Improving linkages to livelihood interventions

In 2013, ASSIST began working with five community quality improvement (QI) teams in two districts, Mangochi and Balaka, to improve the quality of services delivered to orphans and vulnerable children and their families. ASSIST worked with 10 CBOs and helped form QI teams with key community volunteers from the executive committee and community extension workers from health, education, and agriculture sectors. After receiving QI training, teams assessed vulnerable children’s needs, finding food security was one of the biggest challenges they were facing. The QI teams began engaging vulnerable households in different household economic strengthening (HES) activities to improve household food security. By December 2016, the teams supported and linked 2607 of 3416 targeted households (76%) to different household economic and food security strengthening activities.

In order to systematically and effectively improve the services for vulnerable beneficiaries we recommend the following:

- To ensure that households are supported appropriately, there is need to assess the level and type of vulnerability of the households to ensure targeted support for improving their food security and economic status. This was done with the Malawi vulnerability framework.
- Agricultural extension workers are key to improving the household economic status of households as they are professionally trained to support communities. They, together with the community workers, are required to set goals and outline activities for the targeted households before beginning supporting households.
- Data management is cross cutting for improving OVC services. It requires reinforcing quality data collection, accurate recording, quality data management systems, continuous data analysis, interpretation and use for further improvements. Improvement decisions should be made based on the evidence observed from the data collected.

This change package enumerates recommended activities for HES and best practices identified by QI teams implementing them.
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