 1-3, out of curiosity would ask a parent to recite the alphabet or spell some words, etc. By so doing there is a cross-

fertilisation of learning – though in actual fact the aim of children in doing this is to tease their parents.

Persons with Disability

The main stated purpose of the project was “to enable vulnerable people to tackle poverty, disease and inequality by improving access to sustainable livelihoods, water and sanitation and human rights.” It was only in Outcome 3 however that three specific targets were set for working with PWDs (albeit with differing percentages), clearly one of the most vulnerable groups in society. Of these two were met, and while it was clear from MAPCO staff that they sought to include PWD in all project activities the evaluation feels this lack of specific PWD targets in all three outcomes to have been an oversight in the original project design.

What’s more, even where targets were set the evaluation feels them to be very modest. For instance, while census data on the prevalence of disability are notoriously unreliable, the World Health Organisation has estimated that on average in any community 15% will be disabled. So where in outcome 3 the target of 10% PWD might appear reasonable, in fact it was not 10% of the *wider community* population but rather 10% of the disadvantaged people with whom the project sought to work. Given most PWD are disadvantaged, the percentage of them among this sub-set will be far higher than the WHO community figure of 15%. For a project seeking specifically to work with the vulnerable therefore it might have been hoped to see numbers in excess of 15%, but this was not the case. Further, in Output 3 the target of 1,500 disadvantaged families actually equates to 10,500 people, given average family size, to which should be added the 1,000 young people (assuming this further target is separate rather than a sub-set of the families.) Of this combined 11,500 people the PWD target of 300 represents under 3% - a very low figure.

This is not to say that PWD were intentionally discriminated against but there were a number of factors at play. The challenge with empowering PWD is multipronged: on the one hand, PWD often lack confidence in their own abilities to achieve change in their situation and in their rights, while on the other they often face very negative views within the community. Though not verbally stated, the evaluation found indications that communities feel that PWD cannot do things on their own, no matter how much support they receive. These two dynamics reinforce each other, and can be difficult – and slow - to break. Project statistics show very low numbers of PWD beneficiaries, while the absence of PWDs in the evaluation FGD was clearly noticed. In one such meeting participants were asked about the absence of PWD, whereupon one PWD was called and on her arrival asked about any benefits she had had from the group. “I have not benefited from any of the project components”. Asked why, she complained that “if I sell goods and people refuse to pay back my loans, I cannot run after them to retrieve my money”, a statement that appeared to be accepted as inevitable and unchangeable by both CBO members and MAPCO staff present - indicating how PWD lack the strong community or project support to enable them to claim their rights.

Despite these deficiencies the evaluation did find that PWD had been included in the health and sanitation facilities, and in human rights training, yet although PWD understood issues such as violence against women and children, their rights remained unprotected.

WASH

The project started at the height of the outbreak of the Ebola epidemic, because of which the implementation of three of the four components was delayed. With additional funds of GBP49K from BLF the health and hygiene component was started in all the 12 communities and a series of intensive awareness-raising campaigns were conducted. These laid crucial foundations for the adoption of behavioural change in health and sanitation practices.

The project continued the campaigns and rehabilitated broken wells. MAPCO also established linkages with other donor agencies like Red Cross (3 wells and latrines), Help Sierra Leone (rehabilitation of one hand pump well), CARITAS (1 hand dug well fitted with hand pump, VIP latrines) and CARE for additional support in the sector. As a result a major reduction in the prevalence of WASH related diseases (diarrhoea, typhoid, etc.) was reported in communities where MAPCO had rehabilitated the wells. This was confirmed by one female community health worker (CHO), Massah J Tucker, who had this to say:

“Before the intervention as many as 20 water-related cases were reported per month, typical of which were diarrhoea, malaria and typhoid (typhoid caused by acute malaria). With the intervention, the number of cases reported has declined rapidly to around 3 per month”

She put the causes behind this decline as being:

- **Improvements in hygiene practices as a result of sensitisation conducted by community health workers;**
- **Reduction in cases of malaria due to distribution of treated bed nets supplied by UNICEF a 3 per family of 5 persons; and**
- **MAPCO staff collaboration with the community health teams for technical advice on health issues.**

Hygiene strategies instituted in communities included the construction of dish racks, cloth lines, fencing of compost pits, stools for children who cannot use latrines hand washing containers made locally from empty one gallon containers etc. These practices helped create both healthy environments and build local pride for, as beneficiaries in Warema in Tonkolili District put it with great pleasure, “our community is the cleanest”.

Children are traditionally charged with the responsibility of fetching water for the home, which means that in communities without functional wells they have to go to nearby streams, exposing them to risks. Furthermore, water collection takes time such that those in school are often late for lessons and are hence stressed. The rehabilitation/provision of water points in the community therefore not only improved people’s health (and hence productivity) it also reduced risk for – and stress on - children.

PWD, especially those who are blind or physically disabled, reported a very high level of appreciation of the WASH facilities as their situation often does not permit them to move

long distances and, in the absence of a child or ward, they remained desperate. This desperation was alleviated by the WASH provisions.

Human rights awareness and entitlements

Beneficiaries were asked to explain what they understood by human rights and name examples of human rights. The evaluation found that they were able to explain these correctly and that as a result of the increased level of awareness on human right issues, there were many and varied impacts. The most outstanding among these were: a reduction of domestic conflicts and gender-based violence in communities; and increased recognition and inclusion of women and youth in decision-making processes at home. This in turn led to increased self-esteem, improvement in the relationship between husband and wives and improvement in self-confidence.

In some communities, especially in the northern region, it is the tradition that women cannot become chiefs. Over time however this is gradually changing and women are now being crowned as chiefs. This change cannot be attributed to the project alone, as many other factors contributed to it, but it does appear clear to the evaluation that the project made a significant contribution.

Over the years access to family entitlements have been a grave concern for women and the most vulnerable and often conflicts ensued, putting pressure on traditional rulers responsible for mediating such cases. Increased awareness in rights to entitlements as a result of the project is gradually changing this situation. Women are increasingly accessing family inheritance such as land for farming, mining, harvesting produce from family plantations such as palm fruits, cacao, coffee etc. As a consequence, there has been reduction in the number of cases and improved relationship in families. This has in turn led to a reduction of pressure on local chiefs. Joe Jaiah, Town Chief of Mutuo in the Bonthe District puts it this way:

“One benefit that I am presently enjoying as a result of the reduction in the number of conflicts and hence court cases is the increased peaceful co-existence that stemmed from increased access to family heritage. There were times I had to hibernate into my farm for the rest of the day simply because of the pressure on cases to mediate. Sometimes I hardly had time to look into my family affairs because of which I was forced to move. This is now changing and people are happy.

Finally, the evaluation found that three main project elements – livelihoods and social service support, WASH and human rights awareness and entitlements – are mutually reinforcing, empowering the most vulnerable to be economically strong and hence gain self-esteem, recognition in decision-making processes and above all meet family needs including those of the education of their children.

2. TOR 2 Project Assessment: To assess the success of the project in meeting its outcomes, expected results and indicators (including any unintended outcomes - positive or negative)

The evaluation found the project to have met the overwhelming majority of its outcomes, expected results and indicators – many well ahead of schedule. Specific details are set out in the tables below. However in overall terms, all three Outcomes have been achieved. Of the nine outputs across the three outcomes, five have been achieved and/or exceeded and four have been substantially met. Beneficiaries were polled in each of the different project components and asked to give a score from 1 (very poor) to 10 (excellent) and their responses are included below under each outcome, while the reasons behind the success are explored in Section 3 below. Overall the beneficiary responses are outstanding, with an overwhelming majority ranking each component very highly.

It should be noted that the evaluation was conducted in November 2017, some 5 months before the formal conclusion of the project so as to avoid the potentially difficult general election period. It is likely therefore that further progress will be made in the remaining months and hence that the final outcome will be better than that presented here.

Outcome 1. Improved access to livelihoods for vulnerable families and young people through sustainable community organisations delivering social and livelihood services; leading to increased incomes and improved access to basic needs and opportunities.

Table 1: Outcome 1 performance data

PLANNED TARGET	EVALUATION COMMENTARY	
Outcome 1 Improved access to livelihoods for vulnerable families and young people through sustainable community organisations delivering social and livelihood services; leading to increased incomes and improved access to basic needs and opportunities	The evaluation found that overall Outcome 1 had been achieved. While in some specifics it has yet to meet its targets (see below) in the main the vast majority of beneficiaries are enjoying better lives and more secure livelihoods as a result of the project, with change in some cases being transformational, and that these positive changes are likely to be sustainable. As set out below, at the time of the evaluation one output had been exceeded and the other two substantially met.	
	PROJECT DATA AS AT NOV 2017	EVALUATION COMMENTARY
Output 1.1: 1,500 vulnerable families and 1,000 young people receiving social and livelihood	2,748 families and young people (1,515 females and 1,233 males) including 207 PWD (93 females and	The families' target was exceeded by 4.8% and the young people's by 17.6%. These are both very creditable out-turns in terms of hard

services	<p>114 males) have accessed livelihood and social services.</p> <p>Families: 1,572 (849 females and 723 males).</p> <p>Young people: 1,176 (666 females and 510 males.)</p>	<p>numbers, while for beneficiaries it is clear many lives have been transformed for the better. CBO loan funds have built significant capital amounts while the one instance of serious misconduct with a loan fund was satisfactorily addressed</p> <p>TARGET EXCEEDED</p>
<p>Output 1.2: 70% increase in annual incomes of 1,000 families and 800 young people from the time they first accessed the project</p>	<p>911 families and 671 young people including 177 PWD made a 74% increase in their income from the time they accessed the project</p>	<p>The increases in the level of income were ahead of target, while the numbers enjoying this increase were below target. Those that benefitted therefore derived more than expected, but the scale of beneficiaries at the time of the evaluation disappointingly has so far fallen below target. It is unclear whether it will be possible to bring about the target benefits for a further 89 families and 129 young people in the remaining 5 months.</p> <p>TARGET SUBSTANTIALLY MET</p>
<p>Output 1.3: 1,000 families and 800 young people have better access to basic needs and opportunities (e.g. health services, education, no. of meals).</p>	<p>911 families and 671 young people including 177 PWD have better access to basic needs and opportunities.</p> <p>Of the 1,582 with better access to basic needs and opportunities, 1,517 were recorded having better access to health services, 1,540 have better access to education while 1,467 had an average of 2 meals per day.</p>	<p>From the evidence gathered by the evaluation the extent of these gains in access to basic needs and opportunities appear valid and realistic. However once again the scale of beneficiaries was below target at the time of the evaluation. It is again unclear whether it will be possible to bring about the target benefits for a further 89 families and 129 young people in the remaining 5 months.</p> <p>TARGET SUBSTANTIALLY MET</p>

The evaluation found the improvement in livelihood opportunities constitutes the major success of the project. Before the introduction of the project, a big challenge in farming had been the availability of planting materials (seed). As a result of the lack of adequate seed inputs, farm sizes averaged between 1 and 1.5 acres, meaning in turn that the amount of food produced from these small farms was not enough to support families. The seed bank however is increasingly assuring farmers of seed availability and hence increased farm size.

Hungry Period

This is the period between August and September when the food basket is completely depleted. Depression in these months is most intense on children and mothers, as the lack of food for families leads to their exploitation by traders. The advent of the project improved access to livelihood opportunities; farm sizes became bigger to produce food sufficient enough to reduce the hungry period while artisans produced goods and sold services to make more incomes that help minimise the hungry gap.

Creation of Assets

During the project all the CBOs accrued assets (funds and farm seed inputs) that are likely to continue growing. With an agreed lending and repayment cycle managed by enthusiastic and committed executives, the foundation for sustainability is laid. Despite valuing MAPCO's input, beneficiaries were confident they would continue their co-operation together and their loan scheme without MAPCO's help. The CBO members have also established their own savings group as well as the revolving loan with MAPCO.

Support for Children in School

Increased access to livelihood opportunities with their corresponding increase in income for vulnerable people and their families is having a huge success. For many vulnerable families, meeting the child's educational needs such as uniforms, books, food packages for lunch among other things had been very challenging and had often led to cases of dropouts, as Lamin Sheriff narrated. With increased income

“Before the project times were very rough for me and my wife. Of our 5 children we manage to send 2 to school but things became so difficult the eldest (15 years) dropped out because of inability to meet her needs. Fortunately, the project came. My wife took cash and groundnut loan while I enrolled in tailoring scheme. Six months later we made enough resources and today our daughter returned to school. We feel proud and our shame that we could not maintain our children in school died a natural death, thanks MAPCO and APT.”

opportunities though, vulnerable families were able to pull resources together necessary for schooling, enabling many parents to start/re-start sending their children to school.

Increased access to artisans within communities that creates hope for youth

Skills training has brought huge benefits to the involved members and their families, as beneficiary in Levuma, Kando Leppiama chiefdom, described to the evaluation. However having skilled

artisans available within the community also has numerous benefits for villagers. For instance, it reduces costs (lower prices, no need for transport to a nearby town etc.), it makes the procurement

“My boys are lucky to enrol in both carpentry and masonry. A builder needs this combination of skills if one is to realise higher benefit margin, and that is just what they are going to earn. I took a contract to build to completion (raising the superstructures, roofing, plastering and, fixing doors and windows) a four bedroom house. We are at the completion state and I have sent them to hang the doors and windows. Tomorrow we will start with the plastering work. Very soon they will be professionals themselves. Our only constraint in the skills training is the lack of start-up kits. We appeal to the project for such support”.

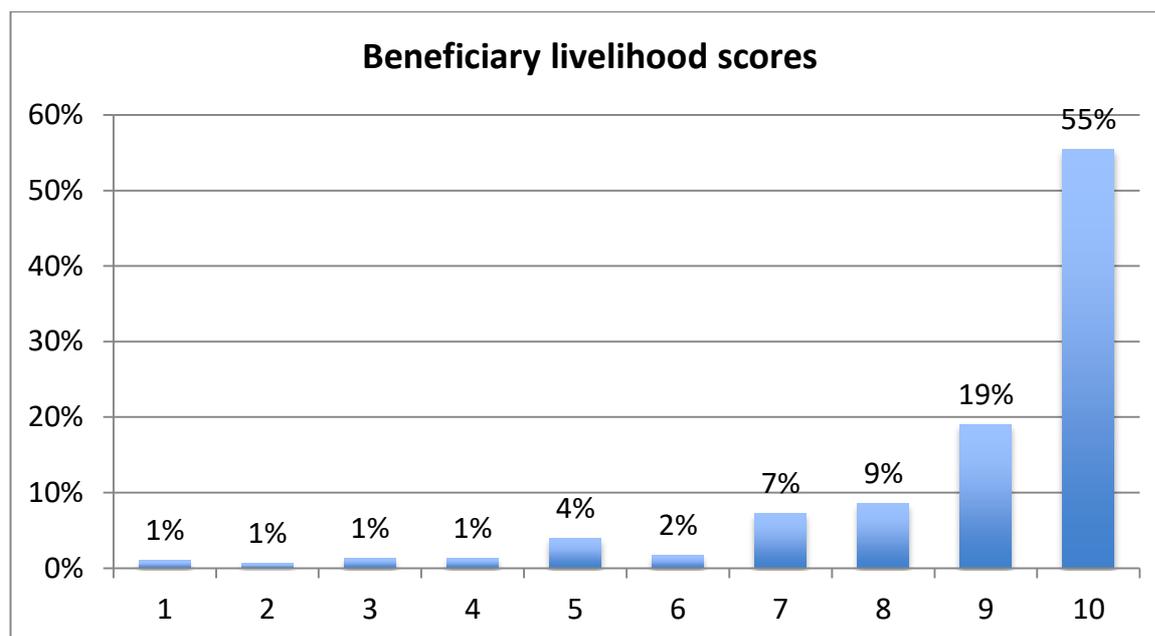
less disruptive or stressful, and it stimulates the local economy. Often school authorities now procure the materials for the uniform and contract the local tailor for sewing rather than go further afield.

Community Pride in project and asset ownership

The fact that the project aimed to empower the most vulnerable in communities created a sense of ownership, as was clear in the composition of beneficiaries in all CBOs. The project was considered as “indeed community empowerment project” due to a number of reasons highlighted. The 10% interest rates charged was very favourable (compared to other schemes that charge 15% or more), a factor contributing to their ability to pay and on time (which they hoped to sustain). For many though the loan maturity period of three months was too short, with a preference instead for four months. Many people commented “this is an opportunity that we should not let go” One town chief commented, “Although I am not benefiting directly, the fact that this project is on my community is of immense benefit to us all. Cash flow has increased and we can (now) easily access skills”.

In summary, beneficiaries - as shown in Fig 1 below - rated the livelihoods component very highly, with over 95% scoring it as good (5) or better and with excellent (10) receiving the majority number of votes.

Fig 1: Beneficiaries' consolidated scores for the livelihoods component



Outcome 2. Improved access to safe water and sanitation in disadvantaged communities with increased knowledge of good hygiene and sanitation practices and sustainable and safe sanitation and safe drinking water facilities; contributing to the reduction of disease - particularly diarrhoea and water-borne diseases

Table 2: Outcome 2 performance data

PLANNED TARGET	EVALUATION COMMENTARY
<p>Outcome 2: Improved access to safe water and sanitation in disadvantaged communities with increased knowledge of good hygiene and sanitation practices and sustainable and safe sanitation and safe drinking water facilities; contributing to the reduction of disease - particularly diarrhoea and water-borne diseases</p>	<p>The evaluation found that overall Outcome 2 had been achieved. The availability and use of clean, safe water has been significantly improved and this, together with other improvements in hygiene practices in the community, has led to a large decrease in the incidence of water-borne diseases such as diarrhoea. This will have led in turn to better educational outcomes for children (fewer school days lost, better concentration) and productivity gains for artisans. The creation of links for CBOs to other NGOs and service providers in this field should help sustainability, which is otherwise at risk due to the pressure of demand on the new or refurbished water points.</p> <p>Two of the three specific outputs were achieved while the third was substantially so (and may be met by the time the project ends).</p>

	PROJECT DATA AS AT NOV 2017	EVALUATION COMMENTARY
<p>Output 2.1: 12 communities with equitable access to safe drinking water and sanitation facilities by the end of the project</p>	<p>26 water points (wells) rehabilitated/constructed in the 12 communities 12 wells provided by the BLF project and 14 by other service providers/agencies through linkages. e.g. Care, Red Cross, HELP/SL and CARITAS 112 latrines constructed under BLF funding with a further 24 provided by other agencies/service providers facilitated by the project Hand washing facilities including soap provided during the Ebola outbreak</p>	<p>The evaluation found the new or rehabilitated WASH facilities to be much appreciated and widely used, while awareness will have been heightened by the Ebola outbreak. This success caused problems in that some facilities broke down due to over- or mis-use, and the project was not able to address this fully.</p> <p>TARGET MET</p>
<p>Output 2.2: 12 Communities where 80% of people (9,600) with increased knowledge of hygiene and sanitation and putting this into practice</p>	<p>12,581 (6,735 females and 5,846 males) people in 12 communities reached with hygiene and sanitation/Ebola key messages, of whom 9,090 people (75.8%) are practicing good hygiene and sanitation.</p>	<p>The evaluation observed widespread adoption of a range of improved hygiene and sanitation practices, and heard from a number of health workers how the incidence of water-borne disease and illness had decreased significantly during the lifetime of the project. Further progress towards this target is possible before the project ends.</p> <p>TARGET SUBSTANTIALLY MET</p>
<p>Output 2.3: 20% annual reduction in occurrence of water borne diseases, diarrhoea and vomiting (in total population of targeted communities)</p>	<p>The increased knowledge coupled with improved access to safe drinking water, improved sanitation and behavioural change among children who are</p>	<p>The evaluation did not examine health centre records, but KIIs with health workers in a number of locations support the data from the Year 3 report that show water-borne</p>

	at high risk of contracting diseases have contributed to the reduction in water borne and related diseases to an average of 35%	diseases to have have decreased by 48% overall as a consequence of improved hygiene and sanitation practices. TARGET MET
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Communities knowledgeable and demonstrating good hygiene practice

From the onset of the Ebola outbreak intensive campaigns on the observance of hygiene practices were conducted. These sessions were reinforced during the project, and communities were found to be knowledgeable in practices such as dish racks, clothes lines and fencing of compost pits. To reinforce these practices, communities established byelaws and some had an enforcement officer who would visit homes weekly and bring to book those who failed to observe such practices.

A reduction in the outbreak of WASH related diseases

Before the project health workers were seeing as many as 20 cases of water-related ailments a month, particularly during the beginning and end of the rainy season, the most vulnerable being children and the elderly. But with the project intervention these numbers have dropped to an average of two per month, confirmed by CHO statistics. This significant change cannot be attributed solely to the project though, as the outbreak of Ebola created a heightened awareness of the importance of hygiene practices now practiced by project as well as neighbouring communities.

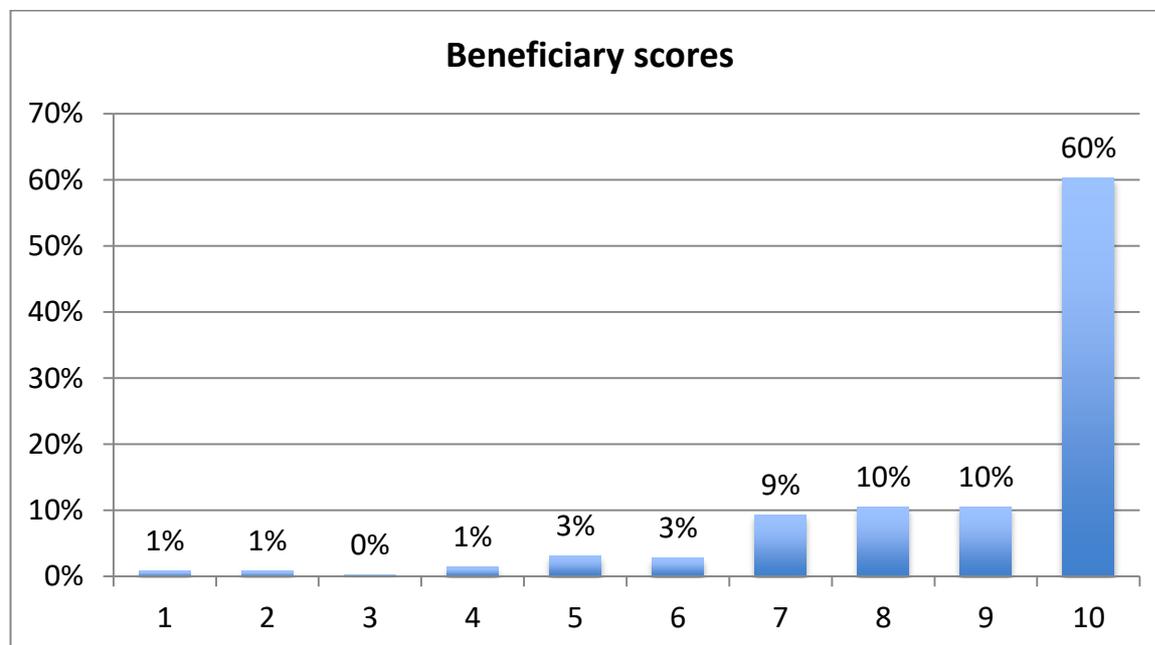
Drinking water and sanitation facilities

Each of the 12 project communities has at least one dug well fitted with a hand pump and the project provided or repaired twelve wells. Other communities have more than one, of which the other is provided by a partner organisations such as CARITAS, Help Sierra Leone, CARE, Red Cross etc. These linkages were facilitated by the project and represent excellent leverage and empowerment while enhancing sustainability (see Section 3 Sustainability, below). For communities with only one hand pump pressure on the pump is high and breakages are not uncommon. In order to minimise this, communities often keep it locked when not in use, keep young children away and levy a minimal fine of between SLL500 and SLL1,000 for offenders. And in some communities each household makes a minimal contribution of SLL1,000 for minor maintenance.

All the project communities have access to latrines, the majority of which were provided by partner organisations already mentioned. MAPCO provided only 56. Each latrine has two drop holes commonly shared between households due to the limited space between houses making a total of 112 latrines across the 12 communities.

In summary (see Fig 2), the WASH element was again rated extremely highly by beneficiaries in the evaluation polling exercise with 97% rating it good or above and 60% rating it as excellent.

Fig 2: Beneficiaries' consolidated scores for the WASH component



Outcome 3: Improved ability of women, youths and disabled people to exercise their human rights, with greater awareness of their rights and entitlements and inclusion in decision-making; leading to reduced discrimination and their improved participation in social and economic activities.

Table 3: Outcome 3 performance data

PLANNED TARGET	EVALUATION COMMENTARY
<p>Outcome 3: Improved ability of women, youths and people with disabilities to exercise their human rights, with greater awareness of their rights and entitlements and inclusion in decision-making; leading to reduced discrimination and their improved participation in social and economic activities.</p>	<p>The evaluation found that overall Outcome 3 had been achieved. The disadvantaged people targeted by the project – women, PWD and youths – report significantly greater inclusion, a much better understanding of their rights and a confidence to see those rights met by the relevant duty bearers. These advances will have fed into gains seen under Outcome 1 and will, in turn, also have benefitted from that element of the project.</p> <p>At the time of the evaluation two outputs had been achieved (one by a significant margin) while the third had been substantially so.</p>

	PROJECT DATA AS AT NOV 2017	EVALUATION COMMENTARY
Output 3.1: 8,000 disadvantaged people (60% youth, 35% women and 5% PWDs) with greater awareness and understanding of rights and entitlements (from total population of communities)	8,310 people - including 485 PWD - reached with key messages regarding rights & entitlements, of whom 7,904 (including 439 PWD) have shown an increase in awareness/understanding of rights and entitlements: 4,884 youth or 62% – target exceeded by 2% 4,917 women or 62% – target exceeded by 75% 439 PWDs or 6% – target exceeded by 1%	Within the parameters of the project, the data shows that all the targets were met while that for reaching women was exceeded by a significant margin, and the evaluation would support these findings. However as discussed elsewhere the targets for the inclusion of PWDs are felt to have been too modest and should have been more stretching. TARGET MET
Output 3.2: 1,200 disadvantaged people (480 women or 40%; 600 youth or 50%; and 120 PWDs or 10%) reporting greater inclusion and/or reduced discrimination in decision-making at household, community and ‘higher’ (ward) levels (from total population of communities)	2,090 disadvantaged people including 165 PWD reported greater inclusion and/or reduced discrimination in decision-making at all 3 levels. 1,764 reported cases of inclusion and or reduced discrimination at household level, 282 at community level and 44 at ward level. Women 1,318 (63%), Youth 1,315 (63%) and PWDs 165 (8%)	The evaluation fully supports the data that show targets have been significantly exceeded. The evaluation also found a synergy with other elements of the project, in that greater social inclusion led to other livelihoods and WASH benefits, and vice versa. TARGET GREATLY EXCEEDED
Output 3.3: 1,500 disadvantaged families and 1,000 young people including 300 PWDs increasing their participation in economic activities by the end of the project	1,480 (98.7%) disadvantaged families (801 females and 679 males) and 1,120 (112%) young people (639 females and 481 males) including 224 (74.7%) PWD (102 females and 122 males) have increased participation in economic activities.	The target has not been fully met numerically in all its aspects, but for those beneficiaries reached the gains have been substantial – and in some cases life-changing. Given the lag time in this area the shortfall in PWD numbers is unlikely to be made up in the remaining 5 months. TARGET SUBSTANTIALLY MET

Increased awareness on children and women's related issues, particularly violence and education

The issue of rights was not new to communities, as other organisations had given training, while the media such as the radio had broadcast such topics. MAPCO beefed up this information though in a way that improved the zeal of communities to demonstrate and adopt improved human rights. For instance, MAPCO in collaboration with human rights organisations such as Centre for Human Rights, conducted a series of workshops on the promotion of rights in communities. Topics included violence against women (including battering, sexual harassment etc.), the rights of children to education, early marriage, inheritance rights for children and child labour. The training also targeted and benefited traditional chiefs who preside over civil laws and execution of rights. In order to validate these trainings the evaluation asked a cross-section of participants to explain what rights are and give examples of rights and abuses, which they were able to do correctly.

The increased level of awareness on abuse of rights and their consequences has greatly reduced the number of incidents and beneficiaries were found to be confident in reporting problems to the committee, which would in turn be taken further to the police as necessary. A number stated that this had personally affected their behaviour and there was a feeling that more justice prevailed regardless of one's economic standing in society.

Inclusion of the most vulnerable in decision-making processes

It was a general conclusion that there had been positive changes and more youth and women are included in decision-making processes in all the communities visited. Some men indicated they now consulted their wives on development plans for instance, a change confirmed by women. As one put it "if my husband failed to consult me in taking decisions he will not get my support and this will affect the entire process".

Women are included in development committees and some have leadership roles as councillors, section chiefs etc. For example, in Motuo, Bontho district, the chairperson of the CBO is a woman. Women also have their own associations or committees to address their needs before being presented in bigger community meetings.

In a similar vein youths also confirmed their being gradually included in decision-making process on matters of community interest such as allocation of land for farming, mining, establishing permanent plantation crops. They are being increasingly realised as future community leaders and at times are represented on the CBO committee. Once they have completed some training, they increasingly take up leadership roles in such as youth organisations. All communities have youth committees formed principally for entertainment but which are also opportunities for consultations among themselves.

All these positive changes and the greater inclusion now enjoyed by marginalised people such as women and youth suggest that the discrimination they previously faced has to some extent reduced. Such attitudinal changes are long-term however, so while progress will be slow it will be helped by the emergence of strong individuals who will in effect act as role models for others in their situation.

Inclusion in economic activities

Engagement in economic activities varies according to interest and capacity. Some enrolled in one component while others in two or more. While more were enrolled in loan schemes, youth were more interested in apprenticeship skills. Asked why, youth explained that skills training is a lifelong endowment and one continues to benefit. Cash loans, on the other hand, carry higher risks such as thieves or a poor market. A clear sense of self-esteem was demonstrated and people felt empowered. Among school dropouts, a hope for future prosperity is rekindled and those who once felt ashamed now raise their heads high.

Joseph Lahai of Levuma narrated how he now feels having enrolled in carpentry “My colleagues looked low upon me and parents feel embarrassed when I dropped out of school, they saw me an idler. But with my new dispensation, I begin to realise a new ray of hope because even as apprentice I have started making from the sale of benches and chairs.”

Some apprentices were found to be realising the benefits of their trade even before graduation, as many quickly won casual contracts. This served as a motivator, indicating that there is hope for prosperity. For bigger tasks, some apprentices would combine forces to accomplish the task faster to make income.

The question of accessing tools upon graduation was a concern for many trainees, but MAPCO clarified that trainees can access loans to buy tools with a longer maturity period and no compound interest.

Improved access to entitlements

Before the project there had been issues over family entitlements, especially for women who suffer from marginalisation by men. Crucial in this is access to family plantations for harvesting, land for mining, farming etc. But with persistence in campaigns, change was observed to be gradually taking place, and women have started to access land and can now harvest family plantations without conflicts.

Improved skills in lobbying with other possible donor organisations

Although not officially trained in lobbying skills, it emerged that CBOs have acquired some skills in networking. A particular achievement the CBOs are proud about is their ability to lobby with other organisations that share their interests or concerns such as CARE or the Red Cross. This has worked well and is considered a high opportunity for the CBOs to beef up sustainability drive after MAPCO pulls out. Such possible organisations include World Vision, ABC and CARITAS, etc.

In summary, Fig 3 below, while the human rights aspects scored the least well of all three components, the scores were nevertheless still very positive, 84% rated it good or above and 51% scored it excellent.

Fig 3: Beneficiaries' consolidated scores for the human rights component



3. TOR 3: Assessment the project’s overall performance in terms of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, economy (including value for money) and sustainability

a) Relevance

The establishment of the project was informed by a needs assessment process in the project communities followed by a baseline survey that identified the status of the people in relation to the project components. MAPCO conducted a series of planning meetings with communities to discuss and agree on implementation strategies. By the mid-term evaluation point, the project had achieved over 80% of its targets while many were fully achieved before the end of the project. While there may be additional factors influencing this situation, the evaluation feels that these outstanding achievements in performance would not have been possible were the project not highly relevant to the beneficiary communities. The relevance of project design is explored further in Section 4 below covering key contributory factors.

b) Effectiveness

For all the project components trainers were identified and funds released on time. The commitment of all stakeholders and group members has been high. MAPCO staff demonstrated vigilance in providing adequate and timely supervision. This, coupled with highly committed CBO executives that provided excellent management, contributed to the effectiveness of achievement of the objectives and hence outcomes.

Within the life of the project all CBOs had created an increase of over 100% in their capital (figure 1 below) and established strong byelaws to guide and strengthen the administration

of the CBO. Additionally and although not directly benefiting from the scheme, local authorities invested strong support so that members feel highly confident that their trust in the administration has the required security.

Although considered highly relevant, many PWD don't feel empowered enough to participate fully and claim their rights. Their conspicuous absence in the evaluation meetings and comments by one PWD beneficiary that "I cannot fight back if someone refuses to repay my loan" clearly portrays a lack of support for them among members of the CBO.

MAPCO collaboration with partner organisations detailed above for a number of the project components has provided a mechanism that propels the effectiveness not only in the implementation process through sharing of useful information and approaches but also a network to support sustainability.

c) Efficiency

The evaluation found that activities had been carried out promptly and without misappropriation, thoroughly managed by executive committees and adequately supervised by MAPCO staff. There was one exception to this of a loan fund that had been deliberately misused. It was not visited by the evaluation but project staff report that steps were taken with the authorities to recover the funds and prevent any recurrence. And although there were a few other cases of loan portfolios at risk, they were managed promptly and as time went by were reduced to less than 1%. With loan repayments very high, members had confidence in their management executives and are determined to move on with the project even when MAPCO pulls out. The evaluation therefore rates efficiency as generally high, with the exception of the way beneficiary communities are widely scattered. With long distances across six districts and a very poorly maintained road network, there is high wear and tear on motorbikes and vehicles, leading to high maintenance costs, high fuel costs to visit and monitor only two communities per district, and inefficient use of staff time.

d) Economy

There is clear evidence that the investment in the project has yielded a very high return, both in tangible terms of the capital now built up by CBOs (i.e. the seed banks and loan funds) and less tangibly in terms of the skills and confidence acquired. There are enough savings made in the inputs (farm inputs and cash loan scheme) to justify economic value, while at the same time trainees in the social services have been adequately prepared and begun realising economic returns of the skills training.

Twelve hand pumps were repaired by MAPCO under this project, with a further 12 through the supplementary BLF funding arising out of the Ebola outbreak. In addition, networking support for the CBOs with other WASH organisations has enabled communities to have sufficient safe water facilities. Investments in health and hygiene campaigns improved adoption rates and this has considerably reduced WASH-related health problems.

And while human rights awareness-raising campaigns were not new, MAPCO intensified the campaigns and this made the component more effective. As a result many dividends are

gradually realised such inclusion of women, youth and the most vulnerable in decision making processes and improvements in access to entitlements.

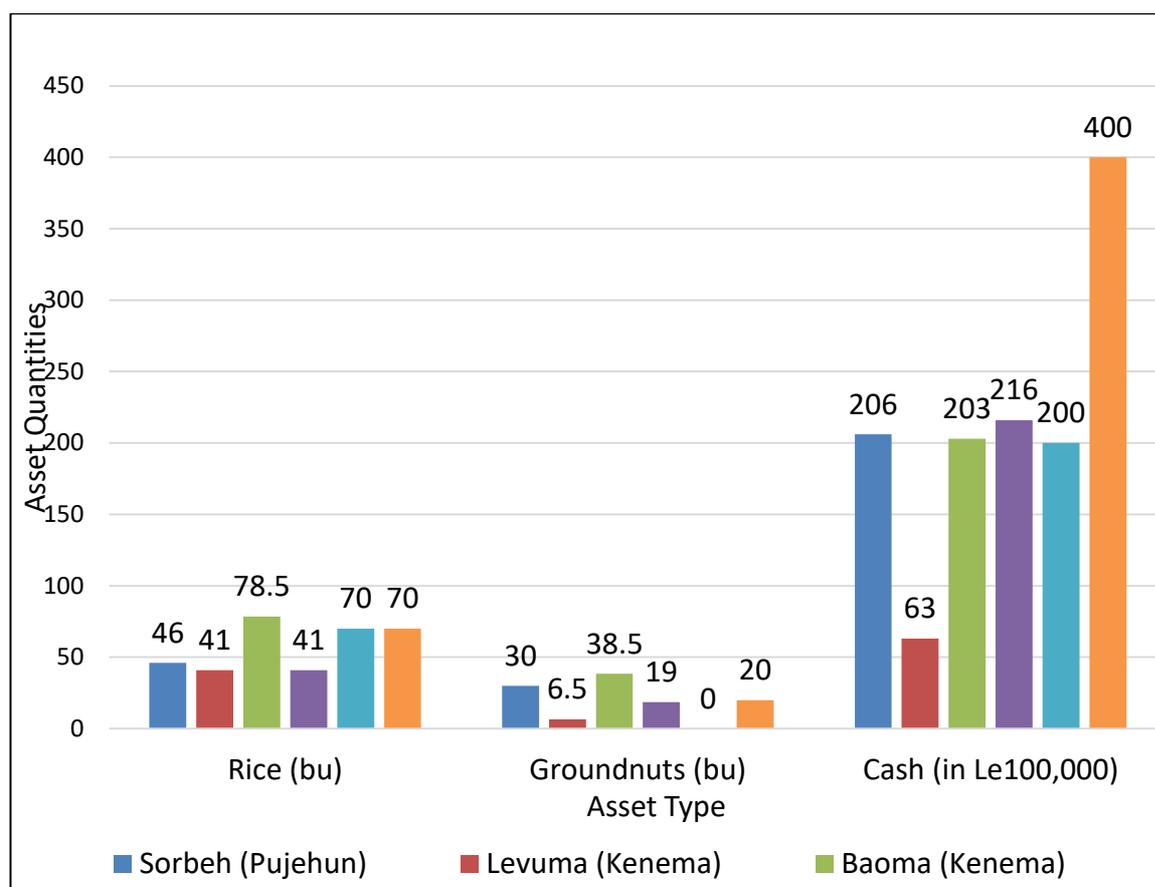
e) Sustainability

In all six of the communities visited by the evaluation (out of twelve in the project), the question of sustainability was greeted with enthusiasm, notwithstanding concerns raised about the mode in which MAPCO would exit. Each CBO proved to have highly committed executives that demonstrated true commitment and competency to the task of managing the enterprise. Each CBO has a very strong constitution to which all members referred, and because of this the rates of portfolios at risk were very low (less than 1%). Details of sustainability plan per component are discussed below.

Savings

Within the life of the project, each community has built up a wealth of savings - made up from the loan scheme and the farm inputs (rice and groundnuts). Loans are recycled as and when received so that at all times they continue to accrue interest. The repayment cycle of cash loan scheme is quarterly at 10% fixed interest rates, while for the farm inputs it is per harvest period. Figure 4 below indicates savings accrued to-date in the three districts (from a possible six covered by the project) visited by the evaluation.

Fig 4. Community assets accrued, by district



The amounts of asset savings per category vary between districts. For the rice, Baoma in Kenema District had the highest savings (78.5 bu) followed by Bongor in Bonthe District and Warema in Tonkolili. Savings in groundnuts was topped by Bongor in Bo District with 38.5 bu followed by Sorbeh Grima in Pujehun. Levuma in Kenema District had the lowest savings for groundnuts. Bongor in Bo District is not a groundnut producing community.

For the physical cash Warema in the Tonkolili has the highest savings (SLL40,000,000 or approx. GBP4,000) followed by Motuo in Bonthe District with SLL21,600,000 (GBP2,200), Sorbeh Grima in Pujehun District with SLL20,600,000 (GBP2,100). Levuma in Kenema District has the lowest savings with SLL6,300,000 (GBP650).

With these assets and the assured availability of trainers in the community, the evaluation found a high determination to continue the scheme, bolstered by increasing the vigilance in enforcing the constitutions. To make this more effective, it is suggested that:

- Regular (possibly quarterly) accountability by the CBO committee of all project assets to members, so as to reinforce confidence and assure members of the need for honest repayment of loans for continuity.
- Continued CBO monitoring visits by MAPCO even when phased out to underpin the need for continuity.

- Appointment by MAPCO and the CBOs of someone external to the CBO with an audit function to oversee the smooth running of the schemes (monitoring the committees)
- Construction of group farms to increase seed bank reserves
- Identification by MAPCO of alternative donors that could continue activities with the CBOs.
- Improvement in loan application plans so as to ensure prompt and accurate repayments
- Reinforcement of CBO constitutions including repayment criteria and date
- Amendment where necessary in constitutions to stipulate that loans are only disbursed with a guarantor, such that in the event that a member fails to repay the guarantor would be held responsible for repayment
- Referral to chiefs and police as a last resort.

Other Social Services

Availability of instructors in communities to assure sustained provision of apprenticeship skills in carpentry, soap making, weaving, tailoring etc. was strongly evident. However, these opportunities will be constrained by the inadequate availability of tools and equipment.

WASH Facilities

Year-round availability of safe water supply is a grave concern in all the communities. While there were concerns over technical know-how for maintenance of facilities, mechanisms are in place for minor maintenance that ensures lasting water availability. These include:

- Monthly household contribution of SLL1,000 for repair costs of damaged wells
- If cost required for maintenance exceeds SLL500,000, the community will solicit external support from organisations such as Water Aid, UNICEF etc.
- Institution of byelaws on use of water facility and levy of fine of SLL500 on offenders for misuse of facility. Monies collected are controlled by a committee member of the water facility
- Institution of byelaws with weekly inspection of household surroundings to ascertain continuity in the observance of hygiene practices.

Project Design

Since 1999, MAPCO in partnership with APT has implemented five projects with essentially the same components: group formation and capacity building; livelihoods and social support services through skills training, functional adult literacy training and CBO loan funds; and human rights awareness and activities, with emphasis on women and child rights and engagement with family and community decision-making that has improved its dexterity in empowering community based organisations.

Outstanding in their management of the work were two key elements. First, the establishment of strong and effective executive committees with clearly defined roles and

responsibilities, trained by MAPCO on the management of the scheme. And second, the formation of very robust constitutions subscribed to by all members, ensuring that access to a loan is in strict compliance with the policy stipulation, including the need for a guarantor who would be held accountable should a defaulting client abscond. A three-month loan maturity cycle with an interest rate of 10% was adopted and endorsed. All loans retrieved were continually revolved. Mechanisms to address cases of default that include interventions by community elders seeking police intervention as last resort constitute strong pillars of the constitution. Default cases were very low and account for less than 1% of loans - and in some CBOs zero.

During the inception meeting of the evaluation with the project staff the CEO reiterated MAPCO's intention, as has been their custom in previous projects, to handover all the assets raised by each CBO. This plan had been affirmed to all CBOs and has motivated their hard work with honesty.

The level of diligence and hard work devoted by the CBO executives (conducting meetings, monitoring activities of each member, assiduousness in retrieving the loan) has to a great extent contributed to the success of the scheme. As a result members have developed strong confidence in them and leaders executed their functions with respect for all that promoted peaceful coexistence. Community authorities were supportive of their CBO and, though they do not benefit directly, are always eager to attend their meetings and give the required support.

Finally, linkages have been established with other partner organisations such as Agricultural Business Centres (ABC), CARE, Help Sierra Leone, the Red Cross and CARITAS for direct project activities. The ABC is a government innovation specifically meant to support and grow small-scale farmers to maximize profit, and hence farm productivity. Crucially while these links have been made by MAPCO they have involved CBOs, so that in future CBOs can build their own, separate relationships and not be dependent on MAPCO. Other partners not directly project related including Bo District Council, the Human Empowerment and Development Foundation (HEMDEF), Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs (MSWGCA) have also contributed to the success of the project. Besides providing technical advice in areas such as health, crop production and human rights, these links encourage the CBO leadership to be confident in their tasks. The evaluation also found that CBO members and leadership were well aware of the exit strategy and that sustainability is embedded in the approach as indicated below.

4. TOR 4: Identify key contributing factors which have enhanced and/or hindered these prospects

As ever with success, there is no one reason or factor behind the outcome, but instead a range of overlapping and, in some cases mutually reinforcing, causes. These include:

- **Motivated, committed staff.** Being focussed on 12 rural communities the programme required staff to be mobile, to be willing and able to endure often bad, tiring roads and to stay overnight in the villages. From the evidence of the evaluation they were not

only prepared to take this but also appeared to have developed warm, appreciative relationships with the CBO members and other local stakeholders. It was clear that many CBOs will be very sorry to lose their regular contact with MAPCO staff, such is the warmth of their relationships, and this will have contributed to success.

- **Building linkages.** The project has successfully created and nurtured a range of links with other NGOs, government departments and agencies. This has brought about a number of benefits that contributed to success. First, it has leveraged additional support for the target communities so that the total 'good' to them consists of more than that delivered directly by MAPCO and the project, and across a wider range than MAPCO could have managed on its own. Second, this introduction of other actors has reduced any possible dependency on MAPCO, a key factor given that for some communities they had previously had little external support (or at least support that delivered on its promises). And third, crucially, the project has done this in a way that is empowering for the CBOs, giving them the links and connections so that in future they can continue to contact and draw support from these networks.
- **Multi-faceted project design.** It was noticeable that the project components, while ostensibly separate, in fact reinforced and supported each other in a way that brought about synergies and additional benefits. Reduced diarrhoeal disease, for instance, means people can work harder and more productively on their farms or at their trades, while less poverty in the home reduces stress and conflict - and in turn can lead to an improvement in participation in decision-making and enjoyment of rights. This bringing together of disparate elements is the result of reflection and learning by the MAPCO and APT teams on prior projects, for which both must be commended.
- **Ebola.** While nobody wished for the Ebola epidemic and certainly it was unplanned, it did have one positive aspect. Disease control was spearheaded by a huge nation-wide drive to improve and enhance hygiene and especially hand-washing. As this was already an element of the project its prominence during the Ebola eradication campaign only helped to strengthen project efforts. On the other hand, this Ebola-related push for hygiene and cleanliness put additional stress on the waterpoints in communities and was a contributory factor behind such a high percentage of those breaking down.
- **Relevance of project design.** The focus on skills development in the community rather than remotely meant that aside from the lower cost and practical benefits for the trainees, apprentices were being trained in trades that were tried, tested and appropriate for their context while meeting real need in their own community. This led to a much-appreciated increase in the availability of these skills and services at village level (replacing the need for expensive and time-consuming travel to markets elsewhere) while decreasing urban drift especially among young people. In addition the crops chosen (rice and ground-nuts) to be available through the seed loans met local need and prioritisation, adding to the success of the loan scheme.

Against these positive contributory factors, the wide geographical reach of the project may have militated against success by requiring significant expenditure of time and fuel – and hence the recommendation (below) that future programming be more tightly focussed.

5. TOR 5: Identify key learning points and make recommendations for future operations of this and similar projects

The evaluation found much to commend but there are also always learning points to capture for future programming. These are set out below in the recommendations to which they relate.

Recommendation 1: Establish processes for loan oversight

The evaluation heard repeated concerns from CBOs about management of their loan schemes once MAPCO stopped visiting. Although the loan schemes have been well set up and have, in the main, successfully built up considerable balances there was a concern that once the discipline of external monitoring stopped these gains might be at risk. Indeed, loan committees might find an external 'auditor' useful when they are under pressure - which they might otherwise find hard to resist - to bend the rules. The evaluation therefore supports the idea from CBOs and recommends that MAPCO explore with the CBOs setting up some form of continuing external oversight of the loan schemes. This function would need some small level of funding to cover transport costs and a small honorarium, which could be covered from CBOs' loan fund surplus as a necessary expense of running the scheme – similar to the way an audit function is accepted as a cost of doing business. And while its fell outside of the remit of the evaluation, there may also be learning regarding post-project loan fund management to be gleaned from earlier MAPCO/APT projects, given this has been their practice for some time.

Recommendation 2: Develop multiplier plans

As has been described above, the project was successful in bringing about very positive change to the lives of targeted poor and vulnerable people. The evaluation found little evidence however of these benefits being disseminated more widely to neighbouring communities, and while this was not something the project sought to do (hence this is not a criticism) there is scope in future programming for this to be addressed. By being more deliberate and intentional it would be possible to disseminate or multiply the benefits to a much wider circle, albeit not benefits on the same scale or range as enjoyed by direct beneficiaries. And efforts to increase the number of indirect beneficiaries need not be extensive or expensive, as relatively minor interventions could reap significant harvests – especially if future work has a tighter geographical focus (see Recommendation 5 below).

For instance, it would cost little to organise exposure visits or exchanges between adjoining beneficiary and non-beneficiary communities to enable one to learn from the other: people learn best from their peers; the conditions of both are likely to be very similar, meaning what works for one is likely also to work for the other; and people tend to enjoy sharing their success stories. By facilitating such activity the numbers reached would increase significantly (it would be important for the project to track the numbers involved and to do some sampling to gauge the extent of change among the indirect beneficiaries) greatly enhancing project cost-effectiveness and attractiveness to donors. It would also boost the self-esteem and self-confidence of the direct beneficiaries doing the sharing, with probable benefits also

for group cohesion and strength, though it would be important to be clear that these multiplier efforts would not dilute or reduce the inputs going to the original communities. Indirect beneficiary communities would not receive grants to set up loan schemes, for instance, but it would be possible instead to encourage table-banking or merry-go-round schemes to get the new groups up and running.

Recommendation 3: Increase focus on PWDs

PWDs were a specific beneficiary target for the project under Outcome 3 and an implied target within the other two, and there is no doubt that some progress has been made. However the evaluation believes that future project design could be amended and expanded to ensure greater PWD inclusion and empowerment. It is important to stress though that this should not be seen as an alternative to including PWD in CBO membership and activities, but rather as an additional activity to help overcome deep-seated stigma and marginalisation.

According to project data, PWD number 264 out of a total population of 17,123 in the target communities. Given that the WHO estimates PWD typically make up 15% of any population, i.e. approximately 2,568, this 264 is such an extremely low figure that it has to be called into question. And this is before the probable increase in PWD numbers arising from the civil war is factored in. What's more, international research has shown that PWD are disproportionately among the poorest, so if anything one would expect to see PWD participation above the 15% average if vulnerability targeting by the project was working properly. Yet of the 6 CBOs visited during the evaluation the average PWD membership was 5.2%, dropping in two cases to 2.4%. It is quite possible that actual total numbers are indeed down on 15% in the rural areas if PWD have migrated to larger urban centres where their prospects (even if only from begging) are better than currently in the village, but this cannot account for such a large short-fall. This all suggests much more needs to be done in future.

The evaluation was not charged with designing PWD programming so did not have the opportunity to sit with PWD to seek their views and ideas – which would need to be the first step in any such project development work. However possible options that could be considered include:

- Establishing closer, mutually beneficial links with existing DPOs so that PWD can connect with a wider circle of their peers while DPOs expand their membership. DPOs could then keep new members informed of wider developments, such as the recent announcement by the Ministry of Health that all PWD are entitled to free health care.
- Supporting the establishment of village-based SHGs of PWD alongside CBOs (i.e. enabling PWD to be members of both) so that within the SHG PWD can provide mutual support, build self-confidence and establish their right 'to be' in the community
- Set up small table banking or merry-go-round schemes within the SHG so that PWD can access small-scale loans/grants for day-to-day expenditure and/or setting up micro-enterprises.
- Facilitate linkages with disability service providers for SHG members, similar to the way the current project has done for instance for CBOs with water supply NGOs.

Recommendation 4: Improve water point maintenance and create spare-part centres

The evaluation recognised the various efforts and ideas MAPCO have made and had towards improving practice in this difficult area. However despite their best efforts – in fact in some cases because of their success (i.e. people’s greater awareness of the need for hygiene has put such additional pressure on the water points it’s caused breakdowns) the rate of failure or breakage is still too high. To supplement current efforts therefore, such as providing someone in each community with training and tools for local repairs, the evaluation recommends future programming include the establishment of spare-part centres. Each would stock parts for the water-points in the surrounding villages, overcoming the need for expensive and time-consuming travel to buy parts in towns and cities further away such as Bo. And they could be run on a cost-recovery basis so that stocks could be replenished at periodic intervals through bulk purchase and delivery.

Recommendation 5: Develop a greater geographical focus

The evaluation noted that the current project design is more closely targeted than MAPCO’s previous projects, reflecting learning and adaptation. However it recommends that this trend be extended still further. The current design, while successfully targeting vulnerable people, has a number of drawbacks. First, being spread across 12 communities in all directions from MAPCO’s base in Bo, it requires time-consuming and costly travel that takes its toll on both staff and vehicles so is not an efficient distribution of target communities. Second, when CBOs are so far apart it makes facilitating exchanges, exposure visits, joint meetings or training all far more difficult and expensive to arrange. Third, by spreading so thin any chance of creating a critical mass of positive change becomes impossible. It is therefore recommended that future programming should have a much tighter geographical focus. This need not – and must not – compromise targeting the poorest and most vulnerable though, as such is the distribution of poverty in Sierra Leone that such targets are to be found virtually everywhere.

Recommendation 6: Talk about numbers of *people*, not families

Much of the project documentation refers to the numbers of families the project seeks to reach rather than the total number of beneficiaries. In a context where average family at 7 is very high, this inadvertently under-plays the project’s reach and impact – especially with foreign donors who will not know (and certainly won’t research) the reality of family size. 1,000 families is the same as 7,000 beneficiaries, but the latter has far greater psychological impact, so the evaluation recommends that the individual rather than the family be used as the unit for describing the work. This would not affect actual project practice, which would remain unchanged, but simply changes the terms used to describe the work so as to make a more compelling fundraising proposition.

Recommendation 7: Move away from one size fits all – bottom-up rather than top-down

The evaluation heard very similar feedback from all the CBOs and their members on a range of specific project features such as group size, loan period, length of training apprenticeship and interest rate. This suggests that a standardised, somewhat top-down approach is being used. This may not be the intention, as from the MAPCO perspective they may only be making suggestions, but the effect on the ground has been to create very similar CBO structures, byelaws and activities. This risks overlooking local factors that might warrant a different approach, and it would be surprising if there were not local factors that called for divergence. Group size in particular would be expected to vary considerably if left to local factors: need and levels of vulnerability will vary and hence so too should programming and specifically group size. In reality however it would seem group size was driven more by the numbers in the project design and the rather crude dividing of the beneficiary total by the number of communities. But more importantly this approach also risks disempowering CBOs. Guidance as to what might be an effective group size and the advantages and disadvantages of larger or smaller groups is certainly appropriate, but this is very different from setting a number from outside; agreeing membership numbers is a critical element of real ownership and control, which is in turn essential for sustainability.

P187 MAPCO: EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES IN SIERRA LEONE
FINAL EVALUATION: 22ND-29TH NOVEMBER 2017
TERMS OF REFERENCE

BACKGROUND TO PROJECT

Started in September 2014, this 44 month project scheduled for completion in April 2018 and funded by Big Lottery Fund (BLF) with a total grant of GBP499,940 works with vulnerable families - particularly women, young people and disabled people - in 12 communities with a combined population of 17,232 in nine chiefdoms of six districts across all three provinces.

The main purpose of the “Empowering Communities In Sierra Leone” project is to enable vulnerable people to tackle poverty, disease and inequality by improving access to sustainable livelihoods, water and sanitation and human rights. The three outcomes are improved livelihoods through 12 CBOs delivering sustainable social and livelihood support services to 1,500 vulnerable families and 1,000 young people, resulting in an increase of at least 70% in incomes of 1,000 families and 800 young people; improved access to safe water and sanitation through increased knowledge of good hygiene and sanitation practices, improved access to sanitation and safe drinking water facilities benefiting approximately 12,000 people and contributing to the reduction of particularly diarrhoea and water-borne diseases; and improved ability of women, youth and disabled people to exercise their human rights through increased awareness of their rights and entitlements, leading to more effective inclusion in decision-making, improved participation in socio-economic activities and non-discrimination.

The current project is based upon the experiences and successes of five previous MAPCO projects implemented in partnership with APT dating back to 1999. Each projects represents successive improvements and additions to MAPCO’s tried and tested CBO support model comprising three components: group formation and capacity building; livelihoods and social support services through skills training, functional adult literacy training and CBO loan funds; and human rights awareness and activities, with a particular emphasis on women and child rights and engagement with family and community decision making.

While the previous project adapted the model to makes it more inclusive of the most vulnerable - young people, families of children and disabled people, the current “Empowering Communities” project added a new component of health and hygiene through water and sanitation as a result of feedback from the previous project evaluation as well as being a BLF priority.

As such, the current project has four components: CBO formation and capacity building; livelihoods and social support services through skills training (including adult literacy) and CBO loan funds; access to safe water and sanitation with increased knowledge of hygiene and sanitation; and greater awareness of rights and entitlements and inclusion in decision-making among women, youth and disabled people.

The project was approved in July 2014 at the height of the Ebola outbreak that peaked between May 2014 and May 2015 and despite the crisis - indeed, because of it - MAPCO decided to start by September 2014 as the project's health and hygiene component acquired a far greater urgency than originally anticipated. When the project started, a supplementary grant of GBP49K was also awarded by BLF for Ebola prevention and information work that ran for six months in the same communities, giving a huge boost to the project's health and hygiene activities. This was also very successful as no cases of Ebola nor deaths were reported in any of the 12 project villages. As the crisis reduced, neither MAPCO nor APT felt it had affected the project's plans or relevance and as such, no changes to the design or outcomes were made.

Much of the project support in terms of livelihoods relates to agriculture and includes the provision of seeds, tools and training in horticulture techniques to improve productivity and reduce water usage with the support of Government Agricultural Extension Officers. This enables people to grow and/or diversify into improved varieties of groundnuts, rice and a range of different vegetables aimed at improving food security and being able to sell surplus produce. Members are also encouraged to bulk their produce for greater leverage as well as exchanging seeds with others. Although seeds are provided by the project, they are treated as loans with repayments to be made to the CBO loan fund. Other livelihoods support includes providing training in business planning and management to traders who are then encouraged to start, expand and/or diversify enterprises through the CBO loan fund.

Another element of the livelihoods strategy is skills training for young people through informal apprenticeships with local businesses (artisans) for a period of 18 months. Skills include soap making, weaving, tailoring, masonry, blacksmithing and motorbike repairs and most courses have now concluded. A total of 240 young people - 20 per community and 60% female - are involved, which also includes training in business planning, development and marketing provided by the project. Once completed, trainees are eligible for loans from their CBO to start their own businesses or buy tools in order to continue working with their trainer. A supplementary two year grant of EUR90,000 from the Turing Foundation in November 2016 has enabled a further 240 youth from the same 12 communities to benefit from skills training and adult literacy and this is ongoing, with training due to finish between July and October 2018.

Functional adult literacy training is seen as an integral part of the livelihoods strategy as it enables trainees to record and monitor income, expenditure and profit, as well as make calculations and follow instructions. Literacy training is open to all CBO members and there are 12 literacy circles (one per CBO) each holding 2-3 sessions per week depending on the season and continuing throughout the duration of the project. Two literacy trainers (usually CBO members themselves) are attached to each circle and are paid a stipend by the project.

The project also has a revolving loan fund of GBP23,988 with three annual instalments to provide support for enterprise creation. Each of the 12 CBOs received annual payments of SLL6 million in Years 1 and 2 and a third and final instalment of SLL1.8 million in Year 3. Although CBO loan funds are primarily for business purposes, some CBOs make a proportion of this available as a social fund (loan) to cover family emergencies and events. While

repayment rates have generally been successful, four CBOs experienced problems of defaulting although this has now been resolved at three of these with average repayment rates across 11 CBOs currently over 90%. However, the issue at one CBO - Yambama - is still ongoing, forcing the project to seek local government intervention that may ultimately lead to civil proceedings if necessary.

The hygiene and sanitation component acquired much greater significance, attention and support in the wake of the Ebola outbreak as all 12 villages (and indeed much of Sierra Leone) introduced byelaws requiring households to keep their compounds and public utilities clean and dispose of waste responsibly, and this continues to be practiced and enforced. The project works with the CBOs' hygiene and sanitation sub-committees and trains members to go house to house, advising and supporting families to adopt practices that reduce water-borne diseases such as frequent hand washing, wearing footwear in toilets, keeping toilets clean, avoiding open defecation, disposing of waste properly and using equipment such as plate racks to keep cutlery and crockery off the ground, washing lines to keep clothes off the ground and use of foot-operated *tippy taps* for improved handwashing. The health and hygiene component also covers sexual and reproductive health rights where preventative actions are addressed within the functional adult literacy training.

Another element the construction of latrines and repair of one non-functioning borewell in each community and 105 toilets (out of a planned 120) have so far been constructed across all 12 communities. Each community decides on the most appropriate location and latrines aim to serve up to 20 nearby households. Toilets are constructed on a cost-sharing basis with the project providing imported materials such as ceramic toilets and cement while the local community provides wood, bricks, stone and sand as well as labour. 12 inactive wells have also been rehabilitated, in most cases by organising the repair or replacement of the pump mechanism. However, with only 4-5 wells in each village and heavy usage, most of these have again fallen into disrepair and there are no further project funds to carry out repairs. The project has established links with external providers to get facilities restored or new water points installed while two communities have started to levy a monthly service charge on users to build up a repair and maintenance fund. Community responsibility for water sources and capacity to fund repairs are a problem across Sierra Leone and by no means confined to this project. Nevertheless, the project is seeking innovative solutions to this perennial problem.

The third project component is greater awareness of rights and entitlements among women, youth and disabled people and with that, improved ability to exercise those rights such as inclusion in decision-making and participation in social and economic activities, leading to reduced discrimination. One key area is rights and responsibilities of and for women and children, including gender-based violence, property ownership, succession and maintenance support as well as the right of women to work and children to education. Inputs aim to challenge traditional attitudes and practices include gender equality, teenage pregnancy, early marriage and gender-based violence. To create awareness of the primacy of statutory law over local customs and the obligations of community leaders to uphold this, the project brings representatives from different government departments to inform communities of their rights, criteria for eligibility and how to access these as well as working with duty

bearers such as chiefs and police. Each CBO has a human rights sub-committee that provides information and support as well as looking out for violations and potential violations.

At the end of Year 3 in August 2017, the project was on target with five of the project's nine indicators across three outcomes having already achieved/exceeded their end of project targets, a further three had exceeded their Year 3 targets and were on track to deliver their end of project targets and one was on track. Being ahead of target at this stage was a deliberate strategy given the need to scale down large scale community activities in the run up to the March 7th elections.

As of August 2017, 1,489 families and 1,069 young people had received social and livelihood support services from all 12 CBOs and experienced an average 66% increase in annual household income. All 12 communities had access to safe drinking water and hygienic sanitation facilities through 21 rehabilitated wells and 105 latrines. All 12 villages were also practising good hygiene and sanitation and as a result, a 35% year on year reduction in the incidence of water-borne diseases (and 48% reduction on the baseline) had been recorded by local health centres. 7,431 people had demonstrated greater awareness and understanding of rights and entitlements, with 1,985 reporting greater inclusion and/or reduced discrimination in decision-making at household, community and ward levels, and 2,410 families and young people reporting increased participation in economic activities.

The three project outcomes, together with respective indicators and end of project targets are as follows:

1. Improved access to livelihoods for vulnerable families and young people through sustainable community organisations delivering social and livelihood services; leading to increased incomes and improved access to basic needs and opportunities
 - 1.1 1,500 vulnerable families and 1,000 young people receiving social and livelihood services
 - 1.2 70% increase on annual incomes of 1,000 families and 800 young people from the time they first accessed the project
 - 1.3 1,000 families and 800 young people with access to basic needs and opportunities (e.g. health services, education, no. of meals, etc.)
2. Improved access to safe water and sanitation in disadvantaged communities with increased knowledge of good hygiene and sanitation practices and sustainable and safe sanitation and safe drinking water facilities; contributing to the reduction of disease - particularly diarrhoea and water-borne diseases
 - 2.1 12 communities with equitable access to safe drinking water and sanitation facilities
 - 2.2 12 communities where 80% of people (9,600) with increased knowledge of good hygiene and sanitation and putting this into practice
 - 2.3 20% annual reduction in occurrence of water-borne diseases, diarrhoea and vomiting (in total population of targeted communities)
3. Improved ability of women, youths and people with disabilities to exercise their human rights, with greater awareness of their rights and entitlements and inclusion in

- decision-making; leading to reduced discrimination and their improved participation in social and economic activities
- 3.1 8,000 disadvantaged people (60% youth, 35% women & 5% PWD) with greater awareness and understanding of rights and entitlements (from total population of communities)
 - 3.2 1,200 disadvantaged people (480 women, 600 youth & 120 PWD) reporting greater inclusion (&/or reduced discrimination) in decision-making at household, community and 'higher' (ward) levels (from total population of communities)
 - 3.3 1,500 disadvantaged families and 1,000 young people including 300 PWDs increasing their participation in economic activities

BACKGROUND TO FINAL EVALUATION

A final evaluation, to be participatory and inclusive of all stakeholders was incorporated into the original proposal and scheduled for the final stages of the project. Scheduled for 22nd to 29th November 2017, the final evaluation provides an opportunity to assess how well the project has met its outcomes, indicators and targets; to identify key factors that have enhanced and/or inhibited this and whether and how the project adapted to this; assess overall performance in terms of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability; and to identify key learning and recommendations for both MAPCO and APT that may have a wider application in other projects.

The overall objectives of this final evaluation are to:

- Evaluate the impact of the project to date on individual beneficiaries, their households and communities
- Assess the success of the project in meeting its outcomes, expected results and indicators (including any unintended outcomes - positive or negative)
- Identify key contributing factors which have enhanced and/or hindered these prospects
- Assess the project's overall performance in terms of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, economy (including value for money) and sustainability
- Identify key learning points and make recommendations for future operations of this and similar projects

The following activities are expected to be undertaken by the final evaluation team:

- Review of relevant project documentation, including the project proposal, baseline survey, annual and quarterly reports, mid-term review and APT staff tour reports
- Oversee the design of a survey instrument and collection of an appropriate and adequate sample of data
- Identify and interview a range of individual project beneficiaries, CBOs, project staff and other relevant stakeholders such as local government and NGOs with whom the project is engaging to discuss the project operation and outcomes to date
- Draft an outline report with initial findings, and present to MAPCO and APT for discussion and feedback
- Produce a final report in the light of feedback received

OUTPUTS

- A report of approximately 25 pages, including an executive summary, assessing the overall impact of the project to date, including:
 - an analysis of the project achievements, quantitatively and qualitatively
 - an analysis of the project design (in terms of its ability to meet the project objectives within the overall socio-economic operating environment)
 - an analysis of project performance in terms of OECD DAC criteria
 - lessons learned and recommendations for future similar remaining projects
 - annexes as appropriate

EVALUATION TEAM COMPOSITION AND TIMING

The final evaluation team will consist of Martin Long, independent development consultant, who will have overall responsibility for writing the report. He will be assisted by John Sankoh, independent development consultant. The evaluation will take place from Wednesday 22nd to Tuesday 28th November 2017, to be followed by a presentation of initial findings and recommendations by the evaluation team to MAPCO's project team and interested stakeholders on Wednesday 29th November 2017.

A draft report covering all activities, findings and detailed recommendations will be submitted in electronic form for feedback to MAPCO and APT no later than 14th December 2017 who will in turn provide all feedback, comments and suggestions no later than 21st December 2017. A final report, complete with all annexes will be submitted to MAPCO and APT by soft copy no later than 5th January 2018.

APPENDIX 2: Evaluation tools

a) Key Informant Interview guide

In line with the terms of reference, the key informant interviews will look at the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, economy (including value for money) and sustainability of the project as well as the nine specific outcome areas. It will also seek to explore key learning points and make recommendations for future operations of this and similar projects. The questions to, and discussions with, individual informants will be tailored to suit their relationship with the project and will match their particular area of expertise. Most KIIs will therefore be focussed on one of two areas and hence will have specific follow-up questions relevant to that issue, namely either access to safe water and sanitation; or reduced discrimination and improved participation in social and economic activities by women, youths and people with disabilities. A small number of KIIs will focus on increased incomes and improved access to basic needs and opportunities for vulnerable families and young people so again will have specific follow-up questions in that field. This is a broad guide therefore rather than a fixed template.

Basic data to be captured for all KIIs:

- Date of interview
- Name of interviewee
- Job title and details of their involvement in programme
- Gender
- Location of interview
- Any notes on interview context
- Length of interview (start/end time)

Greetings and informal conversation

Can you please tell me about your role in the MAPCO Empowering Communities Programme.

Effectiveness - the extent to which the objectives have been achieved and the anticipated results have been realised.

- Overall, do you think the project has been effective? Why/ why not?
- What do you see as the overall strengths of the programme? What key factors have led to any programme successes or achievements? What could have been done to improve the effectiveness of the project?
- In your opinion, what were the least effective aspects and why? What factors contributed to these? How could the weak areas you have identified have been improved or avoided?
- To what extent have the planned outputs been delivered, and the project objectives been met?

- What can you say about the overall impact of the programme? What have been some of the key positive impacts? Were there any unexpected or unintended impacts? Or any negative impacts?

Relevance - *the extent to which the project or programme is suited to the needs of the target beneficiaries or the policies of local/national government, where applicable.*

- Can you comment on the overall scope of the programme and work undertaken. How relevant if at all would you say it has been to addressing vulnerable people's needs in Sierra Leone? Was the design appropriate? Did it address key gaps? How could it have been designed differently?
- Were there any changes or strategies made to the programme as a result of the EVD outbreak? Were they appropriate?

Efficiency/economy – *the extent to which results have been delivered with the least costly resources possible, and the manner in which resources have been efficiently managed and governed in order to produce results.*

- Would you say that the programme has been implemented in a timely and efficient manner (according to plans and budget objectives?) Why/why not? What factors have hindered or supported this?
- Was data broken down by gender? And did the data also note the numbers and gender of children, people with disabilities and elderly people separately?

Sustainability – *whether benefits of the project or programme are likely to continue after donor funding has ceased.*

- At this stage of project completion, what do you think is the likelihood of any programme benefits continuing for a sustained period? What outcomes or benefits are most/least likely to be sustained? Why? What factors have contributed to this (achievement or non-achievement of sustainability)?
- What could be done to improve sustainability of project achievements?

Learning Points and Recommendations

- Are there any learning points not already discussed you would draw from the project?
- Do you have any recommendations for future work similar to this project?

Round-up

- Is there anything else you'd like to say about the project that we haven't discussed?

Thank you!

KII supplementary questions re Outcome 1

Outcome 1: Improved access to livelihoods for vulnerable families and young people through sustainable community organisations delivering social and livelihood services; leading to increased incomes and improved access to basic needs and opportunities

Indicator 1: 1,500 vulnerable families and 1,000 young people receiving social and livelihood services

Questions/issues to explore:

- What social and livelihood services, if any, are you aware of for vulnerable families or young people?
- What difference, if any, do you think these services have made? Please give examples.

Indicator 2: 70% increase on annual incomes of 1,000 families and 800 young people from the time they first accessed the project

Questions/issues to explore:

- What difference, if any, are you aware of in the income of vulnerable families or young people as a result of the project? Do you have any data on this?

Indicator 3: 1,000 families and 800 young people with access to basic needs and opportunities (e.g. health services, education, no. of meals, etc.)

Questions/issues to explore:

- What difference, if any, are you aware of in vulnerable families' or young people's access to basic needs such as health services, education etc as a result of the project? Do you have any data on this?
- What difference, if any, are you aware of in vulnerable families' or young people's living conditions, such as number of meals, etc as a result of the project? Do you have any data on this?

KII supplementary questions re Outcome 2

Outcome: Improved access to safe water and sanitation in disadvantaged communities with increased knowledge of good hygiene and sanitation practices and sustainable and safe sanitation and safe drinking water facilities; contributing to the reduction of disease - particularly diarrhoea and water-borne diseases

Indicator 1: **12 communities with equitable access to safe drinking water and sanitation facilities**

Questions/issues to explore:

- What difference, if any, have you observed in access to safe drinking water and sanitation facilities for disadvantaged communities? Can you give examples please?
- Would you say this access is open and available to all? How is access, for instance, for older people or people with disabilities?
- Have these improvements [if any have been cited] been maintained?

Indicator 2: 12 communities where 80% of people (9,600) with increased knowledge of good hygiene and sanitation and putting this into practice

Questions/issues to explore:

- What changes, if any, have you observed in people's hygiene or sanitation practices in the 12 communities? Can you give examples please?
- How widespread would you say are any changes in the communities? Do you have any data on this issue?
- Do you think these changes [if any cited] are likely to be short-term or long-term?

Indicator 3: 20% annual reduction in occurrence of water-borne diseases, diarrhoea and vomiting (in total population of targeted communities)

Questions/issues to explore:

- Are you aware of any reduction in the occurrence of water-borne diseases, diarrhoea or vomiting? Do you have any data on this issue?

KII supplementary questions re Outcome 3

Outcome: Improved ability of women, youths and people with disabilities to exercise their human rights, with greater awareness of their rights and entitlements and inclusion in decision-making; leading to reduced discrimination and their improved participation in social and economic activities

Indicator 1: 8,000 disadvantaged people (60% youth, 35% women & 5% PWD) with greater awareness and understanding of rights and entitlements

Questions/issues to explore:

- What difference, if any, have you observed in disadvantaged people (i.e. youth, women and PWD) claiming their rights or entitlements? Can you give examples please?
- Why do you think this is happening? Can anything more be done to increase this trend? What do you think are the main barriers or constraints?
- In which areas of life has this been happening? What other areas, if any, do you think it should happen?

Indicator 2: 1,200 disadvantaged people (480 women, 600 youth & 120 PWD) reporting greater inclusion (&/or reduced discrimination) in decision-making at household, community and 'higher' (ward) levels (from total population of communities)

Questions/issues to explore:

- What difference, if any, have you observed in disadvantaged people's involvement in decision-making? Can you give examples please?
- [If not clear from above question] What level (i.e. household, community or ward level) have you observed this happening?
- What reduction, if any, have you observed in discrimination towards disadvantaged people? Can you give examples please?

Indicator 3: 1,500 disadvantaged families and 1,000 young people including 300 PWDs increasing their participation in economic activities

Questions/issues to explore:

- What difference, if any, have you observed in disadvantaged people's involvement in economic activities? Can you give examples please?
- Why do you think this is happening? Can anything more be done to increase this trend? What do you think are the main barriers or constraints?

b) Focus Group Discussion guide

In line with the terms of reference, the focus group discussions will look at the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, economy (including value for money) and sustainability of the project as well as the nine specific outcome areas. They will also seek to explore key learning points and make recommendations for future operations of this and similar projects. The areas for discussion will be tailored to suit the participants' relationship with the project.

This is a broad guide therefore rather than a fixed template.

Basic data to be captured for all FGDs:

- Date and location of discussion
- Name of CBO (if it is one)
- Date their involvement in programme started
- Numbers in the discussion (including gender and youth breakdown)
- Any notes on discussion context
- Length of discussion (start/end time)

Greetings and informal conversation

Can you please tell me about your group: when it was formed, its name/meaning, how many members you have, what are the aims and activities etc..

When did the group first become involved in the MAPCO Empowering Communities Programme?

What support if any has the group had from the project to help it become stronger and more effective? What difference has this made, if any? What further support, if any, would be useful and why?

Ranking Exercise

Please rank the different aspects of the project, on a scale from 1 to 10 where 1 is very poor and 10 is excellent. Scores to be recorded and then probed.

Outcome 1: Improved access to livelihoods for vulnerable families and young people

What different types of livelihood opportunities were provided by the project? How have they worked? How many members were involved?

Would you say there has been a reduction in the food gap during the hungry season? Or an increase in incomes? If yes, can you say roughly what is a typical change or improvement [i.e. a bit, a lot, double, more than double etc.]. Have these improvements been sustained over the life of the project? And what about *after* the project?

Has project support improved the wellbeing of vulnerable people (i.e. PWDs, youths, vulnerable families) in the community? Has it made any difference to their access to things like health services or education? Please give examples.

What challenges did vulnerable people experience in working with these CBOs? How were these managed?

Outcome 2. Improved access to safe water and sanitation

What were the main water and sanitation related diseases in your community before the project?

What is the current status of those diseases? And what do you think is responsible for any change in levels? Please give examples. And roughly how many people [i.e. a few, a lot, many, most, all] practice good hygiene and sanitation now compared to before?

How would you sustain any reduction in water and sanitation related illnesses in the future?

Outcome 3. Improved ability of women, youths and people with disabilities to exercise their human rights

Would you say there has been any change in awareness and understanding of rights and entitlements among women, young people or PWDs? Please give examples.

Would you say there has been any change in how women, young people or PWDs are included in decision-making (at household, community and 'higher' (ward) levels)? And what about reduced discrimination, if any? Please give before and after examples. How if at all has this changed their situation in the community?

Would you say there has been any change in how women, young people or PWDs are involved in economic activities? Please give examples.

Other issues

- What do you see as the overall strengths of the programme?
 - What key factors have led to any programme successes or achievements?
 - What could have been done to improve the effectiveness of the project?
- In your opinion, what were the least effective aspects and why?
 - What factors contributed to these?
 - How could the weak areas you have identified have been improved or avoided?
- Were there any unexpected or unintended impacts? Or any negative impacts?
- How relevant, if at all, would you say it has been to addressing vulnerable people's needs here in your community? Did it address key gaps?
- Would you say that the project delivered what it promised and at the right time?
- What outcomes or benefits are most/least likely to be sustained? Why?
- What could be done to improve sustainability of project achievements?

Learning Points and Recommendations

- Are there any learning points not already discussed you would draw from the project?
- Do you have any recommendations for future work similar to this project?

Round-up

- Is there anything else you'd like to say about the project that we haven't discussed?
- If you are to have another opportunity for a repeat of the project, what is your preference?

Thank you!

Questions for non-project communities, if time allows

- Which of the project components attracted your community most (please rank)?
- What interested you most about those components?

- How did you come to learn about those project components you admired most?
- What action/s has your community taken to replicate those components, and why?

APPENDIX 3: LIST OF PEOPLE MET

MAPCO	
Emmanuel Macarthy	M&E Officer
Bridget Amara	Civil Society and Advocacy Officer
Angela Lavally	Livelihood Development Officer
Theresa Saffa	Finance Officer
Joseph Yankuba	Community Mobiliser
Prince Massaquoi	Community Mobiliser
Mustapha Metzger	Community Mobiliser
Karim Kamara	Programme Manager
Francis Lavally	Chief Executive
Sorbeh Grima	
50-60 members of the CBO, roughly balanced in terms of gender, including 6 office holders, local chiefs and councillors	
Massah J Tucker	Community health officer
Mohammed N Kaikai	Local head teacher
Baoma Oil Mill	
40-50 members of the Manumayei CBO, predominantly female, including 6 office holders, local chiefs and councillors	
Levuma	
54 members of CBO, 20 women and 34 men	
Warema	
40-50 members of the Kamuyu CBO, roughly balanced female/male, including 4 office holders, local chiefs and councillors	
Bongor	
30-40 members of the Bongor Development Association, two-thirds female, plus local chiefs and councillors	
Elizabeth Sandy	MCH Aide
Motou	
60 of the Eloma Development Association of which 22 are males and 38 females including 1 councillor, 1 town chief and 1 Community Health Workers (CHW) and 1 head teacher.	
Bo	
Martin Goba	Bo District Council deputy chair
Jeremy Simbo	General Secretary of the Civil Society Forum in Bo
Patrick Bangura, Foday Sesay, Martha Idriss, Ahmed Turay, Mohammed Turay	Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs, Bo
Kenneth Amadu	Director, HEMDEF (Human Empowerment and Development Fund)

APPENDIX 4: SCHEDULE

Tuesday 21 st November	Martin arrives Sierra Leone, overnight in Lungi
Wednesday 22 nd	a.m. Martin and John travel to Bo p.m. John and Martin meet the team for initial briefing and planning
Thursday 23 rd	Field visit – Sorbeh Grima CBO, Pujehun
Friday 24 th	Field visits – Levuma (John) and Baoma Oil Mill (Martin)
Saturday 25 th	Field visit - Warema (Martin); John – personal business
Sunday 26 th	Reflection, analysis
Monday 27 th	Field visit – Bongor Bumpe (Martin) and Motuo (John)
Tuesday 28 th	a.m. KIIs with Bo District Council deputy chair, Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children’s Affairs, director of HEMDEF, and general secretary of the Civil Society Forum in Bo p.m. preparation for feedback workshop
Wednesday 29 th	a.m. feedback workshop with project team p.m. Martin departs for Lungi and flight home; John returns to Freetown
Thursday 30 th	Martin arrives UK

**P187 MAPCO EVALUATION - JOINT APT-MAPCO RESPONSE TO EVALUATION
RECOMMENDATIONS**

Recommendation 1: Establish processes for loan oversight. The evaluation heard repeated concerns from CBOs about management of their loan schemes once MAPCO stopped visiting. Although the loan schemes have been well set up and have, in the main, successfully built up considerable balances there was a concern that once the discipline of external monitoring stopped these gains might be at risk. Indeed, loan committees might find an external ‘auditor’ useful when they are under pressure - which they might otherwise find hard to resist - to bend the rules. The evaluation therefore supports the idea from CBOs and recommends that MAPCO explore with the CBOs setting up some form of continuing external oversight of the loan schemes.

Under consideration. It is recognised that many CBOs have concerns about ensuring effective management of their loan schemes and becoming prey to undue influence from external actors seeking to access and/or control the fund once the fund has been handed over to them at the end of the project. The same concern has also been aired towards the end of previous projects which have generally proved to be unfounded. One possible option could be the identification of a locally based free-lance consultant with the relevant experience to visit each of the 12 CBOs on a three-monthly basis to check their records and provide necessary support and advice. In this case, the CBOs would need to pay for his/her time and any associated costs as they are requesting the service. Another option is that a current MAPCO staff fulfils this part-time, light touch role as part of their regular duties, although again, local travel would need to be covered by the hosting CBO. This issue, these and other potential responses will be discussed with each CBO as part of MAPCO’s exit strategy.

Recommendation 2: Develop multiplier plans. The evaluation found little evidence of benefits being disseminated more widely to neighbouring communities, and while this was not something the project sought to do, there is scope in future programming for this to be addressed. By being more deliberate and intentional, it would be possible to disseminate or multiply the benefits to a much wider circle, albeit not benefits on the same scale or range as enjoyed by direct beneficiaries.

Agreed in principle although this already happens in many cases but has not been documented by MAPCO. In future projects, including the forthcoming UK Aid one, MAPCO will encourage CBOs and their members to share what they have learned with both people from same community who are not CBO members as well as people from neighbouring communities from the outset. However, MAPCO will also need to emphasise that will have no responsibility for indirect beneficiaries and/or groups that emerge as a result.

Recommendation 3: Increase focus on PWDs. PWDs were a specific beneficiary target for the project under Outcome 3 and an implied target within the other two, and there is no doubt that some progress has been made. However the evaluation believes that future project design could be amended and expanded to ensure greater PWD inclusion and empowerment. It is important to stress though that this should not be seen as an alternative to including PWD in CBO membership and activities, but rather as an additional activity to help overcome deep-seated stigma and marginalisation. According to project data, PWD number 264 out of a total population of 17,123 in the target communities. Given that the WHO estimates PWD typically make up 15% of any population, i.e. approximately 2,568, this 264 is such an extremely low figure. What's more, international research has shown that PWD are disproportionately among the poorest, so if anything one would expect to see PWD participation above the 15% average if vulnerability targeting by the project was working properly. However, of the six CBOs visited during the evaluation, average PWD membership was 5.2%. Possible options to address this could include: establishing closer links with existing DPOs; supporting the establishment of village-based SHGs of PWD alongside CBOs (i.e. enabling PWD to be members of both); set up small table banking or merry-go-round schemes within the SHG so that PWD can access small-scale loans/grants; and facilitate linkages with disability service providers for SHG members, similar to the way the project has done for CBOs with water supply NGOs.

Accepted. MAPCO believe it is likely that total numbers of PWD are below 15% in rural areas as many migrate to urban areas where their prospects (including begging) are considered better than in the village. However, MAPCO will increase its efforts to ensure greater inclusion of PWD consistently across all future projects and targets therein. Indeed, this is a requirement of the new UK Aid project also, which includes the need to disaggregate PWD by impairment.

Recommendation 4: Improve water point maintenance and create spare-part centres. To supplement current efforts such as providing someone in each community with training and tools for local repairs, the evaluation recommends future programming include the establishment of spare-part centres for water-points in surrounding villages, overcoming the need for expensive and time-consuming travel to buy parts in towns and cities further away, run on a cost-recovery basis.

Agreed in part. While MAPCO will not establish its own spare parts facility since the responsibility for continuity falls beyond the organisation's mandate, they may however be able to persuade and support an entrepreneur to set up such a service in the future. Another option might be to encourage an existing spare parts shop - such as a motorbike repair business - to consider also stocking common items for water point maintenance items. With the new UK Aid project more geographically concentrated in Moyamba District, this may well be a viable option and will be considered as the new project is finalised.

Recommendation 5: Develop a greater geographical focus. Being spread across 12 communities in all directions from MAPCO's base in Bo, the current project requires time-consuming and costly travel that takes its toll on both staff and vehicles and is not an efficient distribution of target communities. Secondly, when CBOs are so far apart it makes facilitating exchanges, exposure visits, joint meetings or training all more difficult and expensive to arrange. Third, by spreading so thinly, any chance of creating a critical mass of positive change becomes impossible. It is therefore recommended that future programming should have a much tighter geographical focus without compromising the targeting of the poorest and most vulnerable.

This is agreed and will be happening in the forthcoming UK Aid project where MAPCO will work with 15 of the poorest and most marginalised communities exclusively in Moyamba District.

Recommendation 6: Talk about numbers of *people*, not families. Much of the project documentation refers to the numbers of families the project seeks to reach rather than the total number of beneficiaries. In a context where average family at seven is very high, this inadvertently under-plays the project's reach and impact. 1,000 families is the same as 7,000 beneficiaries, but the latter has far greater psychological impact, so the evaluation recommends that the individual rather than the family be used as the unit for describing the work.

This is agreed and accepted.

Recommendation 7: Move away from one size fits all – bottom-up rather than top-down. The evaluation heard very similar feedback from all the CBOs and their members on a range of specific project features such as group size, loan period, length of training apprenticeship and interest rate. This suggests that a standardised, somewhat top-down approach is being used. This may not be the intention, as from the MAPCO perspective they may only be making suggestions, but the effect on the ground has been to create very similar CBO structures, byelaws and activities. This risks overlooking local factors that might warrant a different approach, and it would be surprising if there were not local factors that called for divergence. This approach also risks disempowering CBOs. Guidance as to what might be an effective group size and the advantages and disadvantages of larger or smaller groups is certainly appropriate, but this is very different from setting a number from outside; agreeing membership numbers is a critical element of real ownership and control, which is in turn essential for sustainability.

This is agreed. In many ways, MAPCO is victim of its own success as the organisation is well known throughout the region for the way it works and their achievements. As a result, suggestions from MAPCO may generally be taken as instructions or advice that should be accepted without discussion. Recognising the need to encourage greater flexibility and diversity from the outset, in new projects MAPCO will stress that their ideas, suggestions and advice are exactly that and encourage CBOs and the members to debate these, consider their relevance to their unique community and what, if any, adaptations might be more appropriate. This focus and dialogue on diversity will continue throughout all new projects.