

Summary Information

In response to IAP's request for evidence on the following: Community-led and adolescent-led local level participatory models of monitoring that are effecting change

Organization: CARE USA

Accountability approach: Social accountability approach, CARE's Community Score Card

Evaluation type: Cluster-randomized controlled evaluation

Outcomes of interest: reproductive health related outcomes

Geographic coverage: Ntcheu, district Malawi

Evaluation published: 2017 (intervention and evaluation carried out from 2012-2014)

Link to published journal article: Gullo S, Galavotti C, Sebert Kuhlmann A, Msiska T, Hastings P, et al. (2017) Effects of a social accountability approach, CARE's Community Score Card, on reproductive health-related outcomes in Malawi: A cluster-randomized controlled evaluation. PLOS ONE 12(2): e0171316. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0171316

<http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0171316>

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Women and youth transforming their own lives in Malawi

Social accountability approaches, which emphasize mutual responsibility and accountability by community members, health workers, and local health officials for improving health outcomes, have grown in popularity in the health sector over the past decade. However, research has lagged behind practice and there have been calls for additional evidence on the effectiveness of these approaches.

To help fill this gap, we carried out a cluster-randomized controlled evaluation to assess the effectiveness of [CARE's Community Score Card](#) (CSC) on a wide range of reproductive health-related outcomes in Ntcheu, Malawi. The CSC empowers and supports women, youth and their communities, service providers and local government officials to work together to identify and overcome obstacles to improve health services and outcomes.

Our analyses showed the CSC had a large and significant effect on the use of modern contraception, with an estimated 57% greater use in the intervention versus control condition at end line. Results also demonstrated the CSC resulted in significant increases in community health workers' home visits during and after pregnancy, and improvements in clients' satisfaction with services. The CSC also catalyzed significant improvements in the level of youth involvement in reproductive health issues, level of male involvement in reproductive health, relationship between providers and communities, reception of clients at the facility, commitment of service providers, and availability and accessibility of information.

Our findings suggest that social accountability interventions like the CSC are an effective way to improve maternal and reproductive health services and outcomes in low-resource settings. One of the greatest strengths of the CSC process may be that it helps build understanding and a stronger, more trusting relationship between the health system and the community. By getting women, youth and their communities and frontline health providers involved and invested in governance over local health services, a new dynamic of working collectively to overcome challenges and improve outcomes is established.

You can read more about CARE's CSC evaluation [here](#). You can view short films on the impact the CSC has had on lives in Malawi [here](#). For more information, contact Sara Gullo, Innovation, Evaluation and Learning Director, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Team, CARE USA (sgullo@care.org).