Navigating between pressures and accountabilities

Local civil society organization’s approaches and challenges to linking relief, rehabilitation, and development in Malawi
Abstract
Malawi is one of the poorest countries in the world and suffers from recurring disasters but no ongoing conflicts. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) working there must therefore take relief, rehabilitation, and development into account as shifting between these stages is the reality of the rights-holders. What approaches that should be used while doing this is unique in each context. The aid structure is however clearly divided between those working with relief and those working with development, and even though the conceptual development suggest that the aid structure should join there has been no change towards this. At the same time Result Based Management (RBM) as a principle for aid effectiveness has been heavily criticized for focusing on short term results, among others.

This qualitative study has contributed to closing two research gaps; in identifying that Disaster Risk Reduction, Human Rights Based Approach, economic empowerment, and sustainable relief interventions are the approaches that CSOs in Malawi tend to focus on when working close to a community where there is a need to link relief, rehabilitation, and development (LRRD); and in identifying that not only can the pressure from a divided aid structure be blamed for the challenges facing CSOs implementing LRRD approaches, but RBM is also a contributing part. This results in CSOs being torn between accountability issues towards donors and staying legitimate towards rights-holders and that because of these challenges they cannot live up to their potential and provide the most effective aid.

Key-words:
Result Based Management, linking relief rehabilitation and development, LRRD, aid effectiveness, civil society organizations, development cooperation, recurring disasters, Malawi
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List of abbreviations
CARD Churches Action in Relief and Development
CBO Community Based Organization
CECOWDA Centre for Conflict Management and Women Development Affairs
CEPA Center for Environment Policy and Advocacy
CSO Civil Society Organization
DAC Development Assistance Committee
DoDMA Department of Disaster Management Affairs
DRR Disaster Risk Reduction
GNI Gross National Income
HDI Human Development Index
HRBA Human Rights Based Approach
(I)-NGO (International) Non-governmental Organization
IDP Internally Displaced Persons
IM Individuell Människohjälp, Swedish Development Partner
IO International Organization
LDC Less Developed Country
LRRD Linking Relief, Rehabilitation, and Development
ODA Official Development Assistance
PME Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluating
RMB Result Based Management
Sida Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SSA Sub-Saharan Africa
SRGDI Sustainable Rural Growth Development Initiative
VSL Village Saving and Loan
WOLREC Women’s Legal Resource Center
WLSA Women and Law Southern Africa

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1 Introduction

Sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries are still, after some 60 years of independence, the least developed countries in the world. Weak states, colonial history, wars, oppressive regimes, and highly vulnerable populations are some of the reasons why many SSA countries struggle with poverty despite often accessing great natural resources.\(^1\) Another reason is aid dependency and ineffective aid, causing weaker institutions and resulting in states lacking incentives to develop functioning bureaucratic systems and capacity building.\(^2\) Malawi is one of the countries which suffer from these historical, social, and institutional barriers for development, and is also the victim of recurring natural disaster such as droughts and flooding. To combat these issues Development Assistance Committee (DAC)-member states and have come together to pledge that 0.7 percent of each Gross National Income (GNI) should be directed towards poverty reduction in Less Developed Countries (LDCs\(^3\)). But despite having a clear set target the average delivered is 0.3 percent,\(^4\) and only a third of this is directed towards the least developed countries,\(^5\) making it even more important that the funds are used in the most effective manner. States have therefore also come together to define and harmonize key principles for effective aid, through an array of global forums. The key principles for aid effectiveness are the basis on how aid is directed from donors to LDCs. They aim at achieving both local ownership, inclusive partnership, and mutual accountability, together with a result (the latter which is achieved through result based management (RBM)). Several researchers such as Eyben (2006), de Renzio (2016), and Holzapfel (2016) find this combination contradictory in its nature and thus explain it to be the reason why aid often result in being ineffective. It is specifically the focus on RBM, as a conditionality for the recipient organizations, that is argued to promote a short term thinking through too much focus on technical result as an output rather than the growth of long term, vibrant, and sustainable development.

At the same time, there are other issues with aid that are said to contribute to a less effective poverty reduction. Financial aid from DAC member countries, multilateral financial institutions, and International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) to LDCs have traditionally

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\(^1\) Gregson “The poorest countries in the world”
\(^2\) Bräutigam 2000:1
\(^3\) LDCs in this paper is paper refers to Less Developed Countries, also known as simply “Developing Countries.” Developing Countries is however a contested term, it implies that some countries have stopped developing or reached a peak. LDC can in some instances be the abbreviation for Least Developed Countries but this definition is not used in this study.
\(^4\) OECD “Statistics on resource flows to developing countries: Table 9: Long term trends in DAC ODA”
\(^5\) OECD “Statistics on resource flows to developing countries: Table 31: Aid from DAC countries to least developed countries”
been divided in two separate structures; development and relief. Economic aid aimed at developmental efforts refers to the type of aid with long-term goals of improving human rights, reduce poverty and support democratization processes. Development assistance usually works closely with government or local civil society. Relief, or humanitarian assistance, refers to the immediate actions taken to save lives and alleviate suffering during and directly after a disaster strikes. It is short-term and does not aim at fighting the root causes of the crises. Relief assistance tend to adhere strictly to the principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence. The question of keeping the two separate structures, or combining them, has been discussed by both aid agencies and researchers for many decades, and since the 1990’s the common conceptual understanding of the approach to Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD) has been that working more closely with development and relief actions would result in smarter and more effective aid, particularly in areas of no ongoing conflict but recurring natural disasters. However, while the conceptual understanding has been developed there has been no corresponding programming framework, and no structural change towards LRRD that has followed the analytical development, meaning that combining and joining efforts of short term relief interventions and long term development programs is still not the norm in international aid and development. Within EU, one of the biggest donors of aid, there are however many writings and policies on the topic but even in that case implementation is found to rely very much on individual willingness and informal coordination.

One of the greatest challenges with LRRD is also the lack of research on how local civil society organizations (CSOs) deals with working through both structures simultaneously and what approaches they are drawn towards implementing. Much research exists on how donors want to organize “our aid”, but there is a research gap on how local CSOs that work in direct contact with the rights-holders experience the challenges of working with two different aid structures in areas where relief and development must be implemented simultaneously, and there is a research gap when combining these with the issues connected to RBM. While it is known that

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6 Humanitarian Coalition “From humanitarian to development aid”
7 Development assistance, development and long-term development are used interchangeable in this study, as well as relief, humanitarian relief, and food assistance.
8 Rehabilitation is a harder concept to define than relief or development. It is often closely linked with post-conflict zones, were rehabilitation could mean rebuilding trust between different groups, disarmament, solving issues regarding land rights, rebuilding infrastructure and transferring back IDPs, or the rebuilding of societies after a difficult natural disaster. Slowly growing disasters such as drought and crop failures are often not the main target group for rehabilitation efforts. Therefore it is not in focus in this study, but should be mentioned as a part of the LRRD approach. Buchanan-Smith and Maxwell 1994:7
9 Buchanan-Smith and Fabbri 2005:36
10 Directorate-general for external policy, policy department, 2012:5
11 Buchanan-Smith and Fabbri 2005:37
the funding gap between relief and development implementation is one of the issues regarding LRRD and causing a need for LRRD (both as to why it is necessary to implement and why it is so difficult to do so.)\(^{12}\) I have found no studies that look at RBM, being a key principle for aid effectiveness, also affecting LRRD approaches and challenges. It is thus a knowledge gap within the research field where the perspectives and challenges of LRRD and RBM are combined, even though they are both claimed to be important for the implementation and aid effectiveness for local CSOs, especially those working in areas where there is a need for relief and development initiatives to be implemented simultaneously. So, what LRRD approaches do CSOs use and can the challenges that CSOs face while trying to implement LRRD approaches be explained by not only the clear division donors have and the disasters themselves, but also the use of RBM?

1.1 Disposition
The theory used in this paper is based on three different aspects, conditions, that create pressure and challenges for the CSOs. These conditions are described in chapter 2, theory and theoretical framework, and further described in chapter 4 on contextual background. Research questions 1 and 2 are answered in chapter 5, empirical findings, while research question 3 is answered through the discussion in chapter 6. Final conclusion and suggestions on further research is found in chapter 7.

1.2 Purpose and research questions

*The aim of this paper is to identify and analyze how local CSOs in an area of recurring crises and with a highly vulnerable population implement links between relief, rehabilitation, and development and what challenges they face while trying to do so.*

The research questions that will guide this study are;

1. What are the LRRD approaches that CSOs in Malawi use?
2. How can the challenges CSOs face be explained by the pressure from recurring disasters; a divided aid structure; and Result Based Management?
3. How are the challenges from these three pressures and LRRD approaches intertwined with each other and how does this affect the aid effectiveness?

\(^{12}\) See Audet 2015
2 Theoretical background and theoretical assumption

Chapter 2.1 describes the key principles for aid effectiveness between donors and recipients of aid, and from where they stem, with specific focus on Result Based Management, as this is a principle that many argues works contradictory to the rest. Eyben’s book “Relationships for Aid” (2006) is also used to describe some of the main characteristics with donor-recipient relationships.

Chapter 2.2 focuses on LRRD as an umbrella set of approaches to development. While LRRD is a well-known within development research, it is not to be considered as one set theory of development. To understand how local CSOs work with LRRD in practice it is important to understand the ideas and conceptual development of LRRD. This chapter also provides some background on human rights based approach and disaster risk reduction, two common approaches to LRRD which also the local CSOs in this study use, and the importance of flexibility within LRRD.

Chapter 2.3 presents the combined theory used in this study, a combination of different pressures that CSOs navigate between.

2.1 Result Based Management as a key principle of aid effectiveness

It was against the backdrop of over 50 years of very little poverty reduction and little result from international aid, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa that the principles of aid effectiveness with particular focus on results was agreed on through a series of High Level Fora on Aid Effectiveness, the first one in Paris 2005. The first fora resulted in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, a declaration made by ministers in developing and developed countries and multilateral and bilateral development institutions to commit to smarter aid and reach the Millennium Development Goals. The declaration stated ownership, harmonization, alignment, results, and mutual accountability as key principles for aid effectiveness. The second fora in 2008 resulted in the Accra Agenda for Action, an endorsement made by ministers of developing and donor countries responsible for promoting development and heads of multilateral and bilateral development institutions to further accelerate and deepen the implementation of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. The endorsement claimed to further strengthen country ownership over development, build more effective and inclusive partnerships for development, and delivering and accounting for development results. During the Busan Partnership for Effective

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13 Holzapfel 2016:9
14 OECD. Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness 2005
15 OECD. Accra Agenda for Action 2008
Development Co-Operation meeting in 2011 the countries agreed to focus on four principles; ownership of development priorities by developing countries, a continued focus on results, inclusive development partnerships, and transparency and accountability to each other.\textsuperscript{16} The first High Level meeting of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation in Mexico City 2014 reaffirmed the previous principles and commitments and added a focus on supporting transition to resilience of fragile and conflict-affected states.\textsuperscript{17} The latest high-level meeting in Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation in Nairobi 2016 also reimbursed the previous principles.\textsuperscript{18}

It is on the premises of these principles that aid agencies interact, and the relationship between different aid agencies is crucial for how they manage to work with their respective missions. Rosalind Eyben suggest that we view the relationship between these different donors as a web of connections, rather than the binary donor/recipient idea, as most of the aid agencies are in fact both donors and recipients of aid. INGOs usually get their funding from DAC governments or private donors or taxpayers to which they are held accountable, while CSO in recipient countries also are donors of aid, either directly to the beneficiaries or to community based organizations (CBOs).\textsuperscript{19} However, even though this way of thinking makes it easier to understand the complicated nature of aid relationships, money matters and just looking at the connection between an INGO and local CSO, there is an unequal power balance between the two. Not just because of the flow of funding but also because the recipients of aid are accountable to their donor, to which they must adhere to rules and conditions focusing on providing results, in order to spend the money in the way the donor believe will achieve their expected outcomes. The donors are less accountable to their recipients.\textsuperscript{20} Thus, while “mutual accountability” is one of the key partnership commitments of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness,\textsuperscript{21} recipients cannot do much more than loudly object if donors would make unfulfilled pledges; there are no sanctions to be made when donors are not fulfilling their commitment to stay accountable. The other part could however possibly lose all funding if they do not meet the required conditions. This is however not something that either side likes to bring up as would shine light on the

\textsuperscript{16} OECD. Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation 2011:3
\textsuperscript{17} OECD. Mexico City Outcome Document, First High-level Meeting for Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation 2014
\textsuperscript{18} Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation. Nairobi Outcome Document, Second High-level Meeting for Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation 2016
\textsuperscript{19} Eyben “Introduction” 2006:1
\textsuperscript{20} Shutt “Money matters in aid relationships” 2006:154
\textsuperscript{21} OECD. Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness 2005
uncomfortable fact that the relationship is, in fact, unequal. Nevertheless, the unequal power relationship is visible in other aspects, for example while donors often describe and view their donors as “partners”, the recipients of aid almost always refer to organizations that hand over money simply as “donors.”

But not only do donors have the upper hand regarding funding, they also have the privilege and upper hand to define what is acceptable knowledge and what the best solutions to solve the massive issues that aid agencies are facing, such as eradicating world poverty. RBM determines what the expected outcome of an intervention should be in advance, and what kind of evidence that is acceptable as a proof of the achieved result, evidence that is often defined by donors rather than recipients. The focus on results in the final agreements from the high-level meetings has created a cultural norm within committed donor agencies to report data in set standard indicators resulting in less long term reported results of development. Results from advocacy and institution or capacity building is tended not to be reported on in result frameworks since it is difficult to quantify the data. By using a reporting and management approach that tends to focus quantity over quality the civil society in recipient countries also gets neglected in their own growth and development.

To work around this unequal power relationship, donors should support the CSOs to be the change, rather than just an instrument of change (an implementer of donor’s goals). Meaning donors’ role should be to support their partners with whom they share common values and mission in capacity development and changing policy environment. To ensure sustainable development focus needs to shift from the accountability donor organizations feel towards the taxpayers or funding government, to the accountability they should have towards beneficiaries of foreign aid, both CSOs and individual rights-holders. This also means shifting focus from short-term results to long term institution building.

So, is result based management all bad? No, there is evidence that enhanced focus on result and result based management has led to improved policy coherence and planning, and improved

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22 Eyben “Introduction” 2006:13
23 Shutt “Money matter in aid relationships” 2006:154
24 In this study I use the term donor organization/INGO, and recipient organization/local CSO. Partner is primarily used to describe local CSOs that work together.
25 Eyben “Making relationships matter for aid bureaucracies” 2006:51
26 Ibid. 2006:50
27 Holzapfel 2016:4
28 Eyben “Making relationships matter for aid bureaucracies” 2006:53
29 De Renzio 2016:13
national systems for monitoring, and is important for broadening the support for aid in general.\textsuperscript{30} The focus on standardized result framework with set indicators increase the public support for development (but only for donor agencies and the public in donor countries.)\textsuperscript{31} RBM initiatives taken by Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) has shown valuable for particularly one thing, its symbolic purpose. By using the approach the public assumes that they are getting value for money, and thus gives a “feel good” value; the tax payers believe that they are contributing to something good,\textsuperscript{32} this even though the results have not even been open to the Swedish public to scrutinize.\textsuperscript{33}

The issues with RBM are however severe; there are practical issues with aggregating data, measuring sustainable results in short term, knowing what indicators are the most relevant, and even attributing the correct results to the correct project. There have also been issues with overly complicated systems which organizations lack resources and capacity to implement successfully. The results are not used as its intended purpose – to improve the decision making and analysis process – but rather as a technical controlling tool and for accountability purposes – accountability primarily towards the donors.\textsuperscript{34} To add to the complexity of the issue, even donors might not always think RBM is the best option. A study on Sida found that the staff often is torn between being understood as illegitimate towards their donors (taxpayer and government) by being scared of sanctions or facing scrutiny if not providing results,\textsuperscript{35} and by the idea of contributing to improved condition for the recipients of aid, something that has no real connection to RBM.\textsuperscript{36} Implementing RBM was also understood as taking valuable time and effort from doing more important tasks.\textsuperscript{37} But not only does the result framework remove focus from long term development results, the results that are reported on are still only snapshots of the main activities and does not provide an accurate picture of what has actually been reached.\textsuperscript{38} A donor using a “value for money” approach might see the cost benefit of implementing a project themselves faster and reaching more beneficiaries as more cost effective than providing capacity building and support for local partners to develop an organization able to implement the

\textsuperscript{30} Vähämäki, Schmidt and Molander 2011:48-49
\textsuperscript{31} Holzapfel 2016:3
\textsuperscript{32} Vähämäki 2017:242
\textsuperscript{33} As an effort from the government to become more transparent some of the results are published on an online database, but a review found that the public was not interested in checking data; the site was mostly used by Sida staff themselves. See Resare “Regerings öppenhetsgaranti om biståndet floppade”
\textsuperscript{34} Vähämäki, Schmidt and Molander 2011:48-49
\textsuperscript{35} Vähämäki 2017:239
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid. 2017:236
\textsuperscript{37} Ibid. 2017:235
\textsuperscript{38} Holzapfel 2016:3
project in question. Thus, the result based key principle tends to contradict the other key principles of local/country ownership and mutual accountability and results in a paradox which ends up in promoting an ineffective development agenda.\textsuperscript{39}

In summary, there is an accountability dilemma where donor organizations are accountable to their tax payers or members/donors, while organizations in recipient countries are accountable to the rights-holders and communities.\textsuperscript{40} To work around this issue, among others, states around the world has agreed on certain key principles that development cooperation agencies and institutions should adhere to; ownership of development priorities by developing countries, a continued focus on results, inclusive development partnerships, and transparency and increasing the accountability to each other.\textsuperscript{41} But since there is an unequal relationship, as Eyben explains, RBM, an approach advocated by the donor side, is tended to be favored over the other principles, in situations where they clash and are difficult to comply with simultaneously. The accountability that donors have towards the taxpayers is considered more important to keep legitimate than the accountability organizations have towards the rights-holders, the world’s most vulnerable groups of people. Therefore, the accountability recipient CSOs have towards their donors also become greater than the one they have towards the rights-holders and communities. The relationship and accountability flow is described in figure 1.

\textsuperscript{39} Holzapfel 2016:4
\textsuperscript{40} De Renzio 2016:7
\textsuperscript{41} OECD. Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation 2011:3
2.2 A divided aid structure and Linking Relief, Rehabilitation, and Development

As stated in the introduction, relief and development are separate types of aid delivered from separate funding and often separate institutions, and has been so since development cooperation started to grow in the 1950’s. But it was during the 1980’s hunger crisis in Africa that calls for a link between relief and development started. Humanitarian organizations had un-sustainable short-term interventions, and it was unclear when developmental organizations should “take over.” It also became apparent that many different types of interventions needed to be applied at the same time to complement each other, and that there were different needs in different regions of the affected areas. At this time, the common understanding, also within the conceptual research field, was that citizens of a still developing country was “interrupted” by a humanitarian disaster, rather than viewing natural disasters as characteristic feature to the area, and was simply expected to resume to their previous lives once their basic needs had been met. \(^{42}\) While the first calls for linking relief and development started in the 1980’s the conceptual idea was more defined through Buchanan-Smith and Maxwell’s study from 1994. Buchanan-Smith and Maxwell explains LRRD like this:

“Emergencies are costly in terms of human life and resources. They are disruptive of development... ... they have spawned bureaucratic structures... ...which duplicate development institutions and sometimes cut across them. By the same token, development policy and administration are often insensitive to the risk of drought and other shocks, and to the importance of protecting vulnerable households against risk. If relief and development can be ‘linked’, so the theory goes, these deficiencies can be overcome. Better ‘development’ can reduce the need for emergency relief; better ‘relief’ can contribute to development; and better ‘rehabilitation’ can ease the transition between the two.” \(^{43}\)

\(^{42}\) Buchanan-Smith and Maxwell 1994:2  
\(^{43}\) Ibid. 1994:1
During the 1990’s several complicated conflicts caused actors to rethink the “outlier” idea as disasters in many places became a recurring situation which resulted in the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) to be founded in 1999.\textsuperscript{44} The conceptual understanding of LRRD can also be understood as a development from a linear continuum process to something described as a \textit{contiguum}, an understanding that the developing countries are in a general state of vulnerability, which requires an approach that includes the understanding of that different types of phases of response need to co-exists simultaneously.\textsuperscript{45} This relationship is visualized in figure 2. The contiguum suggest a joining of relief and development efforts for a more sustainable and successful development, but of which could contribute to increased conflicts in a conflict prone state, while the continuum is dominated by the idea that humanitarian relief and long term development should remain separate type of interventions because of their different types of imperatives and budgets.\textsuperscript{46} Most researchers within the international development analytically discredited the continuum idea in the 1990’s, but there has been no corresponding programming framework that has followed the analytical development.\textsuperscript{47} This means that combining and joining efforts of short term relief interventions and long term development programs is not the norm in international aid and development; in practice the continuum has

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{Figure2.png}
\caption{Linking relief, rehabilitation, and development. The common conceptual understanding of LRRD is that the approach connects all parts of relief, rehabilitation, and development in a web which are all dependent on each other, a \textit{contiguum}. Authors own visualization.}
\end{figure}

\begin{align*}
\text{Relief aid} \\
\text{LRRD approaches} \\
\text{Development aid} \\
\text{Rehabilitation aid}
\end{align*}

\textsuperscript{44} United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction “Who we are”
\textsuperscript{45} Buchanan-Smith and Fabbri 2005:6
\textsuperscript{46} Koddenbrock with Büttner “Chapter 8. The Will to Bridge? European Commission and U.S. Approaches to Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development.” 2009:117
\textsuperscript{47} Buchanan-Smith and Fabbri 2005:36
continued.48 After the events on September 11, 2001, the debate became somewhat more sophisticated, as it was shaped by donors’ security politics. The idea of LRRD became based on that by using development aid to reduce economic inequalities, avoid protracted conflicts, and fight exclusion, terrorism could be avoided. Humanitarian relief became a political tool while the humanitarian agencies fought to divert themselves from political association, especially in protracted conflicts and crises, as they feared that their work will become more politicized when working together development agencies.49

LRRD in itself is not a set theory, it is the common umbrella agenda for humanitarian and development efforts, a coordination mechanism with multiple frameworks, all with the idea of creating better outcomes in aid programs through a smoother connection between relief and development.50 Meaning that not only should there be a long term aspect to relief interventions, but long term development programs should easier be able to adjust to a sudden change of environment and should always aim to enhance the resilience of the most vulnerable so that a sudden (or expected) disaster will have a less devastating effect. Even though the debate today is still shaped by global security politics and there is still a big focus on natural hazards alone through UNISDR, the final paradigm shift (within the conceptual debate), has been towards resilience/disaster risk reduction (DRR) and human rights based approach (HRBA). Resilience has to do with the power vulnerable people have to avoid suffering during a crisis and has become increasingly in focus because of the increased amount of natural disasters because of global warming. But it is now common understanding that disasters are an effect of that people live in vulnerability because of poverty and that they live in poverty because of inequality, and that they live in inequality because their human rights and freedoms have been neglected.51

Several of the most prominent researchers on the field such as Buchanan-Smith and Fabbri (2005), Bennett and Carpenter (2015), and Levine and Mosel (2014) all argue that flexibility in program and project implementation also is necessary to meet the needs as environment and context can change. This could be done by increasing appeals and budgets to longer periods of time as this would allow a bigger flexibility for implementing organizations to scale up and down,52 respond to early warning signals, and redirect funding to where it is more necessary. The solution, Levin and Mosel argues, comes down to CSOs having the possibility of a log-

48 Buchanan-Smith and Fabbri 2005:6
49 Ibid. 2005:34
50 Levine and Mosel 2014:1
51 Buchanan-Smith and Fabbri 2005:17-18
52 Bennett and Carpenter 2015:6
frame that is not only reporting results on an input/output level. Buchanan-Smith and Fabbri notices that aid is political; while many donors include policies and strategies committing to finding ways to link relief, rehabilitation and development (such as the EU) it is usually those organizations that are the least dependent on official donor funding and with larger amounts of private funding that have the greatest opportunities to link different efforts in a smooth manner, as these do not have the same funding conditionality towards their donors (governments).

The main issue with introducing an LRRD perspective (and the main reason for why it is necessary to do so) has to do with the different principals developmental and humanitarian interventions are based on (described in the introduction). Some argue that the effort to link relief, rehabilitation and development is doing more harm than good as working politically or long-term is contradictory to the basis of which humanitarian organization function and thus counter to the interest of the people they are trying to serve, but this primarily since humanitarian efforts are irreconcilable with development in areas of protracted conflicts where the state is involved. Yes, in some context it is preferred to keep relief and development separate, such as highly politically sensitive conflict areas with protracted crises or wars. There international law should be rigorously upheld and a clear distinction between humanitarian relief and any other type of work must be clearly defined, but in any other area there is no reason to not find ways to link relief, rehabilitation, and development. But the basis of which relief and development functions has resulted in the gaps, which some argues are too big to overcome. The institutional barrier is causing donors to be reluctant to fund programs that is outside their usual sphere which makes LRRD actions hard to implement. Several of the most prominent articles on LRRD argue the same thing; that the constraint against implementing a successful linking is limited mainly by the donors; through their structures, cultures, policies, practices, and politics, such as Koddenbrock and Büttner (2009), Buchanan-Smith and Maxwell (1994), Levine and Mosel (2014). National aid policies impeded by donor regulations mandate a strict bureaucratic distinction, especially regarding humanitarian funding. Those within development cooperation which is advocating an implementation of LRRD approaches has major issues to overcome; the political institutional gap between relief and development has caused a gap in funding, which

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53 Levine and Mosel 2014:13
54 Buchanan-Smith and Fabbri 2005:33
55 See Koddenbrock with Büttner “Chapter 8. The Will to Bridge? European Commission and U.S. Approaches to Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development.” 2009
56 Audet 2015:111
57 Ibid. 2015:113
58 Bennett and Carpenter 2015:8
59 Audet 2015:116
in turn has caused practical and cultural barriers hindering relief and development organizations and institutions to even cooperate.\textsuperscript{60}

This does however not change the reality of fact that today constant, or cyclical, emergencies have created societies that are in extreme poverty and thus extreme vulnerability,\textsuperscript{61} such is the situation in Malawi. People living under these conditions tend to move back and forth between periods of acute crisis and periods of less acute, but still often extreme poverty and high risk of food insecurity, and there is thus an actual need for people and communities that relief and development is linked (more of this is discussed in chapter 4). As of now in these situation, while living in acute crisis, the international humanitarian responses tend to step in, but ad hoc and only to alleviate so little that affected people still live under very harsh conditions (since humanitarian relief is only needs based). At this point interventions usually lose support from the strict humanitarian funding pools, and are not able to provide a long-term solution for developing.\textsuperscript{62} Even though the calls for linking started in the 1980’s, because of the divided structure there is still today a gap when humanitarian agencies leave, and developmental organizations “take over.” Both this “gap” period, and developmental programs which lack investment in resilience, leads instead to increased vulnerability to a future disaster.\textsuperscript{63} As Buchanan-Smith and Maxwell described the need for LRRD; it is necessary, since the opposite supports an unsustainable structure and thus an unsustainable development.\textsuperscript{64}

2.2.1 DRR and HRBA as approaches for LRRD

The final paradigm shift within the conceptual development of LRRD has been, as stated before, towards DRR and HRBA. As these also are identified as two of the main approaches in this study implemented by local CSOs, a short chapter with further background on these approaches follows below.

DRR helps with reducing the frequency, intensity, and impact of shocks and to reduce the need for emergency relief itself.\textsuperscript{65} DRR is usually implemented as a mainstreaming approach as disasters are considered a cross-cutting issue for all vulnerable groups. DRR could mean develop-

\textsuperscript{60} Audet 2015:117
\textsuperscript{61} Jayawickrama et al. 2013:85
\textsuperscript{62} Ibid. 2013:85
\textsuperscript{63} Ibid. 2013:86
\textsuperscript{64} Buchanan-Smith and Maxwell 1994:4
\textsuperscript{65} Ibid. 1994.5
ment of farming systems that are drought/flooding resistant (irrigation systems, agricultural diversification), promote environmental protection and against deforestation, diversification of income generating activities and livelihood, measures to encourage saving (both physical and financial), and developing health and water facilities to find synergies between food crises, sickness, and malnutrition. DRR is today extremely under-funded, and very little of the DRR funding is directed toward the least developed countries, and even less if the main hazard is drought as this is a slow on-set hazard and therefore not a factor considered in the Multiple Mortality Risk Index. This even though more than a billion of the world population was affected by drought between 1993-2013 and it is considered the deadliest of hazards. A study on Ethiopian implementation of LRRD from 2009 (published 2012) showed however that while the conceptual understanding of LRRD has developed, the policy frameworks are still largely skewed towards hazardous natural events and that there is little acknowledgement of the political factors behind those events. Only implementing policy frameworks that has a focus on DRR does not achieve sustainable results; DRR alone did not grow more vibrant democracy and make the community members agents of change or grew stronger institutions. Resilient societies are not built on frameworks only focusing on DRR, it has to include HRBA. The concept HRBA was first introduced by UN agencies in 2003 and has since then spread and has become the main approach to development for other agencies as well. The concept is based on that development cooperation should contribute to the development of duty-bearers’ capacity to meet their obligations and to rights-holders to claim their rights. HRBA addresses both immediate needs and the underlying causes of poverty through advocacy and lobbying efforts. Even though national and local state institutions in vulnerable countries sometimes are not willing to care for their citizens’ rights, the approach is useful for shedding light on this weakness and changing towards a better governance. By focusing on local duty-bearers, these are forced to take responsibility towards the rights-holders. However, like many other policies and approaches within the international aid sector, HRBA tends to be more mentioned in policy papers than practiced in interventions.

66 Buchanan-Smith and Maxwell 1994:5
67 Caravani and Kellett 2013:28
68 Center for Research and the Epidemiology of Disasters and UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction “The human cost of natural disasters 2015: a global perspective”
69 Manyena 2012:342-343
70 Ibid. 2012:343
71 UN Human Rights Based Approach Portal “The Human Rights Based Approach to Development Cooperation: Towards a Common Understanding Among UN Agencies”
72 Levine and Mosel 2014:5
73 Buchanan-Smith and Fabbri 2005:19
2.3 Combining the pressures
The division within the aid structure and the unwillingness to work together between the humanitarian and development sections is by many blamed to be the key reason it is so difficult to create links between relief, rehabilitation, and development. At the same time RBM has received immense critique, both from within donor organizations, recipient organizations, and researchers of being ineffective for long term results. At the same time, it is necessary to combine relief and development in Malawi to be able to meet the needs of the rights-holders and communities. The theory is that these three aspects, or pressures, can explain the approaches and challenges CSO face but that they all need to be combined to understand the bigger picture of how they together affect the effectiveness of aid. The theoretical assumption in this study is thus;

1) Malawi is a highly vulnerable and poor country experiencing recurring disasters, hence there is a need from rights-holders and communities to implement relief and development efforts simultaneously,
2) Malawi, and civil society in the country, receive aid from donors with a rigid divided aid structure between what is considered relief and development,
3) As part of the development cooperation they are also working on the basis of result based management as a conditionality for aid and key principle for aid effectiveness,
4) CSOs must relate to and navigate between these three pressures, and their actions and challenges while implementing LRRD approaches could therefore be explained by these
three pressures and what the outcome of them are when combined together. A visualization of the theory is described in figure 3.

Figure 3: Theoretical assumption

![Diagram](image)

Figure 3: Theoretical assumption. The figure shows three pressures (a need for relief and development actions to be implemented simultaneously; a divided aid structure between relief and development; and result based management as a basis of development cooperation.) which all point towards the middle circle where LRRD approaches used and challenges facing CSOs in Malawi interact. Authors own visualization.

3 Methodology

This chapter discuss the most important practical and methodological aspects that had to be considered when conducting this study, both in the planning process and case selection, designing the research, conducting interviews and analyzing these using thematic analysis, and obtaining previous research. Ethical observations and considerations are considered throughout the chapter.

3.1 Choice of case

Implementing LRRD approaches or not is firstly a responsibility of the donor but it is important to research local knowledge and experiences to know what would be the best solution in the specific context of Malawi. While previous studies suggest that post-conflict areas are particularly interesting to study LRRD in (Koddenbrock with Büttner (2009) and Levine and Mosel (2014). I have through a thorough mapping of studies and evaluations regarding LRRD found none that studies the context of Southern Africa, and particularly not Malawi which has made
me draw the conclusion that that LRRD is not a concept thoroughly implemented by international organizations (IOs) or INGOs. It is unclear why this is; it could be that the aid structures are more deeply rooted in Southern Africa which makes it even harder for the donor community to change its approach so there are no evaluations to be done, or perhaps researchers find it more interesting to study conflict prone states and areas of protracted crises than areas of extreme poverty and recurring natural disasters, but without ongoing conflict. The fact that there is a need for LRRD in Malawi, but that the divided aid structure is strong there, makes Malawi an interesting case to study further.

It is the implementing organizations that must deal with both humanitarian and developmental approaches and combine the two in their work, therefore local CSOs In Malawi that works with both development and humanitarian relief efforts has a special understanding and insight of what a lack of LRRD means for the development of the local community. The divided aid structure is, while important to local organization as they deal with the consequences of such a division, not a bearing factor in their daily work as they are present before, during and after a crisis. This also mean that they are key to enhancing the connectedness between the structures. But, as stated in chapter 2, LRRD does not fit all developing countries that also suffer from humanitarian disasters. Different contexts call for different solutions; a detailed and context-specific analysis is required for each state or area. While there is a clear division, there still a “genuine room for maneuver” for civil society to join efforts. However, there is still a need to continue research to expand the knowledge of what works where, when and why.

Most of the CSOs interviewed usually work with long term development of the community, such as women’s support groups and Village Saving and Loan (VSL) schemes. Some however also work by implementing alone, or liaising with other institutions, humanitarian relief when droughts and flooding has occurred which also makes it interesting to speak to these organizations.

3.2 Research design
This paper is a case study, based on interviews, with high or mid-level staff at six Malawian CSOs. This study is limited to researching CSOs in the Southern Region in Malawi, where the

75 Bennett and Carpenter 2015:9
77 Buchanan-Smith and Maxwell 1994:15
context is a none conflict prone areas but a highly vulnerable population experiencing recurring natural disasters. It is designed as a case study as it is a good choice of method since the focus of the study is a contemporary phenomenon (such as the pressures CSOs experience and the actions they implement), does not require control of behavioral events, and uses exploratory “what” and “how” research questions, as this study does.78

While there are many strengths of using case studies it is also important to acknowledge the limitations. Case study investigators are especially prone to becoming biased in their analysis, since they have to have a good understanding of the problem beforehand.79 It has also been important to me that I have kept an open mind while conducting interviews to not become biased towards the finding. It would for example be much better for my study if yes, all organizations agreed to working with DRR, but I received answers that might tell otherwise. When these situations occurred I instead tried to ask questions to receive an explanation to why they are not working with DRR, and then continue the interview on the approaches that the organization did implement. A good thing about using a case study design and strategically picking what type of case I want to study is that I have been able to do analytical generalizations. Through analytical generalizations I can draw conclusions that could also be applicable for other cases, similar to CSOs in Malawi.80

3.3 Data collection
To answer the research questions, I have interviewed six CSOs with offices in Blantyre, that implement projects or programs in the Southern Region. Centre for Conflict Management and Women Development Affairs (CECOWDA) answered through a questionnaire via e-mail. The interview guide can be further explored in appendix 1. The first two people interviewed in Blantyre (the representatives from WOLREC and SRGDI) were contacted through a mutual contact, staff at IM Swedish Development Partners. I was therefore particularly careful to emphasize to them that while I received initial contact through help from IM, I still did not represent that organization. The other interviewees were contacted through a snowball effect, meaning my first initial interviewees referred me to other organizations and staff that might be interested to meet.81 This saved me time in searching for different organizations that were applicable

78 Yin 2009:10
79 Ibid. 2009:72
80 Esaiason et al. 2017:159
81 Ibid. 2017:190
for this study. All the interviews took place in the city of Blantyre, meaning that all organizations had their head office or a local office in Blantyre and some experience from working in the same geographical area of the country.

I used a semi-structured interview method, which is common when doing a case study. While I was perusing a certain line of inquiry and had topics or issues I wanted to bring up, I still let the interviewees talk freely.\(^{82}\) This type of interview is also described as focused interviews. Focus interviews are shorter than in-depth interviews, usually not more than an hour, and while there are pre-set themes that the investigator wish to bring up it is important to not ask leading questions, as it would not be possible to corroborate such data and add to the research field.\(^{83}\) Some of the interviewees I talked to felt more comfortable talking freely and giving examples, whereas other I had to ask more specific questions to get more detailed answers from them. In Appendix 1 to this study you will therefore find that the interview guide has both more open and detailed questions, used in different variations depending on if the interviewee was speaking more freely or not.

In this type of study, in developing countries, it is important to be aware of your role as a westerner. I am aware of as a European foreigner in Malawi I come to represent the donors in my relationship with the people I interview. To avoid getting answers that might not be aimed towards me representing donors I tried my best to emphasize to the interviewees I have been in contact with that I am a student from Umeå University and do not represent Swedish NGOs or donors. During the interviews, this was not something that I registered but it was an aspect I considered while analyzing the results. Some answers given I understood as possibly implying that I would represent or had the possibility to represent a donor organization but these answers were not included in the empirical findings.

I also emphasized to the interviewees that this paper is a study for my Master’s thesis and not research. Ethically it is important to make this clear as a study has not gone through an ethics committee or other instances, while research would require higher approvals from research committees. Before I started the interviews, I asked them if it was okay to record the interview so I could transcribe it later and remain focused on the discussion rather than taking notes, and I also let them know that it was possible for them to remain anonymous in the study.

\(^{82}\) Yin 2009:106
\(^{83}\) Ibid. 2009:107
3.4 Method for analysis

To analyze the material collected from the interviews I have done a qualitative text analysis. Qualitative text analysis is an appropriate method to use when the study object is an actor or actors, which are acting or understanding concepts differently than other. In this case, how local CSOs understand RBM and LRRD differently than donors, or researchers. It is also appropriate to use when some answers given are considered more interesting than others, and phenomenon, such as RBM, has a certain meaning in a certain context. Different approaches were identified from previous research within LRRD before conducting the interviews. Therefore, I let the interviewees speak openly but if they did not bring up the approaches of DRR, and HRBA I asked about that more specifically. I did however remain open to other answers. The interviews could be described as a combination of “open” and “pre-decided” questions. These questions also led to pre-defined themes for analysis. When doing this type of analysis, the study requires certain intellectual demands, both to make sure that there are well thought through criteria’s and making sure that the theory chosen will provide a new outlook. The interviews were analyzed through a thematic analysis (a type of qualitative text analysis) using color coding of the transcribed interviews, to find what approaches of LRRD CSOs use and what challenges they face. After this I did a second analysis of how the actions and particularly the challenges can be connected the theory and triangulation of pressure. Those challenges and actions not applicable to this study were removed. These included actions not aimed at linking relief, rehabilitation, and development (which were only a very few), and other challenges, such as government corruption. The thematic patterns found in the interview are the basis of how the chapter on empirical findings is structured.

This study is primarily actor-centered and secondly idea-centered. Meaning that it is the actors, local CSO’s understanding, which is of the primary importance, rather than the concept of RBM or LRRD and how it has changed over time. For example, had RBM been the focus of the study then different types of actors could have been interviewed on the topic. In the process of analyzing the transcribed interviews I formalized and categorized the text in simpler categories, after color coding different themes. Even though the interviewees are individuals, they are

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84 Esaiason et al. 2017:211
85 Ibid. 2017:223
86 Ibid. 2017:223
87 Ibid. 2017:225
88 The different themes and color coding used were: red for HRBA approach, green for DRR approach, light green for economic empowerment approach, pink for all approaches to relief interventions, purple for pressures from recurring disasters, yellow for pressures from a divided aid structure, grey for pressures from RBM, and other challenges were initially coded light blue.
representing organizations that act in the same environment and it is justifiable to be able to see thematic themes and understandings across the interviews.89

3.5 Use of previous research

When looking at what previous research had been done I used the university library database and google scholar and typed in different variations of search words such as “LRRD + Malawi”, “LRRD + Southern Africa” and “LRRD + Result based management.” When I received no (relevant) hits on these combinations I realized there was a research gap within this field. However, there are many other reports and papers done on the subject of LRRD, and RBM.

Many of the studies, particularly on LRRD, are produced at the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) and their Humanitarian Policy Group. The ODI is a leading British think tank on international development and humanitarian issues which conduct independent research. Some of the research reports from ODI used in this study are “Remaking the case for linking relief, rehabilitation and development - How LRRD can become a practically useful concept for assistance in difficult places” (Levine and Mosel 2014), “Managing crises together: towards coherence and complementarity in recurrent and protracted crises” (Bennett and Carpenter 2015), “Financing disaster risk reduction – A 20 year story of international aid.” (Caravani and Kellett 2013), and “Accountability dilemmas in foreign aid” (de Renzio 2016) and they are primarily referenced in the chapter on theoretical assumption. I also use Buchanan-Smith and Maxwell’s study from 1994 which is the one of the first studies that speak of linking relief, rehabilitation and development as a concept for aid and development. The understanding of LRRD has since then developed further, particularly conceptually, so I also use Koddenbrock with Büttner’s chapter on LRRD from 2009 to bring clarity to what LRRD could mean today. Eyben’s book “Relationship for Aid” was used to bring clarity of what RBM means for the donor-recipient relationship. While it is difficult to know if news articles are objective or not, some of them has been used in chapter 4 on recent contextual background in Malawi, together with academic articles to add relevant information. Many websites and reports from NGOs, IOs, and government institutions are also used, particularly in chapter 4 as well. These are however considered more subjective as they are scrutinized in a different way.

4 Contextual background on Malawi

Malawi is one of the poorest countries in the world and has unlike many other African countries not yet seen a major economic boom. The country has a highly vulnerable population that seems

89 Esaiason et al. 2017:212
to never grow a vibrant economy, the GNI PPP has only increased from 705$ in 1980 to 747$ in 2014; 42$ in 34 years.\textsuperscript{90} In southern Africa, Malawi is unique in how poorly the country has developed. Malawi is ranked 173 on the Human Development Index (HDI) but has the unique history of not participating in violent conflicts (only the Gambia in West Africa has a lower HDI and no history of violent conflicts.)\textsuperscript{91}

Like most other African states, the Malawian people have been victims of colonialism and oppressive regimes. Southern Africa was experiencing a growth of individual independent governments when slave traders abruptly interrupted the development in the mid 1800’s. After this, Christianity was introduced by Scottish missionaries in the late 1800’s and through British colonization of the Malawi region the Christian population grew. The Nyasaland District Protectorate was established in the Malawi region in 1891 by the brits, and in 1951 Nyasaland was joined with Southern and Northern Rhodesia, against the will of the African population. Malawi gained independence from United Kingdom in 1964 through the leadership of Hastings Kamuzu Banda. However, just like many other former colonies Malawi’s independence leader Kamuzu Banda seized a firm grip of the power in the newly independent country and ruled an oppressive regime for over 30 years. Malawi did not experience their first democratic election until 1994, but since then the development has continued to drag. Elections have been tainted with irregularities, and massive recurring corruption scandals, famines and epidemics, and government mismanagement on all levels has resulted in little social and economic progress.\textsuperscript{92} After mismanagement of aid funds by the president in 2009 (eight million pounds of financial aid money was spent on a personal jet) donors stalled some of the aid to the country. But instead of adhering to the conditions of good governance that the donors demanded, the regime added taxes and increased the commodity prices to cover government expenses.\textsuperscript{93} The cabinet continued to grow in size and the president continued his strong hold of the national political center. Local elections were also postponed meaning that there was no local authority running services or representing local democracy.\textsuperscript{94} To protest the oppression and lack of commodities and increased taxes people took to the streets in July 2011, to which the military and police responded with

\textsuperscript{90} UNDP Human Development Report 2016 “Human development for everyone, briefing note for countries on the 2016 Human Development Report Malawi”
\textsuperscript{91} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{92} Kadzamira and Phiri “Malawi history”
\textsuperscript{93} Wroe 2012:136
\textsuperscript{94} Ibid. 2012:137
fire. 19 people died\textsuperscript{95} and aid from Malawi’s three biggest donors was suspended indefinitely.\textsuperscript{96} But it was in 2013 as the biggest scandal was uncovered; after a failed assassination attempt on the government’s budget director who was about to expose a corruption syndicate within the government, the police made raids in high officials houses and found high stacks of cash. Again, the biggest doors suspended aid immediately.\textsuperscript{97} An audit firm found that $32 million was stolen within just six months of 2013 from the national budget, and money had been systematically ended up in government officials and business people’s pockets.\textsuperscript{98} This was more than twice the amount of what was initially suspected, and some of the money is believed to have gone to electoral campaigns. Several banks are also suspected to have been in on the heist.\textsuperscript{99} Since then, and after changing government and introducing new systems, the aid has continued to flow. In 2015 Malawi received over 1155 million USD in net disbursements in form of financial aid,\textsuperscript{100} 16.53\%, of Malawi’s GNI, making it one of the most aid dependent countries in the world.\textsuperscript{101}

With an economy heavily based on agriculture, the population is relying on the success of only a few different types of crops, especially maize, to survive. Maize is heavily subsidized by the government but because of the high cost of fertilizer and changing climate it is becoming harder for smallholder farmers to survive on the crops. While there are many policies in place to support climate change adaption for local communities, there is a lack of capacity to implement these. A study done in Nsanje found that lack of knowledge, lack of funding, corruption, and little open participation makes it difficult for smallholder farmers to take part of new policies. Adding to this there is an ongoing privatization of seed that makes it even harder for smallholder farms to make money from their crops.\textsuperscript{102} The country is landlocked with little possibility of connectivity through trade. About 80 \% of the population resides on the country side and the country, which has been one of those most affected by HIV epidemics, has a young population with limited labor productivity. 10.4\% is living with HIV/AIDS and illiteracy is around 34\% among the adult population.\textsuperscript{103} While child marriage was criminalized in 2015, women’s and

\begin{thebibliography}{10}
\bibitem{95} Wroe 2012:135
\bibitem{96} Ibid. 2012:141
\bibitem{97} Tran "Malawi aid freeze could hit health and education sectors"
\bibitem{98} Anders "Malawi faces toughest, most high-profile trial yet in massive Cashgate scandal"
\bibitem{99} Chikoko “Malawi ‘theft’ balloons to R540m”
\bibitem{100} OECD "Statistics on resource flows to developing countries: Table 30: Net disbursement of ODA to sub-Saharan Africa by recipient"
\bibitem{101} OECD “Statistics on resource flows to developing countries: Table 25: ODA receipts and selected indicators for developing countries and territories”
\bibitem{102} ActionAid International “Climate change and smallholder farmers in Malawi – Understanding poor people’s experiences in climate change adaption”
\bibitem{103} Malawi. \textit{CIA World Factbook}
\end{thebibliography}
girls’ rights are still highly neglected and about 1 out of 2 girls are married before the age of 18, and 9% are married before their fifteenth birthday. Workers’ rights are neglected and in Malawi’s push to start an industrialization process and coal mining, environmental issues has been disregarded. Amnesty International reports that other particularly vulnerable groups in the country are people with albinism and the lesbian, gay, bi, and trans community. Malnutrition is common and almost 50% of children under the age of 5 suffer from some form of stunting in their growth and development. The Southern Region is the poorest and most vulnerable region. And the difference between vulnerability between different communities there is only marginal, and the difference is solely because of physical environmental differentiation. This means that throughout the communities on the country side there is no great divisions between richer and poorer areas.

4.1 Disasters in Malawi

According to INFORM, the global Index for Risk Management, Malawi has the last years seen an increased risk of hazard and exposure of both natural and man-made disasters with flooding and droughts seen as the biggest hazards, an increased vulnerability (both socio-economic factors in general and increasing specific vulnerable groups) and a continuing lack of coping capacity. The weather phenomenon El Niño, which is getting more extreme with climate change, is seen as one of the driving factors behind the increasing amounts of flooding and droughts, both in Malawi and around the world. The country is sensitive to changing of extreme weather, both extreme rainfalls and complete lack of precipitation. But as it is geographically located in a region prone to both these types of weather conditions it is stuck in a loop of cyclical disasters which are increasing in strength through global warming and a more intense El Niño. The extreme weather makes the already vulnerable population even more sensitive to disasters, which in turn makes the population more vulnerable.

Between 1990-2006 Malawi experienced 16 weather related natural disasters, such as droughts and flooding, making the population highly vulnerable. Adding to this the country has been an ongoing food crisis since the 1991 drought. In January 2015, unusually heavy seasonal rains
all over sub-Saharan Africa caused destruction, and one of the most affected regions with a massive flooding was in southern Malawi around the lower Shire valley. About 63500 hectares of land was under water during the peak of the flooding, and about 40000 hectares of the farm land was destroyed. 15 of Malawi’s 28 districts were heavily affected by the rains, most of them in the southern part of the country.\textsuperscript{112} The Malawi constitution of 1994 authorizes the President to declare state of emergency in times of widespread national disaster. On January 13\textsuperscript{th} 2015 president Mutharika declared state of emergency in Malawi in the 15 districts most affected by the flooding and made a plea to the international community to provide humanitarian relief, such as rescue operations, tents, and food to deal with Internally Displaced People (IDPs), washed away infrastructure, loss of livelihood and loss of life.\textsuperscript{113} Even though the IDPs and loss of livelihood and infrastructure has been overwhelming for Malawi, the death toll was only expected to 170 lost lives in the end of January 2015, a number that could have been much higher. UNISDR reported that one of the reasons was that national metrological services could share early warnings to local communities through the red cross and other channels.\textsuperscript{114} The Department of Disaster Management Affairs in Malawi (DoDMA) is the governmental body responsible for implementing disaster risk management programs in the country with the goal to reduce the disaster losses. Since Malawi experiences recurring natural disasters with flooding or drought the DoDMA has a somewhat functioning planning system to coordinate actions with international relief institutions. It is rather the agencies which main objectives is to deal with the root causes of vulnerability that is failing. The UN reported that the humanitarian relief during the flooding, coordinated and led by DoDMA, was both comprehensive and rapid.\textsuperscript{115} In 2016 one of the driest seasons in 35 years hit Southern Africa and the president had to declare state of emergency yet again. 2.86 million people were affected by food insecurity as crops failed and prices went up. Again, the Southern Region was the most affected.\textsuperscript{116}

A study from 2009 found that because of the nature of recurring flooding in lower Shire valley the flooding should be treated as a national security issue. The amount of extreme weather phenomenon is found to be increasing while protecting the citizens in this area is continuously

\textsuperscript{112} Davies “Malawi floods - 250 square miles under water”
\textsuperscript{113} Banda “Malawi floods kills at least 48, damage crops”
\textsuperscript{114} Weru “Floods and poverty collide in Malawi”
\textsuperscript{115} UN Country Team in Malawi “100 days’ response Malawi floods. Report from UN country team in Malawi”
\textsuperscript{116} World Food Program “WFP Malawi Relief Operation Final Situation Report April 2016”
lacking. While planning systems with effective coordination and pragmatic policies was considered important, the researches highlighted the political will to increase funding on disaster risk reduction and protecting its citizens is the most problematic feature.117

5 Empirical findings

This chapter is based on the answers received during interviews with local CSOs active in Southern Region in Malawi. Section 5.1 presents the organizations interviewed. To be able to answer the research questions 1 and 2, the empirical chapter is divided and structured according to the findings of the thematic analysis. Section 5.2 answers research question one (What are the LRRD approaches that CSOs in Malawi use?). Section 5.3 answers research question two (How can the challenges CSOs face be explained by the pressure from recurring disasters; a divided aid structure; and Result Based Management?).

5.1 Presentation of organizations

Most of the organizations in this study, except Churches Action for Relief and Development (CARD) and Sustainable Rural Growth Development Initiative (SRGDI) are primarily development organization in its foundation, meaning they do not work mainly with humanitarian relief efforts. CARD on the other hand started as a relief agency, a cooperation between churches, but has extended their work to also cover long term development initiatives focused on issues regarding food security. They are a member of act-alliance and get their support through churches and Christian INGOS. SRGDI is an implementing organization working with both relief and development and focus on environmental issues and questions regarding youth and women empowerment.

Center for Environment Policy and Advocacy (CEPA) is an environmental organization working primarily with advocacy towards national government and through different programs that their partner organizations implement on ground, they work for example with CARD on a program aimed at enhancing community resilience.

Women’s Legal Resource Center (WOLREC), Women and Law Southern Africa (WLSA) and Centre for Conflict Management and Women Development Affairs (CECOWDA) are gender skewed organizations working with women’s right. WOLREC conceptualize justice in three parts; economic justice, social justice, and legal justice and they provide legal guidance to

117 See Mijoni and Izadkhah (2009)
women and implement projects on ground. They have also at some instances provide humanitarian relief. WLSA focus mostly on research and advocacy efforts and to make sure that laws protecting women are adhered to. CECOWDA is a smaller organization that works with for example education programs, legal advice and counselling, in order to promote especially women empowerment, but also other vulnerable groups. As of now, they do not have any donor funded projects.

5.2 What approaches do CSOs use to implement LRRD?

Through a thematic analysis of the transcribed version of the interviews it is possible to find some recurring themes in how CSOs work with LRRD. The approaches can be divided into working with development work through the approaches Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA), Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), and a combination of the both through economic empowerment, and approaches used when implementing humanitarian relief, primarily using a sustainability aspect. Is should be noted that it is however difficult to also separate these approaches; CEPA for example, work specifically with DRR issues, but through advocacy and lobbying towards national policymakers to implement policies that also support poor and vulnerable people to live sustainable lives with higher resilience, which is considered more of an HRBA approach.

5.2.1 When working with long-term development

Most of the organizations worked primarily with development rather than relief so the approaches described are mostly applicable in long-term development, thus this section is longer than the LRRD approaches to relief.

*Human Rights Based Approach*

HRBA can be done through several ways, but a key method found was to educate and empower rights-holders to support them in claiming their rights, as well as doing advocacy work and lobbying towards government institutions directly, making sure that laws are adhered to, and by providing input to new policy drafts.

"When we think something can only work through educating them, capacity them, that they answer to policy issues then we advocate for a change of the policy in both local and other practice."118

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118 Maluka, Gift. Program Manager at Womens Legal Recourse Center (WOLREC). Interview April 3, 2017, Blantyre, Malawi.
Both WLSA and CECOWDA work with lobbying towards national government to implement policies that supports the rights-holders, and making sure that policies and laws are adhered to.

"CECOWDA works with other organizations to advocate for policies and laws that are gender related so that they are passed in parliament and are implemented by government."119

CARD also does this, often together with other institutions or organizations, like CECOWDA, to create a more powerful voice;

"We know that if policies and laws of the land are not providing a favorable environment for development, then the development won’t take place. So, we have advocated for pro-poor policies in different fields."120

Advocacy is also done towards local government. SRGDI tries to lobby towards having youth involved in the local civil protection committees, the local committees working with DRR issues in the community to improve youth empowerment and local democracy. The also work towards other local duty-bearers, such as private companies;

"We also have a very big component of... making the youth demand their rights.... As I said we deal with social injustices that is happening..., they don’t have access to land, don’t have access to other employment opportunities so we have an advocate component where young people can advocate for their rights to basic services, basic opportunities, climate... for the advocacy part, we are also going to companies and organizations in that particular community and advocate to them that if they are recruiting, to consider having at least a quarter, or a part, that this should be young people. So that they are always sensitive to the youth issues."121

CECOWDA recognized both the importance of working with education towards the rights-holders so they become aware of their rights, what they can demand, and what organizations and available to help them demand their rights, but also towards duty-bearers and other stakeholders;

"Education is also to inform the governments, international organizations and donor agencies that are dealing with human rights their roles and responsibilities."122

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120 Luhanga, Melton. Executive Director for Churches Action for Relief and Development (CARD). Interview, April 11, 2017, Limbe, Malawi.
121 Yirenda, Maynard. Executive Director for Sustainable Rural Growth Development Initiative (SRGDI). Interview, March 27 2017, Blantyre, Malawi.
122 Mvalo, Caroline, CECOWDA, May 3, 2017
A lot of SRGDIs work was also focused on educating the beneficiaries in the targeted communities. They emphasized the importance about HRBA to fight injustices and corruption in the country and as a way to get an accountable government;

“When you do not inform people of their rights they cannot even cry. When people don’t know about their rights they don’t care about corruption. So, what we have managed to do is raise the awareness...That’s the most important... right now there is so many people who are being arrested for corruption in the districts. Why? Because there has been a lot of programs where they count individual digits in communities to hold people accountable. So, if you have seen a lot of stories it is not that corruption is on the rise. But there are now a lot of people demanding... and they are able to hold the government accountable! And there are a lot of cases, which in the past people would just be quiet... so that’s one of the positive changes that is happening. Because people are more aware of their rights and speaking out.”123

SRGDI also mentioned that they would like to work more with combining HRBA and DRR as they both are necessary for a sustainable development;

“We want to do a lot of awareness. Not a lot of work is happening. A lot of change of mind set. That’s a very big thing in Africa. To tell the people that we have to look at this thing in a different way. And they also have to act different. Because if changing of weather is happening we also need to change our lives, but we don’t. We stick to the same way we are doing and I don’t think we will make it.”124

Disaster Risk Reduction

Climate change issues and DRR is by CARD, WOLREC and CEPA considered a mainstreaming issue; it might not be the goal of a project or program but issues regarding the climate is considered in the planning process and incorporated as aspects in the activities throughout. CEPA, which works primarily with national lobbying and advocacy, also liaise with other organizations, such as CARD, that often do the implementation in the local communities and mainstream in those programs DRR in the interventions. CARD gives an example of how they try to bring in aspects of DRR;

123 Yirenda, Maynard, SRGDI, March 27, 2017
124 Yirenda, Maynard, SRGDI, March 27, 2017
“There are several interventions and in the needs of that we have components of DRR...There is irrigation which work as buffers in case of climate change, livestock production, forestry... For example, if you are working on irrigation you try to demonstrate how the benefit from that is going to contribute to reducing disasters...”

It was primarily SRGDI that work with projects where the aim of the outcome was to reduce the risk for flooding for example, this through reforestation and educating about mitigation skills, and through promoting climate smart agriculture. WOLREC also incorporated DRR actions in their programs targeting women empowerment;

“We are in some projects now starting to help the people to do climate smart agriculture...
In some projects, we help them re-forest areas and start bee-keeping and honey production.... We even discourage businesses that has a negative effect on the climate, like charcoal burning, production of burnt bricks using trees, those are discouraged in a number of projects.”

They also realize that issues intersect with each other and that they must address issues that might not be their expertise per se. Through a certain degree of flexibility they are able to listen to what is important and requested by the rights-holders. WOLREC explains;

“Us being a gender institution, we form most of the social and gender. But during the course of the project we learn that no, the people want natural resource management issue to be addressed. That’s when the partner then at least at that time, agreed that no this is what they want so this is the core of the whole compact. So, in that project we provide them with tree seedlings, on how to take care of the trees.”

SRGDI acknowledged the importance of livelihood diversification as a DRR measure, and tried to promote other type of income generating activities in their projects. To increase the resilience it is better to not be reliable on only one source of income and that that source of income is agriculture and maize; maize is sensitive to both droughts and flooding. Through a joint program on agriculture diversification, based on a government initiative and together with the World Bank, SRGDI met 50000 households in the beginning of the year;

“What we are doing is with government and with the World Bank and government.... We distributed sweet potatoes and cassava plant. Why? Because these are drought resistant crops. Now what we have been doing is we distributed in those households that were affected last year with floods so we wanted now to diversify, not just to depend on maize.

126 Maluka, Gift, WOLREC, April 3, 2017
127 Maluka, Gift, WOLREC, April 3, 2017
This country depends on maize. If there is no maize then there is no food. So, we want them to diversify that... The aim is that they will become food secure even when the maize had failed... I find it very interesting because we are being proactive. We just have to change the minds...”

CARD had an example of how communities in Nsanje had been forced to be able to depend on food relief every year but through trying several different methods of they found that the people were at last not depending on the organization anymore and were able to grow their own crops successfully. Though it had taken some time, they were finally able to find a sustainable solution. (CARD)

Not only depending on one type of income, in this case agriculture, is crucial to DRR and decreasing the vulnerability of both individuals, communities, and the entire nation. This is something that the beneficiaries are aware off and desire;

“The resilience building to us is not necessarily giving something to an individual, that it is widening the scope for an individual that is affected by a disaster to understand disaster affect them more because probably they are leaning towards one aspect. So, the issues of diversification it comes from the people themselves. In these areas these are our capacities, these are our vulnerabilities, how can we increase the capacities and reduce the vulnerabilities and in that case to reduce the risks and the disasters?... and to us the definition of resilience is to have several activities rather than one. So, like in enhancing climate resilience program we advertise that an individual, wherever we are working, should adopt more than one practice.”

Economic empowerment
Economic empowerment is to be considered both a way to HRBA and DRR. Economic empowerment is a cross-cutting issue for all these organization and their donors; the main goal for LDCs is of course poverty reduction. All projects and implementations has the bigger aim of strengthening the most vulnerable people in different ways. Their rights need to be respected, such as right to dignity and just remuneration, and they need to have an economic buffer to protect themselves from extreme weather conditions and reduce the risk of disaster.

Dignity can be understood as being independent and being able to care for themselves and family without asking for relief items or economic support. This can be achieved through a wide range of activities. SRGDI works with entrepreneurship skills for youth so they can start their own businesses, and using different type of loan schemes. Many of the organizations also

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128 Yirenda, Maynard, SRGDI, March 27, 2017
129 Luhanga, Melton, CARD, April 11, 2017
work with VSL schemes for different vulnerable groups, specifically youth and women because they see the strength in working together in a group;

“The coping mechanism for the people in terms of floods and droughts, the most important thing, is if you are in a group. So, we will still make sure they are in a group. Because we will not stop disasters from happening in the near future but the possible thing is to make sure communities are resilient... when floods come or droughts come they can easily bounce back. They can even go back and be resilient. But if you don’t have the economic capacity... if you have it you will be more resilient so that’s what we would like to do.”¹³⁰

CEPA also saw working with VSL as a means to buffer for disasters as it is those with the least income that are mostly affected;

“During a disaster for example, if your household doesn’t have money, it’s going to be more affected than another household with cash... If you are doing crop production, during a disaster, and your family doesn’t have enough food, it’s going to be mostly affected than a household that has food... VSL, they work as buffers in case of changing climate and disasters.”¹³¹

5.2.2 When working with relief actions
For the organizations that had implemented disaster relief (CARD, WOLREC, and SRGDI in particular) the main way to connect this long-term development was of course to find a sustainable aspect to the relief.

“Like we would be able to give out food items, to give of things, 2KGs of beans, 50kg of maize flour, 2 liters of cooking oil, per household. But then we see that no, no, if we just give them food, direct food aid, they will eat it and then it will be gone. But what if we also give them some pumps so after this they can start doing reconstruction on their own? So, we give them pumps, for water, we also give them some seeds and fertilizer, the idea is not just to help them short term but also to help them develop and change... They become more self-reliant.”¹³²

CEPA, WOLREC and WLSA all mentioned that they liaise with other institutions or organizations to meet the urgent needs of their beneficiaries;

¹³⁰ Yirenda, Maynard, SRGDI, March 27, 2017
¹³¹ Chikuse, Stephen, CEPA, April 10, 2017
¹³² Yirenda, Maynard, SRGDI, March 27, 2017
“What we will do is liaise with another partner who is more involved with what they want. We will just go between. Otherwise if they ask for something that they want within our projects that we can’t provide we will just get them to meet another potential donor.”

CARD also gave an example of working with a EU project where flexibility in the baseline assessment was encouraged by the donor because a disaster had taken place and they realized that development just does not continue “as usual” as it did before;

“The things might have changed on the ground, so go back now to the ground and come up with a new baseline. So, based on the new baseline information we come up with the new expectations and what the people are saying on the ground. So at least there are some flexibility... Sometimes you going to an area you come up, do the scoping, come up with the program, ... and you come back now we have the resources to find that the situation has completely changed... if others are not interested in service we can’t force them "we want them to serve this", it doesn’t work like that.”

For WOLREC, they also had to think about what their added-value to participating in relief efforts could be, and combine their efforts with organizations that had humanitarian relief as a profile capacity.

“WOLREC was making sure that those projects that was humanitarian prone, or they are skewed towards humanitarian, were not making the issue worse. There are issues where there’s been sexual exploitation in some humanitarian projects. But since our projects has to do with protecting women’s rights we also venture to that, to make sure that in these responses, there are some things that ought not to happen.”

5.3 Challenges to linking relief, rehabilitation, and development efforts

Through doing a thematic analysis of the challenges described by CSOs as to whether they can be explained by pressures from recurring disasters, a divided aid structure or result based management conditionality, the challenges have been divided into three groups.

Some of the responses have been removed while doing the thematic analysis, since they were not applicable to the theory used in this study to explain challenges through a triangulation of pressure when implementing LRRD approaches. When asking about challenges while doing the data collection there were however many different types of answers reviled, from internal issues with staff, and external issues such as falling of currency and of course the massive issues

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133 Lungu, Clara, Programme Officer at Women and Lew Southern Africa (WLSA), April 12 2017, Blantyre, Malawi
134 Luhanga, Melton, CARD, April 11, 2017
135 Maluka, Gift, WOLREC, April 3, 2017
with corruption. While these are important for the success of CSOs and are noted, they are not tied to the donor/recipient or donor/rights-holder relationship.

5.3.1 Pressures from recurring disasters and a vulnerable population

Pressure from working with a vulnerable population and recurring disaster is of course key in the organizations mission and environment, without it, some of them would probably not have a reason to exist. Most of the organizations gave examples of how the recurring disasters, paired with an already vulnerable population worsens the vulnerability and reduce the little resilience that is already there. WLSA found for example that a project on women and climate change had experienced the drought as a hinder:

“The drought does affect the project and the women because they need the rain for whatever techniques they are using to actually work... Women are the ones mostly affected by climate change. The less trees there are, it means the water levels go down, which means they have to travel longer distances to collect water.”

WOLREC admitted to maybe having to incorporate Climate Change Adaption approach in the future because of how recurring disaster affect the communities they work with and because every time a disaster strikes the focus immediately is on surviving and all other issues, such as fighting harmful cultural practices towards women and children, are forgotten about:

“Climate change issues is also something that we might need to address because we are running projects which has to do with economic empowerment and social and cultural practices, but then if the people are not harvesting enough in their fields they will not put much attention to anything else other than fending for their households.”

All organizations working through Village Saving and Loans (VSL) schemes in communities found that these are very affected by disasters as it is a tool to provide resilience, even though it is in its nature vulnerable as the resources are small. CARD explained;

“The amount of what people could save and borrow dwindled completely because people were steering the little resources that they had for food and basic needs.”

SRGDI worded almost the same thing;

“You know what flood do? They cut the whole livelihood of people. The commodities are cutting away. Sometimes even the land where they cultivate is washed away. They lose

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136 Lungu, Clara, WLSA, April 12, 2017
137 Maluka, Gift, WOLREC, April 3, 2017
138 Luhanga, Melton, CARD, April 11, 2017
their assets... So, if a flood come and take all that away its just back to square one. Back to zero, we have to start all over again.”

SRGDI also mentioned working with another type of economic empowerment program; revolving funds. These are meant to be returned by the loan taker to the community, but when the crops fail or some other disaster happens the families become indebted since they are not able to pay back.

Organizations working with economic empowerment issues found that natural disasters affect them repeatedly and that this affects in how they relate to their targeted communities. They found that they lose their legitimacy towards the beneficiaries unless they liaise with other partners that are able to provide them tangible support, such as food aid;

“You’d find out that we are running economic empowerment projects and the women are running businesses but then the little that they have has been affected by the flooding or the drought, that means that their capital base has declined, or has been washed away completely. In those instances, it is affecting in how we relate to them and how they would want us to respond. We have a project looking at gender based violence for example it doesn’t do anything with humanitarian, but we would want the project to be running at the same time the women would want us to address the urgent needs they have at that particular time.”

However, this it not only done for the sake of relief, but for the organization sake to remain legitimate;

“People would think what are you really doing? You are telling us about these things human rights, sexual violation, how to tackle that but where is the food? Where is the blankets? So, with that we revised. We can’t go there all alone, we need to be linked to these who are supporting the tangible benefits...We can’t go there to teach the people on the law and then they are suffering and there’s a drought.”

The recurring disasters also affected the organizations themselves. WLSA found that the 2015 flooding made it practically impossible for staff to physically locate themselves to monitor efforts and implement projects in one of the effected regions resulting in delayed actions, which in the end affects the rights-holders. CEPA found that the last years flooding and drought helped the organization, created a positive pressure, to change the mentality and how they respond and work with possible natural disasters;

139 Yirenda, Maynard, SRGDI, March 27, 2017
140 Maluka, Gift, WOLREC, April 3, 2017
141 Maluka, Gift, WOLREC, April 3, 2017
“That helped in trying to change the way, the approach, that we used to take in term of program implementation. ... it moved the program to a more kind of responsive and resilience building. Because at first I think the initial plan was just to help by just responding. So, the disasters I think opened our eyes in terms of now looking at the long term rather than the short term.”

5.3.2 Pressures from a divided aid structure

A divided aid structure functions as an incentive for donors not to invest in “grey areas”, i.e. DRR, especially the expanding of technical solutions. CARD found that it was hard to get donors interested in investing and expanding new type of solutions, such as green energy solutions that are not as fragile to disasters. SRGDI also found that they have an issue with donors not having the possibility to generate funds for “grey areas” and being pro-active;

“What if, in terms of, other than just getting relief when the floods come... To say “ok, how can we teach people how to use early warning systems so when there is a flood we can be able to know that there’s a flood coming, how are we building our houses, how are we watering our fields?” ... Measuring what is a risk and how do we reduce the risk. How do we reduce the losses? So, ..., if we are doing now the programming this time around, can we be more proactive? But then the challenge is still for them [the donors, ed. Note] to say that no these funds are only generated when disaster strikes so there is no way you can justify it now but it’s something that we are already trying to work with on with them. To say how do we make sure we are all pro-active to these droughts and floods... because they come again, and again.”

The divided aid structure also causes issues of not resulting in sustainable outcomes in the implemented relief actions. CARD described short term programs as being “so strict” and proclaimed;

“... it depends on the recourses that you use. For instance, if you are responding to a flood effected community and you want to give them food and shelter and you have only received a certain amount, that is as far as you go.”

One of the few organizations that also implemented food relief actions during disasters was WOLREC. They explained that it was the lack of sustainability which was the most difficult in the implementation process, and that they simply were not able to meet the needs of the right-holders;

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142 Chikuse, Stephen, CEPA, April 10, 2017
143 Yirenda, Maynard, SRGDI, March 27, 2017
144 Luhanga, Melton, CARD, April 11, 2017
“What was really challenging was this was a ones time thing. So, we went there once, give them the things, and come back. 10 kg of flour, 2 l of cooking oil. 1 kg of beans which could not sustain a family for more than a week... so it was a challenge... People keep on calling us, are you not coming again?”

5.3.3 Pressures from Result Based Management

The main challenges with RBM for CSOs seem to be that it is resulting in less flexibility, unwillingness for donors to invest in core support, and even having to compete with INGOs in the implementation process. Like Eyben argued RBM could lead to donors implementing activities themselves rather than supporting local organizations to do so, both WOLREC and SRGDI confirmed that they had to compete for the beneficiaries, and that INGOs had started to implement on the ground which is resulting in that the space for local CSOs to act is diminishing.

The issue of not receiving core support, meaning funding directly to the institution that can be used for internal capacity development, can be described as a key issue. CSO’s that do not receive the funding they argue is necessary ends up in a dependency situation where they lack capacity to grow as an institution.

When calls for programs or projects are answered and planned for with donors the CSOs usually negotiate a percentage for how much of the program cost is able to go to administrative costs, such as running of the office and staffing. Even CARD, one of the biggest organizations admitted to struggling with negotiating a fair percentage which they found necessary when they also lack proper core funding.

“That is the area where we are not doing very well. We are still negotiating with them, our partners. Most partners will prefer us to do something; there is an emergency in such and such, or we have come up with a program…. but that comes with a person, staffing... If you look in our strategic plan there is growing the core funding, because we know for instance today if one partner comes to us and asks to say: “Here is the basket of funds and we want to work on such and such program.” Within a week, we will come up with the information that they want and provide to them... But for us to come up with such a program we need to have the staff and the capacity to share the right information on the right time as required with so many expectation in terms of being result oriented, of making an impact, then you need to have qualified staff. Just going to the street and say come let’s work on this. No, most of our development work require complex analysis.”

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145 Maluka, Gift, WOLREC, April 3, 2017
146 Luhanga, Melton, CARD, April 11, 2017
SRGDI also said that there is lack of professional and competent people to hire so there is great competitiveness and without fair wages it is difficult to keep personnel at the organization. If they also do not have the possibility of offering them capacity training it is even more difficult and the faith of the organization becomes a heavy burden for the few trained people that chose to stay;

“For example, this organization, right now there is just two of us that can write a proposal, so we need to have internal training to make sure others also learn how to write proposals because it’s hard. And what if the two of us move out of the institution? It would die.”147

Despite having 11 different donors, only one or two funds WOLREC with core funding. While discussing this they bring up the fact that it is time consuming and hours are diverted from working to promote the lives of the rights-holders and communities because they need to look and answers donors’ calls for proposal of projects, just so they can sustain themselves;

“But the rest would not give us that. That is linked to the challenge of us being independent... We would really love to be independent. Not to go about newspapers every day or on the internet searching for who is going to fund for which call. We would love to be independent... not depending on somebody or some institution to give us funding. We have got some internal issues in terms of capacity on some things. That’s capacity is mainly influenced of the issue of dependency, how donors give us funding... If there were a lot of them giving us core funding or there was a lot of them putting resources for us to be independent, we wouldn’t be running about every day to look for funding. I think if that can be done that would bring a lot of positive. Both the way that we operate and in people’s lives.”148

The capacity of the CSO is crucial to the success of project and programs and thus, SRGDI argues, it should be of the interest of the donor to make sure that the local CSOs receive the proper training and resources they need to improve the institution;

“We are also moving on our financial accountability. Because donors will not just give us money, we have to have systems that make sure we are as accountable as possible... We need to have better system, we need to have better policies... And that component the donors need to get interested in too. It’s a very important component because it’s this organization which has to implement the project. So, if there is no emphasis on the organization itself, how does that effect the outcomes of the project?”149

147 Yirenda, Maynard, SRGDI, March 27, 2017
148 Maluka, Gift, WOLREC, April 3, 2017
149 Yirenda, Maynard, SRGDI, March 27, 2017
But it is just not the capacity of the staff that suffers when donors are not willing to provide core funding. WLSA noted that even just the need of basic office appliances was the main challenge:

“The main challenges would be vehicles, we only got one and we all would like to have more. Equipment, printer, fax, copier, that’s a challenge.”

WLSA also noted that capacity development is not something that you only invest in once and CECOWDA argued that capacity issues is key:

“The biggest challenge is lack of capacity to achieve the goals.”

SRGDI argued that core support result in a better relationship with the donor, but, as long as donors do not invest in longer programs, they will not see the need of investing in core support because they will not be in a partnership long enough to see the institutional change and growth:

“And then the relationship that can last for five years it’s the one that can build. Cause honestly, doing a one year project… I have. We have a few short, in particular the short. But... if you’re not in a relationship for a longer time you can’t see the change in a longer period of time as an institution. But if it’s just one or a few years, it not so good. We also like donors that are interested in the internal development and capacity, not just the program side... most donors they will just come, implement activities, or give you the money for the activities to implement, report, and then you are done with it. We like donors who you do things together, you grow together. Because as an institution we want to grow.”

Regarding flexibility within the programs the organization had quite different experiences. Implementing organizations found that they were heavily restricted by donors to revise ongoing projects after the changing needs of beneficiaries. WOLREC explains:

“Most of the times, as the project is running, we don’t have any way to revise on a number of things as according to the needs of the community... There should have been a lot of learning on what is happening. We would start today to give the women goats, but through the course of the projects it ends ups that it’s not proper to give them goats, and they want to be given chickens. If you tell the donor that we want to be giving them chickens sometimes they will say no, that’s not what you proposed, you need the goats. Or better still if the women think that at this point we would need a capital injection not the livestock be-

150 Lungu, Clara, WLSA, April 12, 2017
151 Mvalo, Caroline, CECOWDA, May 3, 2017
152 Yirenda, Maynard, SRGDI, March 27, 2017
cause of the problems that we have. That should be incorporated, that should be the flexi-
bility, for them to allow us, the communities, and the implementing partners to change the
course of the work.”

CARD also gave the example of a conversation between an organization and a donor to show
how focused the donors are on receiving the correct number for the result matrix, rather than
noting sustainable change as a result;

“Sometimes you say you are going to train 250 people... and you should have reached 250.
And you say: “Yes, I should have reached 250, I’ve reached 200. 200 was what was possi-
ble for this project. I wanted to concentrate my resources and my time on the life of these
ones, so these ones understand! So they are able to carry on whatever.” “No, the log-frame
said 250...”

CEPA found that their programs in general are flexible to changing needs. They accredited this
to having several big donors and different types of funding and that they do not implement
project hands on, on the ground, but have partner organizations which does that. They also
stated not having an issue with lacking core support or internal capacity. On the other hand,
CEPA found it difficult to find donors willing to give them support for projects or programs,
since it is difficult to track the results of their programs (being an advocacy skewed institution);

“There used to be a time when we also had a lot of projects, but now it’s the opposite. But I
think for advocacy its usually a problem because most donors don’t see the result of advo-
cacy. It takes so long and they get frustrated. They will grab the funds and they will go to
communities and they will go there and within a month they will have something. But for us
it might even take after the project is finished to see the result. So that’s usually where we
have the problem. Because they will rather work with someone that is going plant 100 trees
and you will go there and they can say we planted 100 trees, here they are. But for us we
have to explain a process. We did this and we did that, but it’s just in words sometimes. It’s
quite a challenge.”

Donors unwillingness to give support for programs that run for a longer time, or those aiming
at advocacy issues, also leads to maybe the most devastating issue of them all; the failure to for
implementing organizations to find the root cause of the problem, resulting in no transforma-
tional change taking place. WOLREC, SRGDI, and CARD all mentioned this;

“There should have been a way of letting us do a proper thorough baseline of the problems
that are there. Yes, we do, but then sometimes I think that maybe we didn’t do. We didn’t

153 Maluka, Gift, WOLREC, April 3, 2017
154 Luhanga, Melton, CARD, April 11, 2017
155 Chikuse, Stephen, CEPA, April 10, 2017
find the real problem... You will find that the donors will fund us for 2 years so you wouldn’t do something to find the concrete cause of the problem within the first year if implementation, when you find out you have got a lot of activities to do and then in the second year you are already facing out. There wouldn’t be transformational change within that. So, I think maybe the lifespan of the projects that we run should be beyond five years, for us to see the significant change that we might want.”

CARD said that longer programs are preferred if you want to work with the people rather than for them and if you want results. SRGDI also said that the results were simply not there if the programs or projects are too short;

“Most of the project we have its 12 months, 24 months, to be honest they will make very little difference... to be in a community for just one year, I don’t think it’s enough. You need to take the community through a transformation... when you leave it should be that the community is able to take it over... just one year and off you disappear, it’s not a sustainable change.”

CARD brought up another issue with long term programs that no one else, did but that highlights the complexity of the issues the CSOs face: the fact that without core funding or negotiated percentage of program costs the CSOs themselves sometimes lack incentive to push for programs running a longer time, because of the conditions RBM comes with;

“Of course, the problem with the longer-term programs is if your core funding is small you will still struggle with that program until the end, because you are still required to show the result same result without the capacity.”

6 Summary of empirical findings and discussion

This chapter will first present a summary of the empirical findings and a further discussion on how the three pressures and LRRD approaches are intertwined with each other and how this affect the aid effectiveness.

6.1 Summary of approaches

Research question one aimed to answer what LRRD approaches that CSOs in Malawi use and in the empirical findings it was clear that they use LRRD approaches both in long term development and in relief interventions. Most of the approaches found were long term development approaches since most of the organizations worked primarily with this. HRBA and DRR are

156 Maluka, Gift, WOLREC, April 3, 2017
157 Yirenda, Maynard, SRGDI, March 27, 2017
158 Luhanga, Melton, CARD, April 11, 2017
found to be the main approaches that CSOs use. These are closely linked with each other, especially through economic empowerment efforts. Within HRBA the CSOs focus is on educating and empowering rights-holders to demand their rights and lobbying and having advocacy campaigns towards duty-bearers. This could be that the organizations advocate for the implementation of pro-poor policies and that they make sure that policies are adhered to. Working with empowering right-holders is also closely correlated to fighting corruption and unjust institutions, one organization even claimed that the reason that the many corruption scandals have been so publicly displayed the last years has been because of the population has become more empowered and are now demanding that their duty-bearers stand accountable for their actions.

DRR is usually an approach that is mainstreamed within other programs or projects that the CSOs have. This means that all activities should consider climate change and the risk of disasters in the planning process, but it is especially through livelihood and agricultural diversification (with the aim to not be as dependent on maize) that DRR efforts are visible. It also promotes having more than one activity or source of income so that extreme weather conditions will not be as disastrous. For DRR efforts some CSO emphasized that they find it important that they come from the communities themselves so that there is a local ownership over the activities and that they are sustainable. Economic empowerment functions as both a way to work with DRR and HRBA; increased economic empowerment functions both as a buffer and coping mechanism towards disasters and empowers the people through increased freedom and dignity. Economic empowerment is primarily done through VSL schemes. By coming together in groups individuals can save money and lend to each other to make small investment and increase their income.

For actions taken by those organizations that work with relief interventions it was most important to see that the relief was sustainable and led to the affected people being able to recover. To assure this food relief items could be handed out together with other tools and things necessary for recovering. Some organizations also made sure to liaise with other organizations when they saw that the rights-holders where suffering as they did not have the possibility to do relief work themselves; if they did not they would be perceived as illegitimate by the communities by not being able to help them meeting their most basic needs when suffering. Some organization also saw their added value even in relief operations, although this was not their primary focus, and tried to contribute with their expertise on, in this case, gender issues related to relief operations.
6.2 Summary of challenges

Research question two aimed to analyze how the challenges CSOs face could be explained by the pressure from recurring disasters; a divided aid structure; and Result Based Management. Some of the challenges were easy to associate with each pressure and some were harder; thus, the third research question. Associating the pressures were done on basis of previous research on what challenges RBM and a divided aid structure usually are accounted for.

The empirical findings presented several challenges associated with recurring disasters, such as the population getting increasingly vulnerable and already vulnerable groups, such as women, are those primarily affected. Even though VSL is a good way to function as a buffer towards disasters it is not enough. Since the VSL groups are groups of very poor people even the funding that the they manage to save together dwindles quickly if the crops fail, which takes them back to square one again, which in turn makes it difficult to have successful VSL schemes. The disasters also make it difficult to do any other type of work; it is not possible to focus on empowering and educating people about their rights when they are suffering and their only focus is on surviving. Therefore, they must liaise with other organizations but sometimes this is not possible. At those instances, they are instead perceived as illegitimate. The disasters also come with practical issues for the organization, such as not being able to monitor the activities creating delays. It also made one organization revise the program from response to resilience as they saw how badly it was needed.

While the CSOs did not explain that a divided aid structure caused issues of gaps in the lives of the rights-holders when a humanitarian organization leave and a development organization “take over” it did cause challenges with sustainability and difficulty to find calls for proposals that were focused on “grey areas.” These were described as proactive efforts that might be necessary to take quite fast to avoid a disaster when the funds are generated first after a disaster strike. Strict budget structures made it also difficult to add a sustainable effort to the relief interventions and the organizations found that the people were not able to recover because of that. Even though there was a need for funding for a longer time in the relief interventions and there was a need for support for the rights-holders to “bounce back” this was not possible to provide from the donors. This resulted in the organizations once again not being able to be accountable to the rights-holders.

Many of the challenges within those connected to RBM were very similar. Like the chicken and the egg dilemma it is in many cases difficult to separate and know what challenge leads to
what challenge. Already set indicators in the results matrix created issues with flexibility as the CSOs many times were not able to revise projects to changing needs because of the strict demands from the donors. This could be even revising small things to meet a changed need for the rights-holders. The lack of core support and internal capacity created dependency issues. Because of this the organizations were not able to grow as an institution which made it harder to get other donors that were willing to fund them for longer periods or further internal capacity. Even issues such as basic office appliances became an issue for some. While working in these conditions they were still expected to deliver results that fit the set standard indicators. The CSOs also felt that it was difficult to get funding for advocacy because this is difficult to quantify in a result matrix, difficult to prove a specific difference, and because advocacy work usually takes many years to finish. This made the CSOs focus on other type of projects that instead made it difficult to achieve sustainable results.

6.3 Discussion on how the approaches and challenges are intertwined and affect the aid effectiveness

While donors continue to work through a divided structure between relief and development, their local partners that work in Malawi are highly affected by disasters and work in a reality were both type of actions are necessary. When a disaster strikes the need for long term development approaches does not stop, but rather increases, and when there is no major concern for food security it still needs to be considered a possible risk in the future and not disregarded. Malawi is not “interrupted” by droughts and flooding, they happen recurrently as a natural outcome of man-made vulnerability; vulnerable populations and communities has little resilience and possibility to “bounce back” after a disaster. This resilience could however be increased, through approaches such as HRBA and DRR, economic empowerment and sustainable relief interventions; approaches that can also link relief, rehabilitation, and development. They often need to be implemented at the same time in a contiguum where all aspects of a development process are important and need to be considered. These of course intersect with each other greatly in other aspects too; successfully increasing access to human rights would also reduce the risk for disasters for example, and organizations working with either of these approaches still face many similar challenges.

Many of the CSOs in this study wanted to work more with these approaches, but challenges stopped them from doing so or implementing them successfully. The challenges of linking are severe for CSOs, both because of a divided aid structure and RBM. But since there is no ongoing conflict in the country and Malawi is known to suffer from droughts and flooding and the
disasters are getting worse, implementing LRRD approaches in Malawi would see to benefit the rights-holders, whose life aid aims to improve.

The challenges with LRRD approaches for CSOs in Malawi seem to be a circular problem where local CSOs navigate between accountability and demands from both rights-holder and donors. The challenges are intertwined with each other which is also a part of the bigger issue with aid; there is a bureaucratic division between relief and development, along with a focus on RBM which leads to less funding directed towards LRRD efforts as it is not clear who should fund what, and less incentive for donors to provide support for programs and approaches that are less likely or harder to provide results for in a result matrix (such as HRBA aiming at root causes through advocacy and DRR efforts, which, unsurprisingly, also are some of those that aim to combine relief and development). This leads to less effective aid, which leads to civil society losing legitimacy towards rights-holders as their programs do not result in sustainable development. Adding to this are problems of governance and corruption, aid dependency both by government and rights-holders, which results in a weak state with little capacity to act, along with the recurring disasters weakening the state and the population.

**Figure 3: Theoretical assumption**

![Diagram showing three pressures](image-url)

Figure 3: Theoretical assumption. The figure shows three pressures (a need for relief and development actions to be implemented simultaneously; a divided aid structure between relief and development; and result based management as a basis of development cooperation.) which all point towards the middle circle where LRRD approaches used and challenges facing CSOs in Malawi interact. Authors own visualization.
Like within the conceptual development of LRRD, HRBA and DRR are the main approaches for CSOs working with linking their efforts in area of recurring disasters. This means that the approaches CSOs use are close to what the scientific community find effective for aid and that local CSOs insight to what the rights-holder and communities need for development correlates with the previous research. However, while Koddenbrock & Büttner (2009), Buchanan-Smith & Maxwell (1994), Levine & Mosel (2014) argue the same thing; that the constraint against implementing a successful linking is limited mainly by the donors divided structure (and cultures, policies, practices, and politics) through my analysis I argue that it is possible to confirm the theoretical assumption used in this study (see figure 3); that the main approaches and challenges with implementing LRRD do not stem solely from the divided aid structure in itself, but also from RBM conditionality, clashing with the need of the rights-holders. The divided aid structure adds another layer of challenges that CSOs which work with both relief and development face as the accountability towards their donors is double (if they receive funding from both relief and development skewed donors.)

Eyben argues that the donor/recipient relationship, INGOs and CSOs in this case, is key for how well the both parts work with their respective mission and this also seem to be the case for LRRD approaches. Both RBM and a divided aid structure are pressures that originates from the donor side. The complex nature is though that the donors also get a lot of their funding from a back donor, usually a government and they are accountable to them. This seem to be the main issues related to implementing LRRD efforts (as these are hard to quantify and provide short term results for): CSOs fear illegitimacy towards rights-holders when they are forced to focus on quantitative result rather than qualitative sustainable results, but they must balance this with the aid conditionality and stay accountable to their donors as well. This while donors fear illegitimacy towards the tax payers or state if they do not deliver (quantitative) results. This makes donors more dependent on conditions that government set (such as using RBM as a normative management tool) than what researchers suggest and rights-holders need (such as flexibility, core support, and qualitative results).

What can donors do to work around these issues? It should be made easier to fund DRR efforts from the development funding pool and see the investment as a result in itself; no disaster should have to strike to know if it made a difference. Buchanan-Smith and Fabbri (2005) argues, and I agree, that if donors actually want to achieve a more accountable government and institutions in the recipient country, they should focus more on strengthening the civil society itself,
as this is key to achieve a vibrant democracy and empowered population. This as the CSOs stem from the rights-holders themselves, which also makes it a key concept within RBA.

If there was mutual accountability, as stated in the principles for aid effectiveness, and trust between donors and recipients of aid such a strict interpretation of RBM would not be necessary. And if we stopped searching for a universal key to aid effectiveness but instead sought out to see what is necessary in specific contexts and appreciated the expertise and insight from those organizations that work close with the rights-holders we would probably see another type of poverty reduction taking place.

7 Concluding remarks and further research
This paper has contributed to closing two research gaps; in identifying what approaches and challenges local CSOs in Malawi tend to focus on when working close to a community where there is a need to link relief, rehabilitation, and development, and identifying how RBM and a divided aid structure both affect these links. The approaches that CSOs find effective are also those that the conceptual development and previous studies also has suggested; a combination of HRBA and DRR, and sustainable relief interventions. The CSOs are however torn between different pressures from a divided aid structure and RBM conditionality and thus cannot live up to their full potential and struggle with maintaining their legitimacy towards the communities and people whose life they work to improve. As stated before, each context calls for different solutions; a detailed and context-specific analysis is required for each state or area so it is hard to make broad generalizations based on this study alone. But, it is clear that RBM is an important factor for the implementation of LRRD approaches. This is not a study which aim to answer the seemingly impossible question if aid is effective, but it is possible through the findings in this study to state that aid could be more effective than it is, and that LRRD could possibly be a way to improve that.

Challenges that are not included in this study are challenges regarding other external stakeholders, particularly government and government institution. This is however another pressure that CSOs constantly have to relate to as well and might also affect the LRRD approaches implemented and should be further researched. As RBM is the normative management tool used in organizations receiving funding from government institutions and taxpayers it would be interesting to, if it is possible to find donors promoting other management tools, to do a comparative case study between donors, to identify how their recipients experience the challenges of LRRD and if there are difference in the challenges or if other issues arise.
References
The reference list is divided in different sections; books and chapters in books and dissertation, academic articles, other scientific articles, online news articles, databases, and IOs, INGOs and government websites and reports.

Books, chapters, and dissertation


Academic articles


**Other scientific reports**


de Renzio, Paolo. *Accountability dilemmas in foreign aid.*


**Online news articles**


Databases


IO, INGO, and government websites and report


Appendix 1

Interview guide

The aim of this paper is to identify and analyze how local CSOs in an area of recurring crises and with a highly vulnerable population implement links between relief, rehabilitation, and development and what challenges they face while trying to do so.

The research questions that will guide this study are;

1) What are the LRRD approaches that CSOs in Malawi use?
2) How can the challenges CSOs face be explained by the pressure from recurring disasters; a divided aid structure; and Result Based Management?
3) How are the challenges from these three pressures and LRRD approaches intertwined with each other and how does this affect the aid effectiveness?

All the participants in the interviews will be anonymous if requested, and I am the only person that will have access to the collected data. No third person will have access to the un-coded data. The participant chooses what questions to answer and can at any stage of the interview decide to stop the interview. With the participants consent the interview will be recorded.

This is an interview guide, meaning it is not meant to be followed completely, and the interviewees are encouraged to discuss freely.

Introduction

- Can you tell me about your organization and what your role is?

Long term development

- What kind of programs and projects do you have?
- How has the drought/flooding affected these programs? Give examples.
- Do you work with Human Rights Based Approach? If yes, how?
- How do these programs take a changing climate/vulnerability into consideration?
- Do you work with either of these programs/mainstreaming areas: DRR/climate change adaption/increasing resilience? How? Why, why not?
- Do you consider possible natural disasters in a risk assessment?
- If working with livelihood, how do you promote livelihood diversification?
- If working with supporting farmers, how do you promote agricultural diversification?
- How flexible are your programs to change after a changing climate/changing needs?
- What are your other biggest challenges to a successful implementation of your programs in areas of recurring disasters?

Humanitarian interventions
• What kind of humanitarian relief interventions have your organization implemented the latest years?
• What was the main focus?
• How did these interventions affect other long-term projects/programs?
• What happened to the beneficiaries after your intervention ended?
• Could you see the same beneficiaries in both the humanitarian intervention and other programs? Same individuals
• What are your other biggest challenges to a successful implementation of your humanitarian interventions?

Donors

• How many donors do you have? What is it like working with these?
• How do you experience the focus on results from donors?
• Do they support possible LRRD efforts?
• Do you receive any core funding?

Other

• How is your relationship with local/regional/national government?
• Anything you want to add?