

**An overview of role players outside  
government that are central to  
evidence-informed decision-making in**

# **MALAWI**

**A LANDSCAPE REVIEW**



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Title: An overview of role players outside government that are central to evidence-informed decision-making in Malawi: A landscape review

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## **1. Introduction and background to the programme**

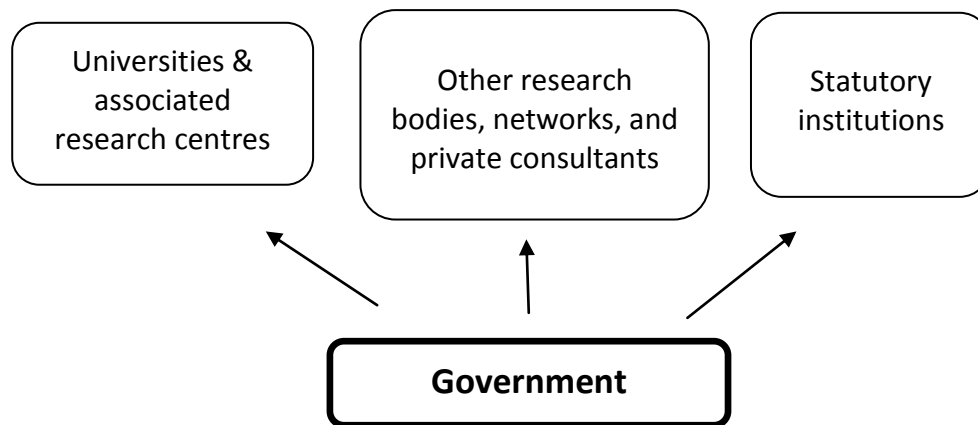
The University of Johannesburg-led Building Capacity to Use Research Evidence (BCURE) programme is a three-year programme, hosted by the Centre for Anthropological Research (CfAR). The programme aims to build capacity in evidence-informed decision-making (EIDM) in the governments of South Africa and Malawi. It focuses on building the capacity of senior policy-makers and technical staff to use research evidence through a range of activities including training, mentorships, and secondments within government departments.

## **2. Rationale for this review report**

UJ-BCURE Malawi works alongside another DFID-funded BCURE project led by the African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP) that focuses on Kenya and Malawi. Careful consideration and planning is therefore necessary to ensure that activities of the two programmes complement one another.

However, the AFIDEP-led consortium is only one of many role players in the Malawian research and capacity-building landscape. The landscape review set out in this report is part of an ongoing process of identifying other role players involved in the production and dissemination of research, as well as those who aim to facilitate research uptake among policy-makers in the Malawian government.

The landscape review focuses on identifying role players *outside* of government. These include universities, other research centres, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), independent consultants, and research councils. The landscape review also seeks to understand the work of these role players and how they relate to government policy processes. Figure 1 below is an illustration of how the main categories of role players have been organised for this report. A simple organising structure has been used according to the type of organisation, rather than using a more complex organising structure and making upfront assumptions about how these organisations might interact with government.



**Figure 1: Understanding the research landscape in Malawi**

The review does not focus on the capacity-building needs of the Malawian government in EIDM. This will be the focus of subsequent work. This landscape review, and a subsequent needs assessment, will form the basis of an implementation plan developed in close cooperation with the Malawian government.

### **3. Contextual overview**

A first step to understanding the research landscape in Malawi is to understand the history and political context of the country. Malawi is a landlocked country, located in the South East African region. The country gained independence in 1964, and has an estimated population of 15 million people. Malawi consists of three main regions and 28 districts. Mzuzu is the capital of the Northern region, which has six districts. Lilongwe is the capital of the country and also of the Central region (which has nine districts), while Blantyre – the commercial capital of the country – is the capital of the Southern region (which has 12 districts). There are six recognised degree-granting universities in Malawi, of which four are public universities: the University of Malawi based in Zomba, Mzuzu University, and Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources, and the Malawi University of Science and Technology. The latter university opened in 2013 and had its first intake in 2014. The two private institutions in the country are the Catholic University of Malawi and the University of Livingstonia.

Agriculture is the dominant economic sector consistently contributing over 30% of Malawi's GDP. Subsistence agriculture is the main source of livelihood for people within Malawi; close

to 90% of Malawi's population resides in rural areas<sup>1</sup>. A recent poverty assessment found that 51% of the population live below the poverty line, and that close to one in four people are unable to meet basic food necessities<sup>2</sup>. In terms of development, Malawi ranks 14<sup>th</sup> from the bottom based on the Human Development Index (HDI), and is characterised by poor socio-economic indicators such as life expectancy, literacy, standard of living, and quality of life<sup>3</sup>. About 62% of the population experience high poverty levels with an income of less than \$1.25 per day<sup>4</sup>.

Malawi is confronted by budgetary and external account deficits, and arguably requires constant and high levels of foreign aid usually in the form of grants and concessional loans<sup>5</sup>. Approximately 40% of the country's budget relies on foreign donor funding through balance of payment support<sup>6</sup>.

The government of Malawi operates under the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy II (MGDS, 2011 – 2016) which follows on from the first MGDS (2006 – 2011) and acts as the overarching strategy to attain the country's development goals. Furthermore following the economic collapse in 2012 the Malawian government, under President Joyce Banda, developed the Economic Recovery Plan to address the then pressing economic and developmental needs of the country. Following the election of President Peter Mutharika in May of 2014, the Malawian government is likely to introduce measures under the MGDS II to address the economic challenges facing the country following fiscal mismanagement and the resultant withdrawal of foreign aid. In order for these reforms to succeed, a robust synchronised approach from various stakeholders and effective policy-making processes are necessary (where decisions are informed by the best available research irrespective of the ruling political parties or presidents). Such policy-making would also contribute towards increased continuity across government's terms of office<sup>7</sup>. These reforms also necessitate an

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<sup>1</sup> The 2008 Population and Housing Census found that 88% of the population reside in rural areas (National Statistical Office, 2009).

<sup>2</sup> The poverty analysis from the Integrated Household Survey 2010/11 found that 50.7% of Malawi's population are poor and 24.5% ultra-poor (Government of Malawi, 2012).

<sup>3</sup> Malawi ranks 174 out of 187 countries on the HDI in 2013, according to the 2014 Human Development Report (UNDP, 2014).

<sup>4</sup> This is according to the 2014 Human Development Report which records that 61.64% of the population lived below a purchasing power parity (PPP) of US\$1.25 in 2010.

<sup>5</sup> Joint Donor Evaluation. 2008. Managing Aid Exit and Transformation: Malawi Country Case Study.

<sup>6</sup> ICEIDA (2012) Malawi Country Strategy Paper 2012-2016.

<sup>7</sup> Continuity in government and in policies is particularly important going forward as Malawi had three presidents between 2012 and 2014.

effective monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system characterised by efficient supply lines from the community to national levels.

In Malawi, M&E plays an important part in measuring performance in government and assessing its progress towards the attainment of developmental goals. There has been a clear progression in the development of M&E systems and their use in the Malawian context. In the 1980s, M&E was mainly used to ensure that funds allocated were accounted for and as a way to legitimise funds provided by the donor community. In recent years, there has been an increasing focus on the use of M&E data, and consequently efforts to improve data quality and the use of data in decision-making processes. However, there are still challenges in the Malawian M&E system. These include the lack of clear work plans for M&E, the absence of a separate budget for M&E activities, human resource constraints, and challenges in the general coordination of M&E structures<sup>8</sup>. Although a more detailed discussion of the M&E system in the Malawian government will be presented in the needs assessment, mention of it is necessary here as background to the country-specific context.

The remainder of this report will present a preliminary overview of some of the key role players operating in the research sphere outside of government.

## **4. Research methods**

Qualitative research methods were used to collect the data presented in this report. The methods included desktop and internet searches, key informant interviews, and visits to relevant institutions. Respondents were identified through referrals from partners, by accessing existing databases, and by engaging in snowball sampling.

This review report<sup>9</sup> is the amalgamated product of a series of distinct research tasks conducted more or less consecutively and independently:

- A preliminary landscape review by the UJ-BCURE team

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<sup>8</sup> Centre for Learning on Evaluation and Results Anglophone Africa (CLEAR-AA), Graduate School of Public and Development Management, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 2013. Study for the Demand for and Supply of Evaluation in Malawi.

<sup>9</sup> With special thanks to Dr Maxton Tsoka for reviewing an earlier version of this amalgamated report.

- A landscape report that UJ-BCURE commissioned from the Parent and Child Health Initiative (PACHI) in Malawi focusing specifically on the research landscape outside of the health sector
- Consideration of a list of key role players provided to the programme by a government partner
- Meetings with representatives of research organisations during the UJ-BCURE team's visits to Malawi in July and September 2014

## 5. Landscape review

This review begins by outlining the key organisations working in the evidence-into-policy landscape in Malawi, including universities and associated research centres, and other research bodies including non-governmental organisations, research networks, private consultants, and research councils.

### 5.1. Universities

There are currently six recognised degree-granting universities in Malawi. The University of Malawi (UNIMA)<sup>10</sup> is the oldest of these, having been established in 1964. Its main campus is in Zomba, but the university has campuses in Blantyre and Lilongwe as well. UNIMA is the largest tertiary institution in Malawi and offers a wide range of degrees and diplomas. The foundation of the Mzuzu University<sup>11</sup> in 1997 presented an alternative to UNIMA and thus marked the beginning of a change in Malawi's tertiary education landscape. The institution is based in Mzuzu and offers degrees in education, environmental science, information and communication sciences, nursing, hospitality, and tourism. The University of Livingstonia, which was founded in 2003 at Livingstonia mission in Rumphi, offers training in education, commerce, nursing, and theology<sup>12</sup>. Three years later, in 2006, the Catholic University of Malawi was established at Nguludi Mission in Chiradzulu, near Limbe, Blantyre<sup>13</sup>. Its faculties offer training in education, social sciences, and commerce. In 2012, Malawi's tertiary education landscape saw the formation of Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.unima.mw>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.mzuni.ac.mw>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.ulivingstonia.com>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.cunima.ac.mw>



Resources (LUANAR) that resulted from the separation of the Bunda College of Agriculture from UNIMA and the subsequent incorporation of that body with the diploma-offering Natural Resources College<sup>14</sup>. In 2013 the government of Malawi opened a newly built Malawi University of Science and Technology (MUST) in Thyolo which had its first intake in 2014. Students not able to gain access to any of these universities also have the possibility of enrolling at a number of recognised public and private vocational training colleges (offering course in mainly teaching and nursing, social work, and forestry).

#### *5.1.1. Research centres associated with universities*

Throughout the tertiary institution landscape there are a number of research centres doing work across the fields of medicine, social science, education, and agriculture.

### **Centre for Social Research (CSR)**

The Centre for Social Research (CSR) was established in 1979 and is a research centre located in Chancellor College at the University of Malawi. The Centre has completed more than 300 research projects and does both academic and commissioned research<sup>15</sup>. The CSR's focus is applied research, especially in fields relating to the priority developmental areas of the country. Stated areas of interest include:<sup>16</sup>

- Democracy and governance
- Accumulation, economic growth, and sustainable livelihoods
- Human, social, and cultural development
- Agricultural development and land reform
- Environment and development
- Participatory decision-making

The CSR undertakes applied research to generate reliable data on the country's priority challenges, and then aims to channel this information to policy-makers and planners. It emphasises research communication, i.e. facilitating the exchange of information and

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<sup>14</sup> <http://www.bunda.luanar.mw>

<sup>15</sup> [http://www.chanco.unima.mw/centre/centre.php?CentreID=3&Source=Centre\\_for\\_Social\\_Research](http://www.chanco.unima.mw/centre/centre.php?CentreID=3&Source=Centre_for_Social_Research)

<sup>16</sup> [http://www.unima.mw/?page\\_id=237](http://www.unima.mw/?page_id=237)

experiences between local policy-makers, development practitioners, and academics. The CSR also provides training in research methods to government officials, and organises local and regional conferences and seminars in order to create opportunities to facilitate the exchange of information. The CSR also collects information about social science research and the priority development areas in Malawi so that this information is easily accessible to researchers. Finally, the CSR is involved in the publication and dissemination of research results<sup>17</sup>.

Examples of research projects undertaken by the CSR for, and in partnership with, the Malawian government include:

- A study conducted in 2001 on the role of Health Surveillance Assistants (HSAs) in the delivery of health services and immunisation in Malawi that was jointly commissioned by the Malawian Ministry of Health and Population and UNICEF<sup>18</sup>.
- Participation as a collaborating partner in impact evaluations conducted in 2007 and 2008 by the Center for Global Health and Development (CGHD) on the Malawi Social Cash Transfer Programme. The government of Malawi used data from these evaluations to improve the operation of the programme, to better identify potential recipients, and to inform future plans for upscaling the cash transfer initiatives across Malawi<sup>19</sup>.

## **Centre for Education Research and Training (CERT)**

Established in 1991, the Centre for Educational Research and Training (CERT) is also part of Chancellor College at the University of Malawi. Until 1995, CERT was a Ministry of Education / University of Malawi project, funded through the World Bank Second Education Sector Credit. However, it has since become one of the research centres of the University of Malawi<sup>20</sup>. CERT's research focus is education-related issues in Malawi. Areas of interest and past work include:<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> [http://www.unima.mw/?page\\_id=237](http://www.unima.mw/?page_id=237)

<sup>18</sup> [http://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/files/MLW\\_01-04.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/files/MLW_01-04.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.bu.edu/cghd/our-work/projects/evaluation-of-the-malawi-social-cash-transfer-program/>

<sup>20</sup> [http://www.chanco.unima.mw/centre/centre.php?CentreID=2&Source=Centre\\_for\\_Educational\\_Research](http://www.chanco.unima.mw/centre/centre.php?CentreID=2&Source=Centre_for_Educational_Research)

<sup>21</sup> [http://www.chanco.unima.mw/centre/centre.php?CentreID=2&Source=Centre\\_for\\_Educational\\_](http://www.chanco.unima.mw/centre/centre.php?CentreID=2&Source=Centre_for_Educational_)

- Teacher education
- Improving quality education
- Gender, inclusiveness, and education
- Financing of education
- School effectiveness studies
- HIV / AIDS and education
- Education management and information systems (EMIS)

CERT uses a wide range of research methodologies such as impact studies, modelling, and participatory research approaches to generate knowledge on educational projects relevant and tailored to the Malawian context. It also disseminates research findings to improve educational practice in Malawi.

In addition to its focus on research, CERT also develops educational research and training programmes for researchers and conducts educational training in Malawi. It has carried out policy-related research on behalf of the Ministry of Education, as well as research, evaluation, and consultancy work for donor agencies and NGOs. Collaborating partners include the World Bank, DFID, and USAID.

An example of a research project conducted by CERT is a 2009 study funded by GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH) to evaluate a programme of complementary basic education in Malawi for out-of-school youth introduced by the government of Malawi with the assistance of the German government<sup>22</sup>.

## **Centre for Agricultural Research and Development (CARD)**

The Centre for Agricultural Research and Development (CARD) falls under Bunda College, which is in turn part of the Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR). CARD comprises of three units: the Agricultural Policy Research Unit (APRU), the Agricultural Policy Analysis Training Unit (APATU), and the Training and Consultancy Coordinating Unit (TCCU).

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Research

<sup>22</sup> <http://edumalawi.cc.ac.mw/jspui/handle/123456789/401>

CARD conducts training and research focused on agricultural and natural resource management. In particular, its activities investigate issues around agricultural production, credit and access to inputs, farmer organisations, trade and marketing, and natural resources and the environment. It aims to provide innovative solutions and policy options geared towards the advancement and transformation of agriculture and resource use in Malawi<sup>23</sup>.

An example of a research project conducted by CARD is a rural water baseline study published in 2013 conducted in four districts and 12 market centres in Malawi. The objective of the study was to determine benchmark indicators that could be used to measure the impact of the National Water Development Programme. This programme aims to increase people's access to safe water, especially in rural areas<sup>24</sup>.

CARD is also a member of the Regional Network of Agricultural Policy Research Institutes (ReNAPRI). This network brings together national agricultural policy research institutes from countries in east and southern Africa. One of its aims is to facilitate the provision of policy guidance to policy-makers at national government levels based on lessons learnt from across the different countries<sup>25</sup>.

## **College of Medicine (COM)**

The College of Medicine (COM), established in 1991, is a constituent college within the University of Malawi. The college is located in Blantyre in the Southern region of Malawi. An example of a COM research unit is the Malaria Alert Centre-Communicable Diseases Action Centre (MAC-CDAC), which supports medical and operational research. MAC-CDAC offers knowledge, skills, and advocacy training for malaria, HIV / AIDS, TB applied research, and M&E programmes. The research centre works with national and international partners as a

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<sup>23</sup> [http://www.medcol.mw/domasi/?page\\_id=151](http://www.medcol.mw/domasi/?page_id=151)

<sup>24</sup> [http://thedata.harvard.edu/dvn/dv/cardresearch/faces/study/StudyPage.xhtml;jsessionid=346c8bd0794f9af0afb676a1e47f?globalId=hdl:1902.1/20587&studyListingIndex=0\\_346c8bd0794f9af0afb676a1e47f](http://thedata.harvard.edu/dvn/dv/cardresearch/faces/study/StudyPage.xhtml;jsessionid=346c8bd0794f9af0afb676a1e47f?globalId=hdl:1902.1/20587&studyListingIndex=0_346c8bd0794f9af0afb676a1e47f)

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.bfap.co.za/index.php/ct-menu-item-5/ct-menu-item-25/ct-menu-item-29>

centre of excellence in operational research, developing capacities and strategies relevant to national health policy<sup>26</sup>.

Table 1 below provides a summary of these research centres and their engagement with government.

**Table 1: Summary of university engagement with government**

Name	Summary of engagements with government	Key networks
Centre for Social Research (CSR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides training to government in research methods</li> <li>• Facilitates communication between academics, policy-makers, and development practitioners</li> <li>• Conducts research on behalf of government</li> <li>• Conducts policy-relevant research</li> </ul>	None
Centre for Educational Research and Training (CERT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducts research on behalf of government</li> <li>• Conducts policy-relevant research</li> </ul>	None
Centre for Agricultural Research and Development (CARD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducts policy-relevant research</li> </ul>	A member of the Regional Network of Agricultural Policy Research Institutes (ReNAPRI)
College of Medicine (COM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducts policy-relevant research</li> </ul>	None

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<sup>26</sup> <http://www.medcol.mw>

### *5.1.2. Civil society, other research centres, and non-governmental organisations*

A number of research centres and non-governmental organisations (national and local) work in Malawi. These include: the Evidence-Informed Policy Network (EVIPNet) Malawi, Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL), the Wellcome Trust, Reachout, the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), the Parent and Child Health Initiative (PACHI), the Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI), Action Against Hunger (AAH), Total Land Care (TLC), the Centre for Development Research and Information in Southern Africa (CEDRISA), the Child Rights Information and Documentation Centre (CRIDOC), the Civil Society Education Coalition (CSEC), and the Centre for Human Rights and Rehabilitation (CHRR).

This section of the report provides an introduction to some of the civil society research centres and non-governmental organisations in Malawi. For the purpose of this landscape review we focus on a number of examples of organisations and networks that we regard as key, or which were identified by partners in Malawi.

#### **The Parent and Child Health Initiative (PACHI)**

The Parent and Child Health Initiative (PACHI) is a Malawian-based NGO established in 2009. PACHI collaborates with the Ministry of Health and the paediatrics department at Kamuzu Central Hospital. Its operations are supported by the Centre for International Health & Development, the Institute of Child Health, and University College London (UCL) through a Wellcome Trust grant<sup>27</sup>.

PACHI's work has a strong health focus, and they are especially interested in promoting the use of evidence in decision-making in the fields of maternal and child health. They promote EIDM in a number of ways:

- Through a programme of excellence in research aimed at developing research capacity in the country in fields in and outside of health
- By providing technical expertise on health projects

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<sup>27</sup> <http://www.momiproject.eu/project-consortium/consortium-partners/pachi-malawi.aspx>

- Through board members, drawn from academic institutions and the Ministry of Health, who have access to research produced by PACHI and who in turn provide links to other maternal and child health projects in the country<sup>28</sup>

PACHI is currently involved in the implementation of seven projects across Malawi, one of which is Evidence for Action (E4A)<sup>29</sup>. E4A is a five-year DFID-funded project led by Options-UK, which runs between 2011 and 2016. E4A aims to improve maternal and newborn survival in Ethiopia, Malawi, Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and Tanzania by “...using evidence strategically to generate political commitment, strengthen accountability and improve planning and decision-making in sub-national and national levels”<sup>30</sup>. PACHI provided support in the development of the E4A project and conducted a stakeholder mapping exercise, among other activities<sup>31</sup>.

Another example of a project undertaken by PACHI is the MaiMwana project in the Mchinji district in the Central region of Malawi. In 2005, the Infant Feeding, Care, and Counselling intervention was implemented in 24 clusters within the Mchinji district as part of a randomised control trial. The aim was to improve mother and child health by focusing on exclusive breastfeeding. The 2009 evaluation of the project showed that exclusive breastfeeding had increased, that breastfeeding behaviour had improved, and that there had been a reduction in maternal and child morbidity. The MaiMwana project has since been scaled up to focus on a wider range of care practices, complimentary feeding, and nutrition after infancy<sup>32</sup>.

For a detailed description of PACHI’s work, with particular emphasis on research-into-policy activities, see Appendix I.

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<sup>28</sup> <http://www.momiproject.eu/project-consortium/consortium-partners/pachi-malawi.aspx>

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.mamaye.org.mw/blog/parent-and-child-health-initiative-pachi>

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.evidence4action.net/>

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.pachimalawi.org/index.php>

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.momiproject.eu/project-consortium/consortium-partners/pachi-malawi.aspx>

## **Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI)**

The Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI) dates back to 2002, with the establishment by President Clinton of the Clinton HIV / AIDS Initiative. In 2010, CHAI became an NGO separate from the Clinton Foundation and changed its name to the current form. The name change seeks to reflect the revised focus on broader health initiatives. CHAI works with governments in 25 countries, of which Malawi is one<sup>33</sup>. One of CHAI's values is to always work in partnership with government rather than duplicating work or implementing stand-alone projects<sup>34</sup>. For example, CHAI supports the Malawi Ministry of Health with a project on the use of Frontline SMS technology. This technology is used to communicate with patients on a remote basis (such as tracing them when they have missed appointments, communicating CD4 count results, etc.). CHAI supports the Malawian government through the establishment of public-private partnerships with local telecommunications providers in order to negotiate reduced pricing of the Frontline SMS technology. Reduced costs would enable the government upscale interventions such as mHealth interventions<sup>35</sup>.

CHAI has also completed a comprehensive resource mapping exercise of the Malawian health sector in order to understand resource flows and financing challenges. Gaps in the financing of certain sections of the health sector, or certain health conditions, can prevent the country from attaining its health goals. The Malawian government and its partners submitted comprehensive budget information to CHAI to be analysed during the mapping exercise. This mapping exercise constitutes the most detailed and comprehensive information on total health sector resources in Malawi, and is being used by the government to better inform planning decisions<sup>36</sup>.

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<sup>33</sup> <http://www.clintonhealthaccess.org/about/history>

<sup>34</sup> <http://www.clintonhealthaccess.org/about>

<sup>35</sup> <http://www.healthunbound.org/node/3141>

<sup>36</sup> CHAI Malawi, July 2013. Health Financing Summit. Key Findings from Round 2 of Resource Mapping. PowerPoint presentation.



## **Action Against Hunger (AAH)<sup>37</sup>**

Action Against Hunger (AAH) was established approximately three decades ago. The organisation works against global malnutrition, and does so in a range of contexts including natural disasters, conflict situations, and countries / communities facing chronic food insecurity.

The organisation aims to improve life expectancy by responding to the nutritional needs of malnourished children and communities through, for example, facilitating access to safe water and solutions to hunger.

In addition, AAH conducts applied research projects that aim to find innovative solutions to food insecurity challenges, and contribute to the development of more effective, evidence-informed programmes, policies, and procedures. The organisation has established strategies to encourage the use of their research data in policy-development processes. This includes preparing research summary reports or policy briefs that are presented to key government representatives and departments at seminars designed for this purpose. The research findings are also released to the media, and pamphlets with essential information are distributed to the public.

Examples of projects undertaken by AAH include initiatives designed to strengthen small-scale irrigation systems, the provision of training and longer-term advisory support on crop husbandry, and activities focused on access to water and sanitation. Some of the organisation's current programmes (at the time of writing) include initiatives for the formation of farmer clubs, the provision of market strategies training, and the establishment of seed banks.

## **Total Land Care (TLC)<sup>38</sup>**

Total Land Care (TLC) was established as a non-governmental organisation in Malawi in 1999. In 2006, the organisation expanded its operations to Mozambique, Tanzania, and Zambia.

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<sup>37</sup> Information for this section was predominantly obtained through key-informant interview(s).

<sup>38</sup> Information for this section was predominantly obtained through key-informant interview(s).

The organisation seeks to improve the livelihoods of small-scale farmers. TLC focuses on community-based approaches to increase agricultural production, food security, and income, whilst simultaneously ensuring the sound management of natural resources.

Furthermore, in collaboration with relevant national and international institutions, the organisation conducts research in agriculture and environmental studies. Subject areas include rural livelihoods, diversification, reforestation, and food security. TLC disseminates this information to the relevant decision-makers in an attempt to facilitate the development of improved, evidence-informed policy development that supports sustainable economic growth.

The organisation has established strategies to disseminate and encourage the use of their research data in policy-development processes. These include presentations to key government stakeholders at seminars and conferences, press releases to mainstream media sources, and publicising the data on their (and other international agencies') websites.

Examples of projects undertaken by TLC include a community-based forestry project, a rural diversification initiative, an agroforestry partnership project, a treadle pump irrigation initiative, and an environmental and socio-economic baseline study. At the time of writing, the organisation was engaged in at least five projects, notably: a management for adaptation of rural communities to climate change initiative, a rural livelihood enhancing project, a cassava based farming system initiative for improved food security, a sustainable enterprise project, and a reforestation and community support programme.

### **The Centre for Development Research and Information in Southern Africa (CEDRISA)<sup>39</sup>**

The Centre for Development Research and Information in Southern Africa (CEDRISA) was established in 2000. The centre aims to contribute to sustainable development by enhancing the capacity for informed and participatory decision-making among key stakeholders in the southern African region. The centre attempts to achieve this aim through the creation of mechanisms that facilitate access to information and promote participation.

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<sup>39</sup> Information for this section was predominantly obtained through key-informant interview(s).

CEDRISA's research focus is on socio-economic development. Research subjects include skills development, youth development, environmental conservation, information accessibility, and financial management skills development among target audiences such as the youth. The centre's primary method for research data dissemination is through mainstream media, and their research data is targeted at government decision-makers.

Some examples of projects undertaken by CEDRISA include skills development and training initiatives aimed at the youth, and civic education pertaining to elections. Some of the organisation's current projects include business and finance management training initiatives, an income generating activities project, and the Shire River basin management programme.

### **Child Rights Information and Documentation Centre (CRIDOC)<sup>40</sup>**

The Child Rights Information and Documentation Centre (CRIDOC) was established in Malawi in 2003. The centre seeks to facilitate access to information pertaining to child rights and related matters. CRIDOC does this by conducting child rights research, documenting data available on children's rights, and disseminating the data on websites and through other information communication technology (ICT) systems.

The organisation disseminates its research and data through publication on the organisational website, and press releases to mainstream media sources (radio, television, radio). The target audience for this information is decision-making government officials. The aim of data distribution is to influence policy development and implementation.

Examples of projects undertaken by the centre include capacity-building initiatives, and research focusing on child trafficking and human rights. Current projects focus on childcare, protection and justice, and budget tracking.

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<sup>40</sup> Information for this section was predominantly obtained through key-informant interview(s).

## **Centre for Human Rights and Rehabilitation (CHRR)<sup>41</sup>**

The Centre for Human Rights and Rehabilitation (CHRR) is a political, voluntary, human rights non-governmental organisation in Malawi. The organisation was established in February 1995 by former exiled students who returned to the country during the political transition process of 1994.

The CHRR's mission is to contribute toward the protection, promotion, and consolidation of good governance by empowering rural and urban communities in Malawi to their increase awareness, and use, of their rights. The organisation seeks to achieve its mission through research, education, advocacy, and networking focused on human development, democracy, and human rights.

The CHRR's current activities (at the time of writing) include a paralegal advisory service, initiatives geared at increasing dialogue and participation in the justice sector, and various community mobilisation and empowerment activities. Examples of activities previously undertaken by the CHRR include projects on juvenile justice, voter and civic education, and public participation.

The CHRR also engages in socio-economic research. Research topics include governance and corruption, cultural diversity, democracy, human rights, good governance, and monitoring of government implementation.

The centre distributes its research findings primarily through mainstream print media, but also produces pamphlets for more targeted information dissemination. The CHRR has also established a working partnership with the Malawian Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, which facilitates the integration of the centre's research findings into policy development and other policy outputs.

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<sup>41</sup> Information for this section was predominantly obtained through key-informant interview(s).

## Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP)<sup>42</sup>

The Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) was established in 1992 to promote justice and peace through programme interventions.

The CCJP works predominantly in the Central region of Malawi in partnership with various donor agencies, and its activities include civic education, capacity building, advocacy, and legal assistance. Some specific examples of the CCJP's activities are:

- Provision of free legal services to all who require it (through legal aid clinics and trained paralegals within communities)
- Provision of paralegal training to community-based volunteers (known as animators), focusing on, *inter alia*, skills development in the areas of conflict management, social analysis, training for transformation, interpretation and application of the Malawian constitution and related human rights legislation, and advocacy
- Selecting (from local government structures, such as extension workers, community policing, and victim support units) representatives to serve as community-based educators who, in collaboration with the community-based volunteers, promote rights awareness and utilisation
- Identification (through consultative meetings with District Executive Committees and other key stakeholders) of District Implementing Agencies in each country district, and tasking them with implementing the Primary Justice Project on a national scale
- Capacity building through, for example, the production of a training manual on primary justice and training workshops attended by key stakeholders such as parliamentarians
- Various advocacy activities (e.g. a review of the legislation pertaining to traditional authorities, and "witchcraft", publications, press releases, conferences, demonstrations, and dialoguing events).

Table 2 below provides a summary of these NGOs' and civil society organisations' engagement with government.

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<sup>42</sup> All data in this section from <http://www.ccjp-lilongwe.org/programs.html>

**Table 2: Summary of how NGOs engage with government**

Name	Summary of engagements with government	Key networks
Parent and Child Health Initiative (PACHI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducts research on behalf of government</li> <li>• An implementing partner in Evidence for Action (E4A)</li> </ul>	None
Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Works in partnership with government to improve health outcomes</li> <li>• Conducts research on government</li> </ul>	None
Action Against Hunger (AAH)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An NGO focusing on alleviating malnutrition and promoting food security</li> <li>• Conducts applied research to inform policy processes</li> </ul>	None
Total Land Care (TLC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aims to improve the livelihoods of small-scale farmers, promote food security and natural resource management, and conducts research to inform policy processes</li> </ul>	None
Centre for Development Research and Information in Southern Africa (CEDRISA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engages in capacity building among policy developers, focusing specifically on socio-economic development</li> </ul>	None
Child Rights Information and Documentation Centre (CRIDC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focuses on facilitating access to information on child rights and related matters through research, documentation, data dissemination, and capacity building</li> </ul>	None
Centre for Human Rights and Rehabilitation (CHRR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focuses on the promotion of good governance through research, advocacy, education and networking rights awareness</li> </ul>	None

Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promotion of justice and peace through activities such as civic education, capacity building, and legal assistance</li> </ul>	None
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## 5.2. Networks

### African Community of Practice (AfCOP)

The African Community of Practice (AfCOP) is a worldwide web-based community of nearly 1,500 practitioners from 87 countries, 41 of which are in Africa. The community specialises in management approaches, or what is called managing for development results (MfDR). The aim is to build strong and effective institutions that are performance-oriented and can therefore better achieve sustainable development results in Africa<sup>43</sup>. AfCOP does not currently have a branch (also called a 'chapter') in Malawi, although there are currently AfCOP members in Malawi. However, AfCOP is in the process of establishing a Malawi chapter.

Their focal point in government will be the Office of the President and Cabinet (OPC), although they intend to work across government departments. Their programme of activities for the year includes a launch, a series of workshops across the country to raise awareness of their intended work, the development of an action plan for the year, implementation of that plan, and the presentation of the results. Their focus will generally be on the institutional capacity of the Malawian government to deliver goods and services<sup>44</sup>.

### Dignitas International and the Knowledge Translation Platform

Founded in 2004 by former members of Médecins Sans Frontières / Doctors without Borders (MSF), Dignitas International is a medical humanitarian organisation working in Malawi focusing on people living with HIV / AIDS, and improving their treatment and access to

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<sup>43</sup> <http://www.cop-mfdr-africa.org/page/what-is-the-african-community> and <http://copmfdrafrica.ning.com/profiles/blogs/afcop-casebook-2010>

<sup>44</sup> Conversation and correspondence with AfCOP member involved in the establishment of the Malawi chapter.

quality care<sup>45</sup>. Dignitas takes a four-pronged approach to its work: it focuses on delivering medical care, strengthening health systems, using research to innovate and come up with practical and effective solutions to health needs and the provision of care, and advocating for improvements in health policy by sharing experiences and evidence from its work<sup>46</sup>. An example of how this advocacy work has improved health care in Malawi is the Malawian Ministry of Health's implementation in 2011 of a new HIV Prevention of Mother-To-Child Transmission Programme (called Option B+). The programme is based on research conducted by Dignitas and on WHO guidelines. The programme adopts a national 'test and treat' strategy that could have a substantial impact on maternal and child health<sup>47</sup>.

Dignitas is also a key role player in the Knowledge Translation Platform Malawi (KTP Malawi) that focuses on improving health policy and practice. Since 2012, Dignitas has been supporting the Malawi Ministry of Health with the establishment of KTP Malawi. The inaugural steering group meeting took place in June 2013. KTP Malawi aims to address the lack of engagement between policy-makers, clinicians, and researchers in order to improve the uptake of the best available research by policy-makers. KTP Malawi provides a way of coordinating and institutionalising such engagements between the different role players<sup>48</sup>.

### **Civil Society Education Coalition (CSEC)<sup>49</sup>**

The Civil Society Education Coalition (CSEC), which advocates for the right to quality education in Malawi, was established in 2000. The coalition is comprised of 78 civil society organisations (with Malawian and international representation), and 27 Malawian district education networks.

CSEC has particular expertise in development research, policy analysis, advocacy to inform policy development and implementation, and citizen (i.e. participatory) budgeting processes.

The activities of the coalition include:

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<sup>45</sup> <http://dignitasinternational.org/about-us/vision/>

<sup>46</sup> <http://dignitasinternational.org/>

<sup>47</sup> <http://dignitasinternational.org/about-us/vision/>

<sup>48</sup> KTP Malawi, June 2013. Inaugural Steering Committee Meeting Report. Bridging the Gap: Strengthening Malawi's Knowledge Translation Platform for Improved Health Policy and Practice

<sup>49</sup> Information for this section was predominantly obtained through key-informant interview(s).



- Ongoing monitoring of the flow and impact of the Malawian national budget for education, and related expenditures
- Offering capacity-building opportunities to representatives from the Malawian education sector, and non-governmental organisations, focusing on budget tracking, advocacy, research and communication strategies
- Policy analysis and advocacy activities with key stakeholders such as academia, the Parliament of Malawi, and university student movements in an attempt to influence and support policy reforms in the Malawian education sector
- On-going community mobilisation and constituency building activities, focusing specifically on the attainment of the 'Education For All' and the Millennium Development (education) Goals
- An access to information campaign

Examples of other previous projects undertaken by the coalition include projects on gender responsive budgeting, and an education service delivery satisfaction survey in 2009.

The coalition's research is aligned to the activities listed above. CSEC focuses on the attainment of local and international education goals, the quality and content of education, early childhood development, and the educational rights of the child.

The organisation seeks to encourage the uptake and use of the research data it generates through the establishment of partnership with key stakeholders in the Malawian government (notably the Malawian Ministry of Education, Science and Technology). These partnerships are longer-term, and ensure that both the coalition and the government partner are involved in the complete research process, can select research topics, and are capable of interpreting and utilising the data.

## **Malawi Economic Justice Network (MEJN)**

The Malawi Economic Justice Network (MEJN)<sup>50</sup> is a coalition of over 100 civil society organisations (including NGOs, CBOs, trade unions, and representatives of the media and various academic institutions) active in the economic governance sector of Malawi. The

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<sup>50</sup> All data on the MEJN from <http://www.mejn.mw/mission.html>

network has representatives in all of Malawi's districts. In its mission statement, the MEJN describes itself as "committed to poverty reduction through the promotion of equitable and just distribution of socio-economic opportunities".

The network engages in a number of broad initiatives directed toward the attainment of its aforementioned commitment including:

- To create partnerships between civil society and the government in order to influence and direct pro-poor policy development
- Through capacity-building initiatives that contribute to a sustainable civil society sector capable of effecting activities that promote the welfare of citizens and, in particular, of the poor
- Through policy research and the dissemination of research data to capacitate civil society to engage in policy processes, and to directly influence the development and implementation of policy processes
- Through advocacy and monitoring, to increase government accountability and thereby contribute to good economic governance

MEJN often interacts with the Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development – something which will be explored in greater depth in the needs assessment report.

## **Leadership for the Environment and Development (LEAD)**

Leadership for Environment and Development (LEAD) consists of a worldwide network of individuals and organisations that are committed to promoting sustainable development. It was initially established in 1991 by The Rockefeller Foundation<sup>51</sup>. LEAD Southern and Eastern Africa (LEAD SEA) is based in Zomba in Malawi and is part of UNIMA. It was established in 1994 and is one of three LEAD offices in Africa<sup>52</sup>. LEAD sees itself as "an environmental and developmental think tank that goes beyond training and research to find practical ways to move human society to live in ways that protect the Earth's environment and its capacity to provide [for] the needs and aspirations of current and future generations"<sup>53</sup>.

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<sup>51</sup> [http://www.ecosystemmarketplace.com/pages/dynamic/organization.page.php?page\\_id=940](http://www.ecosystemmarketplace.com/pages/dynamic/organization.page.php?page_id=940)

<sup>52</sup> <http://www.leadsea.mw/about/index.php>

<sup>53</sup> <http://www.leadsea.mw/about/index.php>

One of the many projects and programmes that LEAD SEA participates in is the Lake Chilwa Basin Climate Change Adaptation Programme (LCBCCAP) – a five-year programme aimed at securing the livelihood of people in the Lake Chilwa Basin through implementing strategies to cope with climate change that support the Malawi National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPA)<sup>54</sup>.

LEAD SEA conducts policy-relevant and needs-driven research. This attention to needs-driven research is of particular importance, considering that Malawi is a resource poor country and thus requires that research funding be strategically targeted. The organisation also participates in different forums such as sector-specific technical committees that aim to feed research into policy. LEAD SEA also disseminates research findings in a way that is easier for government to work with (for example, publishing research findings in the form of policy briefs that contain less jargon, etc.)<sup>55</sup>.

Table 3 below provides a summary the networks discussed and their engagement with government.

***Table 3: Summary of how research centres and networks engage with government***

Name	Summary of engagements with government	Key networks
African Community of Practice (AfCOP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Malawi chapter in the process of being established</li> <li>Will focus on building institutional capacity to deliver goods and services</li> </ul>	A broader community of practice in Africa
Dignitas International and KTP Malawi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Institutionalised advocacy to bridge the gap between research, policy, and practice</li> </ul>	None
Civil Society Education Coalition (CSEC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The coalition conducts development research, policy analysis, and advocacy to inform education policy processes</li> <li>It also engages in monitoring, capacity</li> </ul>	78 civil society organisations and 27 education

<sup>54</sup> <http://www.lakechilwaproject.mw/introduction.php>

<sup>55</sup> Information from conversations with key stakeholders in the Malawi research landscape.

	building, and community mobilisation and research activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It has an established relationship with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology</li> </ul>	networks
Malawi Economic Justice Network (MEJN)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotes a more equitable and just distribution of socio-economic opportunities by building partnerships between government and civil society, capacity building in civil society organisations, policy research and data dissemination, and advocacy and monitoring</li> </ul>	100 civil society organisations
Leadership for the Environment and Development, Southern and Eastern Africa (LEAD SEA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducts policy-relevant research</li> <li>• Participates in forums that aim to feed research into policy</li> </ul>	Part of an international LEAD network

### 5.3. Private consultants

In addition to research centres, NGOs, and other organisations involved in the supply and dissemination of research, it is necessary to mention private consultancy companies and individual private consultants who work in the research sphere outside of government. Private consultants are highly mobile and many have worked in government before. Many continue to work closely with government through commissioned research – either by government itself, or by donors.

### 5.4. Statutory institutions

Malawian research councils have undergone restructuring in the last few years. In 2008 the National Research Council of Malawi (NRC) and the Department of Science and Technology were integrated to form the National Commission for Science and Technology (NCST), which is tasked with advising the Malawian government on issues relating to science and

technology<sup>56</sup>. The NCST hosts a number of projects, such as the Health Research Capacity Strengthening Initiative (HRCSI) funded by DFID and the Wellcome Trust which is aimed at enhancing institutional capacity for research, the formulation of evidence-based policies and programmes, sharing scientific knowledge, and improving the regulation and coordination of national health research in Malawi<sup>57</sup>.

The National Statistical Office (NSO) of Malawi operates under the 2013 Statistics Act and is the primary government department responsible for the collection and dissemination of official statistics. They are responsible for a wide range of surveys, such as the population census and household, health and housing surveys<sup>58</sup>. The NSO is a key link between data and government decision-making, but as they are considered part of government, their role will be explored in greater detail in the needs assessment report.

## **6. The preliminary relationship landscape**

This section describes the preliminary relationship landscape as it pertains to organisational / institutional facilitation of evidence use in government policy processes. The diagram below presents an illustrative summary of how organisations and programmes are working across the landscape to increase the usefulness and use of research by decision-makers in government. The following points should be noted:

- The left side of the diagram represents classic producers of research such as universities. In Malawi the key examples listed are the Centre for Social Research, the Centre for Educational Research and Training, the College of Medicine and the Centre for Agricultural Research.
- The right side of the diagram represents those who demand research, in other words government departments. In the case of Malawi, key government partners include the Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development (MoFEPD) and the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, while other specific departments are presented as examples. We acknowledge that the use of evidence in decision-making applies to all government departments.
- The detail on the right side of the panel serves to illustrate that government departments are also generators of research data. Government departments either have

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<sup>56</sup> <http://www.ncst.mw/>

<sup>57</sup> <http://www.ncst.mw/index.php/projects/hrcsi>

<sup>58</sup> <http://www.nsomalawi.mw/index.php/about-us.html>

their own research departments or internal structures enabling them to conduct research that generate evidence for policy processes, or they partner with (or contract) other research organisations (often on a long-term basis) to conduct particular research tasks (this will be explored in greater detail in the needs assessment). The closer the circle to the tab on the right, the closer the research interaction and policy influence between the institution and the government department.

- An important point to note about the diagram is that the arrows at the bottom represent the commissioning of research from universities by government. What emanated from one of our conversations with a key stakeholder in the research landscape is that there are three ways in which academics interact with government:
  1. Government commissions a research centre to do research
  2. Academics are asked to be part of technical committees constituted by government
  3. Academics work as consultants on government research projects

The above discussion of research centres' work particularly illustrates the commissioning of research by government, which is one of the main forms of interaction between academics and government. It is clear that in the Malawian context, universities take on more than their traditional role of producing academic research which might be different from other country-contexts.

- Institutions such as the NSO and NCST are statutory bodies. The NSO produces research while the NCST is supposed to have an overview of research conducted in Malawi and research should be registered with it. The institutions are part of the formal 'systems' through which data reach decision-makers or where decisions-makers can become aware of research that has been conducted or is underway.
- The remainder of the organisations and networks mentioned are spread across the landscape based on a rough estimation of how closely they work with government in order to promote EIDM. Some of these networks (such as KTP Malawi) have a formalised process of engagement with government, while others engage more informally. Organisations such as CHAI are almost embedded in government, while other organisations have less formal and more *ad hoc* engagement with government. As already noted the closer the organisation is placed to a government department, the more formalised or involved the research relationship between the organisation and the government department is (and by implication, the bigger the organisation's impact on evidence-informed policy processes).

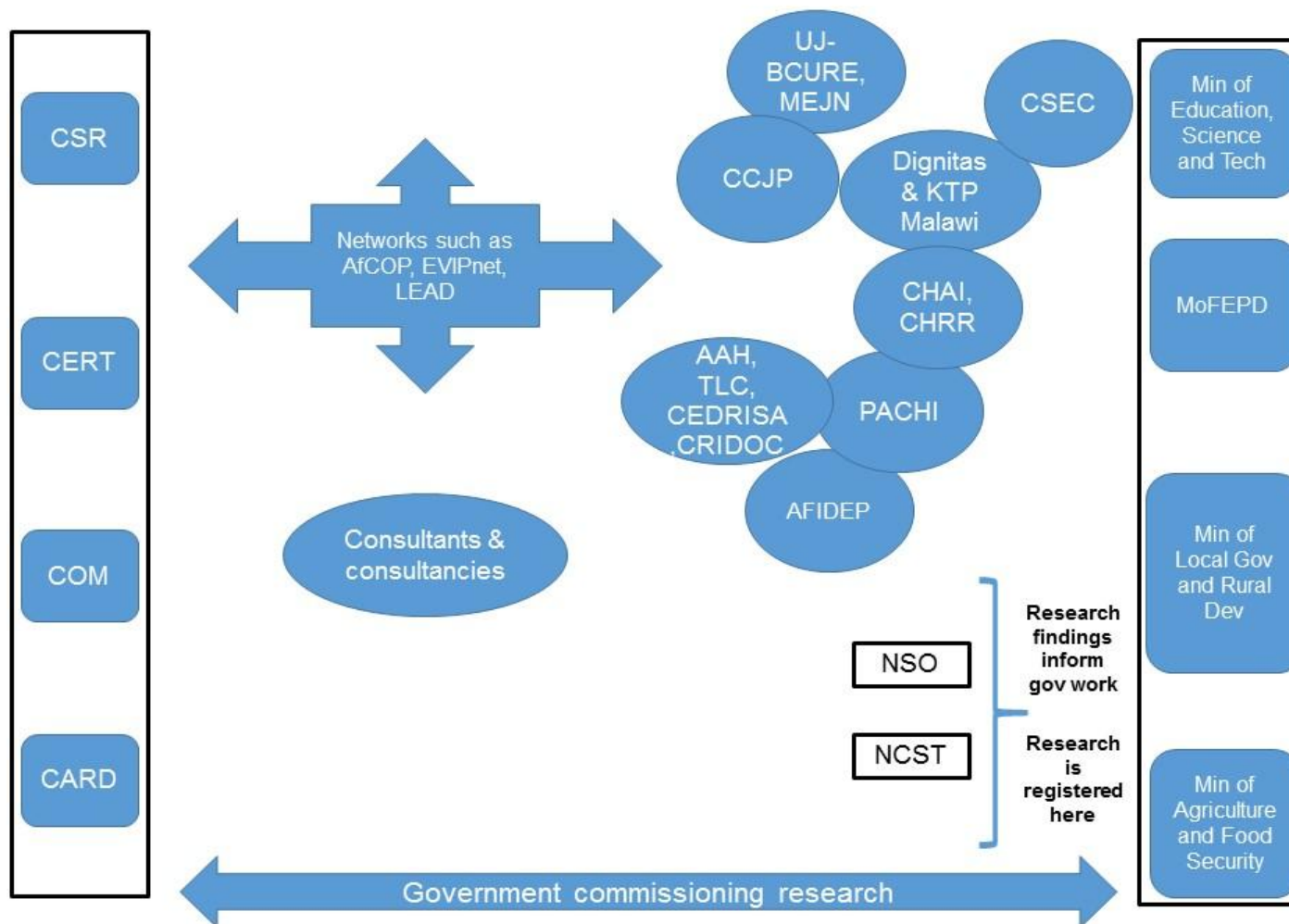


Figure 2: Representation of select role players in the research field and their engagement with government

## **7. Other key findings and next steps**

- There is evidence of strong partnerships and networking arrangements between government departments and civil society organisations, and among civil society organisations, for the dissemination and uptake of data and evidence into policy processes.
- Dissemination occurs through commissioned research, direct engagement, utilisation of mainstream media, and through information communication technologies such as websites.
- It seems clear that there are a number of research centres and organisations conducting research and that the supply of research is therefore strong. However, as was pointed out in conversations with key stakeholders in the Malawi research landscape, the supply and quality of research is not equal across all of the different sectors.
- It is also noticeable that much of the research conducted is aimed at addressing developmental needs. This points to two important aspects: that within the context of a resource-poor country, research is specifically targeted to address development; and much of the research that is conducted is donor-funded, which further explains the emphasis on developmental issues.
- Much of this report has focused on what institutions say they do in order to help facilitate the translation of their research findings into policy. The report has provided some evidence in this regard. However, what the impact of this work is ( in other words, the extent to which research is in fact being taken up by government for use in policy and other decisions) will be explored in subsequent work.
- This landscape review has focused on some of the relationships of the main players in EIDM in Malawi. Although the UJ-BCURE team has not been successful in securing a workshop to present this report to government, a near-final version was reviewed by a staff member of the CSR in his personal capacity. This landscape review is the first step of a broader programme of capacity-building work with decision-makers in the Malawian government.



## Appendix I: Summary of PACHI activities and profile

### **Overview of PACHI's Research Activities**

The Parent and Child Health Initiative (PACHI) is a local NGO registered in Malawi. It works in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, University of Malawi, and various other stakeholders in the area of maternal and child health. PACHI's goal is to develop and promote evidence-based decisions on maternal and child health issues. The organisation does this by developing research capacity in Malawi through an inter-disciplinary programme of excellence in research as well as by promoting evidence uptake into policy and practice. Through its technical advisors and senior board members (representing academic institutions and Ministry of Health, Malawi), the organisation links to other maternal and new-born health projects in Malawi, the Malawian Ministry of Health, and the University of Malawi.

PACHI supports local, low-cost, and sustainable people-driven initiatives, and strong generation and use of evidence. PACHI's mission is to promote high quality, sustainable, and cost-effective maternal and child health care delivery, capacity building, and research in health facilities and communities to promote the health of men, women, and children in Malawi and beyond.

The organisation states in its vision that it “exists to drive advancement in maternal and child care through evidence-based, sustainable, and reliable solutions and technologies”. The organisational goal is to develop and promote evidence-based decisions on maternal and child health programmes and interventions. The objectives are to:

- Generate evidence to improve the lives of women & children
- Implement the Getting Research Into Policy and Practice (GRIPP) programme
- Build systems, structures, and appropriate partnerships for maternal, newborn and child health (MNCH) strengthening.

PACHI has completed, and is currently implementing, various research projects. These include: Missed Opportunities in Maternal and Infant Health (MOMI), Pneumonia (PCV 13) effectiveness study, Acute Respiratory Infection (ARI) retrospective data study, pneumonia prognostic study, Wellcome Trust Strategic Award (WTSa), International Men and Gender Survey (IMAGES).

Further, PACHI - in collaboration with other stakeholders - supports the Ministry of Health (MoH) to improve maternal and neonatal health through a DFID funded programme entitled Evidence for Action, Ntcheu Integrated Maternal and Child Health Project (NIMCHP), as well as a USAID funded programme named Support for Service Delivery Integration (SSDI) Maternal and Child Health project.

### **History of PACHI's research-into-policy activities**

PACHI was set up in 2009 with support from the Institute of Global Health (IGH), formerly the Centre for International Health & Development (CIHD) of the University College of London. PACHI's establishment was further facilitated by the Wellcome Trust Strategic Award (WTSA). The WTSA aims to improve the survival of women and children in high mortality settings through evidence-based policy and practice. The overall aim was to create an initiative to bring together the various research and development activities conducted in Malawi to influence policy and practice related to maternal and child health. IGH, under the guidance of Prof Anthony Costello, has been working in Malawi since 2002 and has been associated with various projects such as MaiMwana, MaiKhanda, and the Ntcheu perinatal care project.

The MaiMwana project (since 2002), through the Paediatric Unit of Kamuzu Central Hospital, undertakes research in Mchinji aimed at reducing maternal and neonatal mortality in Malawi through community mobilisation via women's groups. PACHI provides technical advice through its technical advisors and currently facilitates the development of the MaiMwana Strategic Plan for 2012 – 2016. PACHI works with the IGH in MaiMwana. IGH led the evaluation of the MaiKhanda project (February 2006 – February 2012), which is currently being implemented in three districts (Kasungu, Lilongwe and Salima). It uses women's groups to assist in improving the quality of services in health facilities to reduce maternal mortality and morbidity in the participating districts.

The Perinatal Healthcare project in Ntcheu district has been working with women's groups in the community using the existing health care infrastructure. PACHI provides technical advice, participates in board meetings, and is involved in a project funded by Comic Relief to undertake an evaluation.

## **Overview of key activities undertaken**

### Missed Opportunities in Maternal and Infant Health (MOMI)

This is a European Union (EU) funded health systems research project (2011 – 2016) to identify and implement missed opportunities in maternal and infant health, especially in the postpartum period (from delivery up to time the child is one year old). The project is implemented in four African countries (Burkina Faso, Kenya, Malawi, and Mozambique) with PACHI as the implementing partner for Malawi. The implementing consortium also consists of European universities, including Ghent University as the lead partner, the University of Porto, and the University College London. In Malawi, the project is implemented in Ntchisi district. The MOMI project seeks to understand the local context, is facilitated and owned by the District Health Management Team (DHMT), and identifies solutions (via interventions) based on local situation analysis, stakeholder analysis, and local policy analysis.

### Pneumonia health services study (2012 – 2014)

With the introduction of the 13-valent pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (13-PCV), this study investigates the effect of the vaccine on health service delivery for pneumonia. This is a Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation funded, three year project. The study is taking place in two central region districts in Malawi – Mchinji and Kabudula (Lilongwe). The project closely engages the DHMT in implementation. The 13-PCV study commenced in November 2011 in Lilongwe and Mchinji districts. In Lilongwe, the study is being carried out at Kamuzu Central Hospital and in the Kabudula area at Kabudula Community Hospital, seven health centres, and 20 village clinics. In Mchinji, the study is being carried out at five hospitals, ten health centres, and 20 village clinics. This study aims to assess the pattern and severity of pneumonia presented at health facilities in two districts in Malawi before and after the introduction of the pneumococcal vaccine. The primary objective is to understand the disease burden of pneumonia on the health system as a result of the introduction of the vaccine as well as the economic implications thereof.

### Wellcome Trust Strategic Award (WTSA)

The award is aimed at building the evidence for maternal and child health survival in high mortality settings. The objective is to conduct cross-site comparisons and build local research capacity through the development of a global network of linked surveillance sites in Bangladesh, India, Malawi, and Nepal to study population maternal and child health survival. Through WTSA, a studentship programme has been developed for PACHI's academic

engagement with the University of Malawi, particularly for a PhD programme, so as to build strong research capacities within the country. One PhD student is currently registered with the College of Medicine, Blantyre and is doing his research as part of the MaiMwana project.

#### Evidence for Action (E4A)

This is a five year DfID funded, Options led project (2011 – 2016) looking at evidence, advocacy, and accountability for maternal and neonatal health. The Evidence for Action (E4A) programme is being implemented in Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and Tanzania being funded by the Department for International Development. In Malawi, E4A is being implemented in six districts of Malawi (Kasungu, Ntchisi, Mchinji, Ntcheu, Balaka and Mangochi). In each of these districts there are multi-sectoral teams, which are based at the district hospitals. The country team is hosted by Kamuzu College of Nursing. Supporting the country team are a consortium of internationally recognised experts in evidence, advocacy, and accountability skills including Options, Advocacy International, the University College of London, the University of Aberdeen, and the University of Southampton.

#### IMAGES Study Project (2013 – 2014)

The International Men and Gender Survey (IMAGES) is a one year project funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). It is conducted by the SONKE gender network in collaboration with a research partner (PACHI) in Malawi. IMAGES is a quantitative and anonymous household survey on men's attitudes and practices – along with women's opinions and reports of men's practices – on a wide variety of topics related to gender equality. It has previously been conducted in seven countries on different continents (including Rwanda and South Africa). In Malawi, it is conducted in five districts: two in the central region (Lilongwe and Kasungu), two in the southern region (Blantyre and Chiradzulu) and one in the northern region (Mzimba). The aim of the project is to build an understanding of men's practices and attitudes as they relate to gender equality, to inform, drive, and monitor both policy development and interventions that promote gender equality.

#### **The future**

The core programmes to guide PACHI in the next five years include:

1. Develop and pilot Paediatric Health Information System in Malawi for better data and clinical management of paediatric health services
2. Development of a clinical learning and mentorship programme
3. Facilitate the roll out of Maternal Death Surveillance and Response system / community maternal death reviews
4. Advocate for increased access to maternal, new-born, and child healthcare, including HIV treatment
5. Pilot mhealth in the following:
  - Use of hand held devices using MIVA to report health data from communities
  - Pilot the use of smart card (e-health passport) to improve health records

