

Zimachitika Mini Serial Radio Drama Feedback Research Report



Submitted by:
**Story Workshop Educational Trust
(SWET)**

To:
**University of Malawi (UNIMA) and
Loughborough University**

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Contact Information:
Story Workshop Educational Trust (SWET)
Private Bag 266, Smythe Road, Sunnyside, Blantyre, Malawi
Tel: +265 (0) 888 86 61 90
Email: swet@storyworkshopmw.org
Website: www.storyworkshopmw.org



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Zimachitika is a six-episode radio drama produced by Story Workshop Educational Trust (SWET) under the Para Sport Against Stigma (PSAS) project. Designed to promote disability inclusion, gender equity, and social participation, the series used locally grounded storytelling to reflect everyday Malawian realities. Guided by Development Media Theory (DMT), the drama sought not only to inform but to evoke emotion, stimulate dialogue, and enable audiences to reinterpret social norms. The evaluation combined focus group discussions, exit surveys, and Most Significant Change (MSC) stories across nine sites in eight districts, engaging learners, parents, teachers, youth, and para-athletes. This mixed-methods approach provided a rich picture of how audiences perceived, interpreted, and acted upon the drama's messages.

Findings show that *Zimachitika* achieved exceptionally high engagement. More than 90% of survey respondents reported that the storyline was clear and relatable, while FGDs confirmed that listeners connected deeply with characters such as Limbika, Gonje, and Teacher Jere. Audiences did not experience the drama as distant fiction; they linked its dilemmas directly to their own schools, families, and communities. Across sites, participants reframed disability as a matter of rights and capability rather than shame. They named discriminatory practices such as; mocking, hiding children, exclusion as social problems, and expressed empathy and confidence in inclusion. Gender and intersectionality emerged strongly, with learners recognizing that girls with disabilities face heightened risks, and interpreting the drama's portrayal of resistance and accountability as empowering.

Schools were identified as decisive sites of change, where teacher attitudes and leadership decisions shape inclusion. Parents described emotional reflection on past practices, acknowledging stigma-driven behaviors while pointing to evidence of positive change such as increased enrollment. Parasports stood out as a tangible pathway for empowerment, offering visible proof that inclusion builds confidence and pride. Importantly, audiences expressed readiness to share the drama's messages through families, schools, youth clubs, churches, and community forums. This participatory diffusion reflects DMT's emphasis on audiences as co-producers of meaning, not passive recipients.

Overall, *Zimachitika* functioned as development media: it enabled emotional engagement, critical reflection, and community dialogue. Its impact is best understood not as immediate transformation, but as a normative shift in progress laying foundations for inclusive attitudes and actions across households, schools, and communities.

Key Implications:

The findings highlight that radio drama can serve as a credible and scalable tool for

social behavior change. To maximize impact, future programming should expand dissemination through community radio stations, integrate listening clubs as participatory spaces, and adapt content for multi-platform formats such as social media and video with sign language interpretation. These steps will strengthen accessibility, broaden reach, and accelerate the normative shift toward disability inclusion and equity across Malawi.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION AND STUDY CONTEXT

This chapter introduces the *Zimachitika* radio drama within the Para Sport Against Stigma project, explains why radio was chosen as the medium, and outlines the study's purpose: to capture audience feedback on how the drama influenced perceptions of disability, stigma, and para sports.

1.1 Background to the *Zimachitika* Mini Drama Series

Radio remains one of the most accessible and trusted media platforms in Malawi, particularly in rural communities where literacy levels and access to television or digital media are limited. Drama as a format combines storytelling, emotion, and relatable characters, making it a powerful tool for shifting attitudes and stimulating dialogue. Within the Para Sport Against Stigma (PSAS) project, radio drama was chosen to promote disability inclusion and para sports because it can:

- Reach diverse audiences across geographic and socio-economic divides.
- Present complex issues such as stigma, exclusion, and empowerment in ways that are engaging and memorable.
- Encourage collective listening and discussion, thereby reinforcing diffusion of messages through families, schools, and community networks.

Story Workshop Educational Trust (SWET) produced a six-episode mini drama series titled *Zimachitika*, broadcast nationally and regionally on MBC Radio 1, Timveni Radio, Mzati Radio, and Mzimba Community Radio. The series explored six thematic areas:

1. Isolation and stigma
2. Employment and livelihoods
3. Family attitudes and caregiving
4. Para sports and empowerment
5. Education and school life
6. Gender and intersectionality

The target audience included learners, parents, teachers, youth, and community influencers. By situating disability narratives within everyday contexts, the series aimed to challenge stigmatizing attitudes, promote inclusion, and inspire participation in para sports.

The drama aligns with Malawi's national disability inclusion strategies and youth/sports agendas. It supports the objectives of the Malawi Paralympic Committee and complements government commitments to inclusive education and sports participation. By embedding para sports within broader narratives of equality and human rights, *Zimachitika* contributes to national and international efforts to reduce stigma and expand opportunities for persons with disabilities.

1.2 Purpose and Objectives of the Study

The University of Malawi commissioned SWET to conduct feedback research on the mini drama series as part of the PSAS project. The study was designed to capture authentic audience responses, assess how the drama influenced knowledge and attitudes, and document its contribution to stigma reduction and para sports promotion.

The study, therefore sought to answer:

- How did audiences recall and interpret the drama's key messages?
- What emotional, cognitive, and behavioral shifts were reported after listening?
- In what ways did the drama resonate with local realities of disability and inclusion?
- How did audiences perceive para sports as a pathway for empowerment?
- What diffusion pathways emerged for sharing the drama's messages within schools, families, and communities?

The findings will be used to:

- Inform program improvement by refining communication strategies within the PSAS project.
- Support scaling of disability-inclusive media approaches across Malawi and beyond.
- Provide donor accountability by demonstrating evidence-based impact of media interventions.
- Strengthen advocacy for inclusive education, sports, and community participation through locally grounded evidence.

CHAPTER 2. CONCEPTUAL AND ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter explains the analytical lens guiding the study. It introduces Development Media Theory (DMT) as a way to understand how media can challenge stigma, empower marginalized voices, and stimulate dialogue. It also sets out the study's theory of change, showing how exposure to *Zimachitika* is expected to move audiences from listening and emotional engagement, through shifts in knowledge and attitudes, toward changes in social norms and inclusive action.

2.1 Development Media Theory (DMT) as the Analytical Lens

Development Media Theory (DMT) emphasizes the role of media in advancing national development, inclusive participation, and social transformation. It argues that media should not only inform but also empower audiences, stimulate dialogue, and amplify marginalized voices. In contexts where exclusion and stigma persist, DMT provides a framework for understanding how media products can catalyze change by shaping perceptions, validating experiences, and encouraging collective action.

Applying DMT to disability and para-sports communication highlights how inclusive narratives can:

- Challenge stigmatizing attitudes by portraying persons with disabilities in empowering roles.
- Normalize participation in para sports as legitimate and aspirational.
- Encourage empathy and solidarity by reflecting everyday realities of exclusion and resilience.
- Provide platforms for dialogue that extend beyond the broadcast, enabling schools, families, and communities to interpret and act on the messages.

Although the drama was facilitated through Radio Listening Clubs, the analysis treats *Zimachitika* as a standalone media product. This approach ensures that findings reflect the drama's intrinsic communicative power rather than the facilitation process. By isolating the drama's impact, the study can more accurately assess how audiences engage with its content, recall its messages, and translate them into attitudes and actions.

2.2 Theory of Change

The theory of change underpinning this study assumes that exposure to *Zimachitika* can generate shifts across multiple levels:

- **Knowledge:** Audiences gain new information about disability rights, para sports, and inclusive practices.
- **Attitudes:** Emotional engagement with characters and storylines reduces stigma and fosters empathy.

- **Social Norms:** Repeated exposure and collective discussion normalize inclusion, making exclusion less acceptable.
- **Individual and Community Action:** Learners, teachers, parents, and youth translate new attitudes into advocacy, participation in para sports, and support for inclusive education.

Pathways from Media Exposure to Social Change

The expected pathway can be summarized as:

- 3 **Media Exposure** - Audiences listen to the drama episodes.
- 4 **Emotional Engagement** - Characters and storylines evoke strong feelings (inspiration, sadness, pride, hope).
- 5 **Cognitive Processing** - Audiences recall key messages and connect them to personal and community realities.
- 6 **Attitudinal Shifts** - Stigma is challenged; empathy and fairness are reinforced.
- 7 **Normative Influence** - Inclusive values gain legitimacy within schools, families, and communities.
- 8 **Behavioral Intention and Action** - Audiences commit to act differently, advocate for inclusion, and support para sports.

This pathway reflects DMT's emphasis on media as a catalyst for dialogue and transformation, showing how *Zimachitika* can move audiences from awareness to action.

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the participatory mixed-methods design used to gather audience feedback on *Zimachitika*. It explains the sampling framework across ten sites, the use of school and community FGDs, exit surveys, and MSC stories, and describes how qualitative and quantitative data were analyzed through Development Media Theory. Ethical safeguards and accessibility measures ensured inclusive participation of learners, parents, teachers, youth, and para-athletes.

3.1 Research Design

The study adopted a participatory mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative tools to capture both depth and breadth of audience feedback. School-based listening sessions and community focus group discussions (FGDs) formed the core of the design, ensuring that learners, parents, teachers, and youth could engage with the drama in familiar settings. Facilitated recall and discussion were central: selected scenes were replayed to stimulate memory, emotional response, and dialogue, allowing participants to connect the drama's messages to their own lived experiences.

3.2 Sampling Framework

The research was conducted across **ten sites in eight districts**, selected to represent diverse geographic and socio-cultural contexts:

TABLE 1: Sampling Framework & Participant Breakdown

District / Site	Participant Groups	Approx. Numbers	Disability Representation	Notes
Nkhata Bay – St Maria Goleta Primary	Learners (primary)	~40 listening sessions, 10 FGD	Learners with disabilities + abled peers	School-based listening session
Mzuzu – Ekwendeni CCAP Primary	Teachers (inclusive & regular)	10 FGD	Specialists in visual impairment, learning difficulties	Strong institutional lens
Kasungu – Chilanga Primary & TA Mnyanja	Parents, youth	10 per FGD	Parents of children with disabilities, youth with albinism, dwarfism, and stammering	Household/community focus

Dedza – Mua Primary & TA Kachindamoto/Songwe	Teachers, youth	10 per FGD	Inclusive education teachers, youth with physical disabilities	Institutional + youth club perspectives
Mangochi – Nkope Primary	Learners, parents/PTA	~40 listening sessions, 10 FGD	Learners with visual impairment, parents of disabled children	Strong family/community reflection
Phalombe – Phalombe Secondary	Learners (secondary)	~40 listening sessions, 10 FGD	Learners with disabilities + peers	Gender and school life focus
Mulanje – Mulanje Secondary	Learners (secondary)	~40 listening session, 10 FGD	Learners with albinism, spinal dysfunction, diabetes	Strong focus on peer inclusion
Chiradzulu – Nguludi Montfort School	Learners (primary)	~40 listening session, 10 FGD	Learners with blindness, low vision, albinism	Household concealment issues highlighted
Blantyre – BSS & Nyambadwe	Learners (secondary)	~40 listening session, 10 FGD	Learners with visual impairment, hearing impairment, limb absence	Strong gender/intersectionality insights
Cross-Site (Para-athletes & Coaches)	MSC stories	5	Para-athletes with disabilities	Captured empowerment narratives

At each site, a maximum of 10 participants were engaged in FGDs. In primary and secondary schools, all learners with disabilities and a small number of abled peers were invited to the listening sessions (approximately 40 learners per sitting). From these, 10 learners/students were selected for in-depth discussion to ensure a manageable group size and deeper reflection.

The exit interviews were conducted with 77 respondents, drawn from FGD participants and additional learners who had listened to the radio programs. In addition, five Most Significant Change (MSC) stories were captured from para-athletes and their coaches, providing rich narrative evidence of transformation.

3.3 Data Collection Methods

- **School-based FGDs:** Conducted in primary and secondary schools, with inclusive participation of learners with disabilities and selected abled peers. Listening sessions involved ~40 learners per site, followed by focused FGDs with 10 learners for detailed discussion.
- **Community FGDs:** Held with parents and youth in Kasungu (Chilanga and TA Mnyanja), Dedza, and other sites to explore household and community attitudes.
- **Teacher and coach interviews:** Conducted in Mzuzu, Dedza, and other sites to capture institutional perspectives on inclusive education and para sports.
- **Exit surveys:** Administered to 77 respondents across sites, including learners who had participated in listening sessions and those who had independently listened to the drama.
- **MSC stories:** Five stories were collected from para-athletes and coaches, documenting significant changes in perception, motivation, and practice.

3.4 Data Analysis Process

Data analysis followed a structured sequence:

- **Transcription and translation:** All FGD recordings were transcribed from Chichewa into English, preserving tone and nuance.
- **DMT-aligned coding framework:** A codebook was developed based on Development Media Theory dimensions (empowerment, social change, resonance, feedback loops).
- **Thematic analysis:** Both emergent and pre-defined categories were applied to transcripts, producing thematic matrices by group and theme.
- **Cross-group comparison:** Responses were compared across learners, parents, teachers, and youth to identify convergences and divergences.
- **Triangulation:** Findings from FGDs were cross-checked with exit survey data and MSC stories, ensuring robust validation across qualitative and quantitative sources.

3.5 Ethical, Accessibility, and Inclusion Considerations

The study adhered to strict ethical standards:

- **Informed consent:** All participants provided consent, with accessible formats (sign language, large print, audio) available as needed.
- **Safeguarding and confidentiality:** Discussions were anonymized, and a safeguarding focal person was present to address concerns.
- **Accessibility adaptations:** Venues were selected for physical accessibility; transport refunds and caregiver allowances supported participation of persons

with disabilities. Sign language interpreters and inclusive facilitation practices ensured equitable engagement.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

This chapter presents key findings from the Zimachitika mini-series assessment, organized thematically to integrate qualitative insights from focus group discussions with emerging quantitative patterns from exit interview data. The findings reflect how audiences across age, geography, and social roles engaged with the drama and how it contributed to shifts in awareness, attitudes, and intentions related to disability inclusion, gender equity, and social participation.

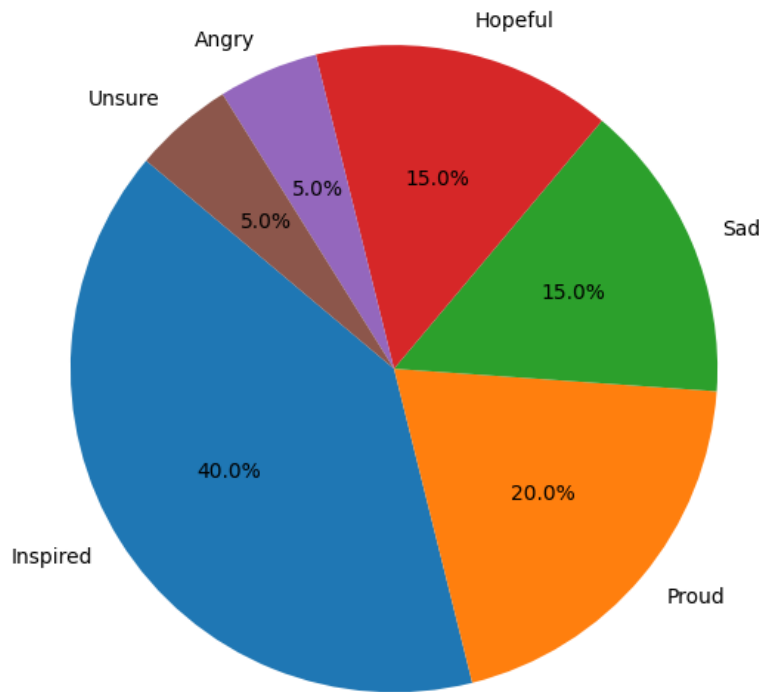
4.1 Emotional Engagement and Narrative Identification

The exit survey shows over 95% of respondents reported a strong emotional reaction to the drama episode they listened to, indicating that the content did not produce neutral or passive listening.

Figure 1: - Emotional Responses Distribution:

The pie chart highlights how participants felt after listening, with Inspired and Proud dominating, but also meaningful shares of Hopeful and Sad, showing both empowerment and empathy.

Distribution of Emotional Responses



Across all sites, FGD participants demonstrated *high emotional engagement* with the drama, indicating that Zimachitika successfully connected with audiences at an affective level. Learners, youth, teachers, and parents consistently described the story as *realistic, painful, inspiring, and eye-opening*.

Qualitative discussions revealed that participants did not experience the drama as distant fiction; instead, they *identified personally with characters and situations*, often recalling parallel experiences from their own schools, families, or communities. Like a student from Blantyre Secondary School who has physical disability of visual impairment shared;

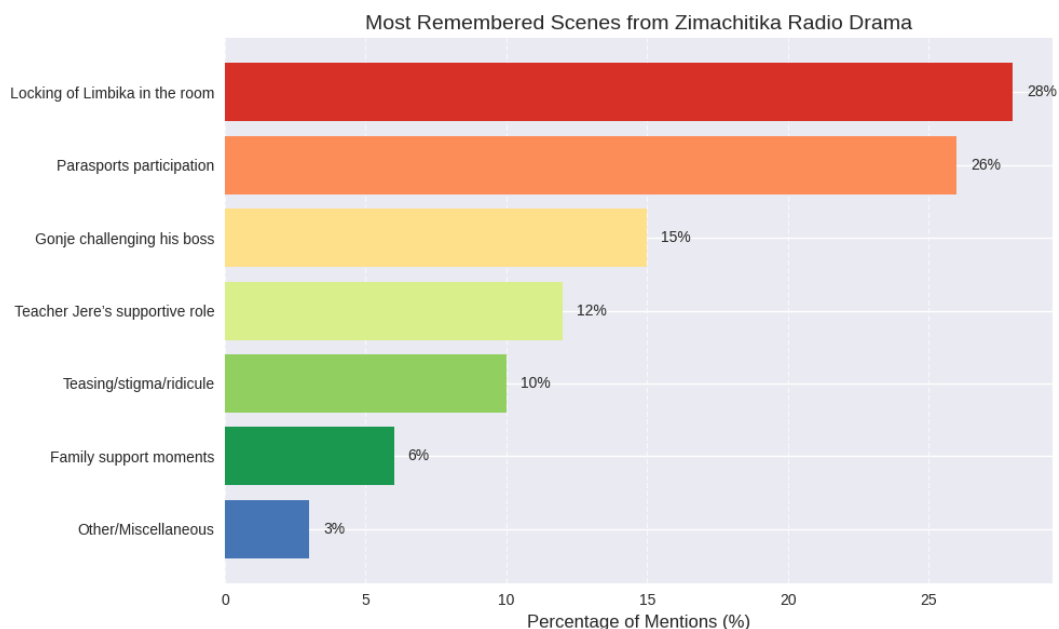
“The story reminded me of my primary school days, when teachers always chose the same abled learners for running competitions even though they kept losing. No matter how much we asked for a chance, they ignored us. This continued until I wrote my PSLCE and was selected to this school. Here, I was finally allowed to compete: at BYC I came first, and at Kamuzu Stadium I came first again. If I had listened to the discrimination back then, I would have given up. The story reminded me that if you stay strong and work hard, you can still make it. It truly inspired me.”-

Male Student, Blantyre Secondary School

Characters such as Limbika, Gonje, Mr. Jere, and Mr. Msowoya emerged repeatedly as emotionally resonant figures.

Figure 2: Most Remembered Scenes from Zimachitika

The bar chart shows which scenes audiences recalled most vividly. Limbika's confinement and parasports participation dominated recall, followed by Gonje's challenge to his boss and Teacher Jere's supportive role. Scenes of teasing and family attitude change were also remembered, illustrating how both exclusion and empowerment moments left lasting emotional impressions. This confirms that the drama's strongest impact came from portraying the tension between stigma and inclusion.



Key finding:

Zimachitika effectively generated empathy and emotional proximity, creating a foundation for reflection and dialogue across diverse audience groups.

Case Study: Parent Feedback on From Chilanga Primary School, Kasungu

Context

This testimony comes from a parent living near Chilanga Primary School for the Blind. She is both a matron at the school and the mother of a child with albinism and visual impairment. Her perspective provides a unique blend of professional caregiving experience and personal lived reality.

Emotional Response

Listening to the radio drama was described as deeply moving and painful. The parent admitted that the scenes of misinformation, isolation, and lack of supportive communication reflected real experiences within her community. She noted how peers often mislead children with disabilities, telling them they will simply “disappear” rather than die, and how parents sometimes unintentionally worsen loneliness through unhelpful words. These depictions resonated strongly with her own observations and experiences.

Turning Point

The drama's shift toward hope was particularly impactful. The parent highlighted the teacher's story of **Lionel Messi**, who despite a growth condition became one of the world's greatest footballers. This narrative of resilience encouraged the child in the drama and, by extension, offered inspiration to parents and caregivers. It demonstrated that disability does not define potential, and that encouragement can transform fear into confidence.

Lessons Learned

The parent emphasized that children with disabilities should never be made to feel less capable. Instead, they need:

- Truth rather than misinformation
- Acceptance of their differences
- Encouragement to pursue their dreams
- Love to build resilience and confidence

She affirmed that disability does not diminish a child's value or potential. With supportive words and attitudes, children can thrive just as much as any other.

Implications for Parental Attitudes

This testimony validates the effectiveness of radio drama as a tool for shifting parental perspectives. It shows that media can evoke empathy, highlight harmful practices, and inspire caregivers to adopt more supportive approaches. The parents' reflection underscores the importance of honest communication and nurturing environments in enabling children with disabilities to flourish.

4.2 Disability, Stigma, and Shifting Perceptions

Responses to the Audience Empowerment Attitude Index embedded in the exit survey interviews indicate strong support for the inclusion of people with disabilities across sports, employment, and education. Participants predominantly agreed or strongly agreed that people with disabilities should be included in sports, that qualified individuals with disabilities should be recruited by employers, and that children with disabilities should attend mainstream schools. The consistency of positive responses across all three items

suggests a coherent and robust empowerment-oriented attitude, reinforcing qualitative themes of inclusion, fairness, and social responsibility that the play portrayed.

4.2.1 Inclusion of People with Disabilities in Sports

Respondents expressed high levels of agreement with the statement that people with disabilities should be included in sports. This reflects recognition of sports as a social, physical, and community activity to which people with disabilities are equally entitled.

Interpretive insight:

- Agreement with this item reflects social inclusion and visibility, as sports are public, communal, and symbolic spaces.
- The finding aligns with qualitative themes of fairness, participation, and equal opportunity emerging elsewhere in the dataset.

This suggests that the narrative content successfully challenged exclusionary assumptions about physical ability and participation.

4.2.2 Recruitment of Qualified People with Disabilities by Employers

Responses to the employment statement also showed strong agreement, indicating that respondents supported the idea that qualified people with disabilities should be recruited by employers.

Interpretive insight:

- Agreement here reflects endorsement of *merit-based inclusion*, not charity.
- Respondents demonstrated an understanding that disability does not negate competence or productivity.
- This item captures a more structural dimension of empowerment, extending beyond interpersonal attitudes to institutional practices.

Support for inclusive employment suggests that the audience internalized messages related to dignity, capability, and economic participation.

4.2.3 Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Mainstream Schools

The statement regarding *children with disabilities attending mainstream schools* also received high levels of agreement, although this domain often evokes more complex social and resource-related concerns.

Interpretive insight:

- Agreement reflects endorsement of *inclusive education*, a cornerstone of long-term social change.
- This item signals acceptance of diversity in learning environments and early social integration.

- Support for inclusive schooling suggests that respondents recognize the role of education in shaping future attitudes and reducing stigma.

Endorsement of this statement indicates that the audience perceived inclusion as both socially and developmentally appropriate.

4.2.4 Audience Empowerment Index Interpretation

Taken together, the three items demonstrate consistent positive attitudes across recreational, economic, and educational domains, supporting the validity of the Audience Empowerment Attitude Index.

Key analytical conclusions:

- The alignment of responses across all three items suggests a *coherent empowerment orientation*, rather than isolated positive views.
- The absence of strong disagreement indicates that the radio drama narrative did not provoke backlash or resistance.
- The findings quantitatively reinforce qualitative themes of empathy, fairness, and social responsibility as identified in the focus group discussions.

Mixed-Methods Integration

The strong agreement observed across the empowerment index items converges with qualitative findings in which participants articulated:

- Respect for people with disabilities
- Rejection of discrimination
- Commitment to inclusive behavior

Thus, the attitude index functions not only as a quantitative outcome measure but also as confirmatory evidence that the narrative content contributed to audience empowerment. A central theme across all FGDs was the reframing of disability, from a condition associated with shame, incapacity, or dependence to one associated with ability, rights, and potential.

Participants across sites acknowledged that stigma against persons with disabilities remains present, particularly at the family and community levels. Learners and youth spoke openly about mocking, exclusion, and neglect, while parents and teachers reflected on past practices of hiding children or limiting their participation.

At the same time, discussions revealed clear shifts in perception. A male parent from Chilanga Primary School in Kasungu, which practices inclusive education, reflected:

“The story changed how I see albinism. Many people hold wrong beliefs about it, such as saying a person will disappear instead of dying. Through the story, I learned that albinism is caused by

genetic factors, not myths. Now I can clearly explain this to others. The radio drama truly opened my eyes and my mind." - **Male parent, Chilanga Primary School, Kasungu (FGD 2025)**

This illustrates how the drama challenged harmful myths and reframed disability in scientific and rights-based terms.

Similarly, a male student from Mulanje Secondary School explained how the story influenced peer relationships:

"The way we used to interact with special needs and disabled students will change because we usually do interact less with them. Like in this story the official never wanted Limbika to succeed but because others helped her, she became successful. So, from now onwards we will be working together both students with disabilities and without disabilities." - **Male student, Mulanje Secondary School (FGD 2025)**

Here, the narrative's emphasis on collective support translated into a commitment to peer inclusion. This sentiment was echoed by a student with visual impairment from Blantyre Secondary School:

"This play is very important because many able-bodied students grow up without ever interacting with people with disabilities, they only see them on TV or just hear about them. When they later meet us at school, like here, they don't know how to relate to us. If they listen to Zimachitika on the radio before that, they learn how to treat us in hostels, classrooms, and on the playground. It helps them understand that we are human just like them, which can reduce discrimination and promote harmony." - **Male student with visual impairment, Blantyre Secondary School (FGD 2025)**

This underscores the drama's role in preparing able-bodied students for meaningful interaction with peers with disabilities. Quantitative monitoring data further suggests that disability-related themes were among the most frequently recognized and recalled elements of the series, indicating high salience.

Key finding:

The drama contributed to increased awareness and critical reflection on stigma, supporting a transition from deficit-based views of disability toward dignity- and rights-based understandings.

4.3 Gender and Intersectionality

Gender emerged as a significant cross-cutting issue across FGDs, particularly in discussions with learners and youth. Participants consistently noted that girls with disabilities experience layered forms of exclusion, shaped by disability, gender norms, and unequal power relations. Importantly, participants did not view the drama as merely reflecting these imbalances; many interpreted it as actively challenging and exposing them.

4.3.1 Recognition of Gendered Inequality Through the Drama

Participants identified multiple scenes where girls were treated differently from boys and described these portrayals as realistic and familiar within school and sports environments.

*“The boys were given a room, but the girls were not.”- Learner,
Mulanje Secondary School FGD*

Rather than seeing this as neutral storytelling, learners explained that the drama made such unequal treatment visible and questionable, prompting discussion about why such differences are accepted in real life.

4.3.2 Girls with Disabilities as Especially Vulnerable

Participants emphasized that disability intensified existing gender inequalities. Learners articulated that girls with disabilities are often perceived as easier to control, less likely to complain, or less likely to be believed.

“Girls are already seen as weak, and when she has a disability, the discrimination increases.”- Learner, Mulanje Secondary School FGD

This understanding emerged through comparison between the drama's events and participants' own school experiences, suggesting that the storyline provided a language and reference point for discussing intersectional vulnerability.

4.3.3 The Drama as a Counter-Narrative to Abuse of Authority

FGDs revealed particularly strong reactions to scenes where adults misused authority over girls' bodies and participation. Learners did not interpret these scenes as normal or acceptable; instead, they consistently described them as wrong and abusive.

“Telling girls to change in front of boys is not discipline, that is abuse.”

- Student, Blantyre Secondary School (FGD 2025)

Participants explained that the drama helped distinguish between legitimate authority and abusive power, especially in contexts where such behavior is often normalized or excused as discipline. In this sense, the drama was perceived as pushing back against harmful practices, not reinforcing them.

4.3.4 Representation of Resistance and Protection

Participants also noted that the drama did not leave gender-based abuse uncontested. Scenes where girls resisted, sought help, or were supported by adults were interpreted as important counterbalances.

*“They said if that’s the case, they will not participate.”- Learner,
Blantyre Secondary School (FGD 2025)*

Learners explained that these moments showed that girls are not expected to endure mistreatment silently, and that refusal and reporting are legitimate responses.

4.3.5 From Silence to Articulation

Several participants reflected that while such gendered risks exist in real life, they are often not openly discussed. The drama was perceived as creating space to talk about them.

*“It happens, but people don’t talk about it.”- Learner, Nkope
Primary School FGD*

By naming the behavior and showing consequences, the drama functioned as a counter-force to silence, enabling participants to articulate concerns they previously struggled to express.

Key finding:

Zimachitika was perceived not only as reflecting gender and disability-related inequalities, but as actively challenging them. Through its portrayal of unfair treatment, abuse of authority, resistance by girls, and protective intervention by adults, the drama functioned as a counter-narrative that questioned normalized practices and supported critical reflection on power, safety, and dignity for girls with disabilities.

4.4 Education and School Life as Sites of Inclusion and Exclusion

Schools featured prominently in participants’ interpretations of the radio drama, not as neutral spaces, but as powerful environments where inclusion or exclusion is actively produced through everyday practices. Learners, teachers, and education officials consistently described schools as places where the futures of children with disabilities are shaped sometimes enabled, but often constrained.

4.4.1 School-Based Barriers Reflected in the Drama and Real Life

Across FGDs, participants identified multiple challenges within school settings that mirrored scenes in the drama and reflected their lived experiences. These challenges were not described as isolated incidents, but as systemic and recurring patterns.

Participants highlighted:

- Low academic expectations, where learners with disabilities are assumed to be incapable of high performance and therefore not challenged or supported adequately.
- Exclusion from sports and extracurricular activities, particularly at early stages, unless learners “prove” themselves.
- Teasing, labeling, and social isolation, especially in boarding schools and hostels.
- Inadequate infrastructure and learning resources, including inaccessible classrooms, lack of assistive materials, and shortages of trained personnel.

Learners explained that these barriers often operate subtly, through attitudes rather than explicit rules.

“Some teachers already decide who will fail before the lesson starts.”

- Learner, Blantyre Secondary School FGD

This perception aligns with how the drama portrayed institutional bias not always as open discrimination, but as lowered expectations and delayed support.

4.4.2 Teachers as Gatekeepers of Opportunity

One of the most consistent insights across FGDs was the recognition of teachers as gatekeepers whose decisions can either protect or harm learners with disabilities. Participants noted that the drama's portrayal of fair and reflective educators resonated strongly because it reflected the power teachers hold in real school contexts. Teachers themselves acknowledged this responsibility, noting that inclusive outcomes depend heavily on individual teacher knowledge, confidence, and workload.

An Inclusive Education Coordinator from the District Education Management Office emphasized that structural constraints often limit teachers' ability to provide adequate support, even when attitudes are positive:

“One of the major challenges is the shortage of teachers with knowledge of inclusive education. For instance, learners with visual impairments have to collect their work from the mainstream classroom and then come to the Resource Centre for it to be transcribed. After marking, they have to return again for it to be re-transcribed. It is a very tedious process. The teacher-learner ratio is also too high. We have too many learners and very few teachers. Even for learners with learning difficulties, we have six learners and only two teachers. That work requires concentrated support, and ideally each learner with learning difficulties should have a

designated teacher. They are supposed to receive 10 hours of support, not just 2 hours.”- Inclusive Education Coordinator, Mzuzu (Ekwendeni FGD, 2025)

This account reinforces participants' interpretation that exclusion in schools is not only attitudinal, but also structural and institutional.

4.4.3 Leadership and Protection as Determining Factors

Participants repeatedly contrasted negative school experiences with moments in the drama where school leadership acted thoughtfully and protectively. Learners and teachers described these moments as realistic and aspirational, particularly where leaders did not rush to judgment or dismiss complaints.

“The headteacher did not rush to judge. That was good leadership.” -Female Regular Teacher Dedza Kalilera School, (MUA FGD 2025)

Such representations prompted reflection on how leadership practices listening, investigating, and safeguarding learners can alter outcomes even within resource-constrained environments.

4.4.4 What Participants Took Away

Rather than viewing schools simply as places of learning, participants came to articulate schools as intervention points where inclusion must be actively practiced. The drama helped participants recognize that:

- policies alone are insufficient without informed and protective teacher behavior;
- inclusive education requires time, training, and institutional support;
- and everyday decisions made within schools accumulate into life-altering consequences for learners with disabilities.

Key finding:

Schools were understood as decisive sites where inclusion or exclusion is actively produced. While resource shortages remain major challenges, participants emphasized that teacher awareness, protective leadership, and fair decision-making can significantly alter educational trajectories for learners with disabilities.

Case Study: Coaching Transformation Through Zimachitika

In October 2025, Thokozani Kanyungo, an inclusive education teacher and para-athletic coach at Nguludi Demonstration School, was introduced to the *Zimachitika* radio drama. After listening, he shared the episodes with his learners. The drama changed his coaching

methods. Previously, he used standard techniques and worked only with learners who showed initial interest. Inspired by the actions of characters Teacher Jere and Gonje, he adopted new strategies for engaging and motivating para-athletes.

“The drama showed me that my previous methods were limited and that there was a better way to build enthusiasm and participation in parasports.”

Why It Was Important

The drama provided practical strategies to inspire learners, especially those with visual impairments who found the episodes both entertaining and motivating. It revealed new ways to build confidence and participation, shifting Teacher Kanyungo's perspective on coaching.

What Changed

Teacher Kanyungo's behaviour and methods shifted significantly:

- He began conducting motivational speaking sessions, inspired by Teacher Jere and Gonje.
- He invited former athletes who had competed in regional games to share experiences with learners.
- He encouraged repeated listening to the drama, with learners engaging 4–5 times.
- He engaged parents during PTA meetings, opening debates about parasports and shifting attitudes from fear to support.

Community Response

The changes had visible impact:

- More learners expressed interest in joining sports, creating positive “pressure” to accommodate them.
- Learners with visual impairments particularly loved the drama, finding it accessible and engaging.
- Parents, initially hesitant, became supportive after hearing explanations during PTA meetings.

Significance of Change

Teacher Kanyungo's story illustrates how *Zimachitika* influenced not only learners but also educators and parents. By reshaping coaching practices, the drama catalyzed broader participation, parental support, and community recognition of parasports. This case demonstrates the drama's potential to transform *institutional practices* and *community attitudes*, reinforcing parasports as a pathway for empowerment and inclusion.

4.5 Family and Community Gatekeeping

Family behavior emerged as one of the most decisive factors shaping the lives of children and youth with disabilities. Across FGDs, particularly with parents and teachers, participants repeatedly returned to the household as the first site of inclusion or exclusion, where decisions about visibility, schooling, care, and opportunity are made.

4.5.1 Community Practices Reflected in the Drama

Parents described the drama's portrayal of families and communities as realistic and familiar, noting that the behaviors shown were not exaggerated but reflected common practices rooted in fear, misunderstanding, and concern for social standing.

Participants openly discussed real-life situations that closely mirrored the drama, including:

- children being hidden or confined at home,
- delayed or denied school enrollment,
- abandonment following unsuccessful traditional “treatments,”
- and decisions driven by shame, fear of ridicule, or concern for family reputation.

One teacher-parent recounted a case where misunderstanding of disability led to severe harm:

“There was a child who had speech impairment... they took her to a traditional doctor who made several cuts on her tongue, believing this would help her speak... Eventually, her parents abandoned her, leaving her at home for almost ten years without attending school.” -Parent/Teacher, Chilanga (FGD 2025)

Others described children being locked indoors or kept away from school for years.

“Her parents kept her hidden in the house, often locking her inside.” - Parent, Chilanga (FGD 2025)

Parents did not distance themselves from these accounts; instead, many spoke with recognition and discomfort, acknowledging that such practices exist within their communities.

4.5.2 Emotional and Moral Reflection Triggered by the Drama

Parents described the drama as prompting self-reflection rather than blame. Several noted that seeing similar behaviors enacted in the story forced them to reconsider actions that are often normalized or justified as protection.

“We were hiding children because we thought we were protecting ourselves from shame.” - Parent, Chilanga (FGD 2025)

The drama was perceived as holding up a mirror to community behavior, making visible the consequences of decisions that are usually made privately within households.

4.5.3 Recognition of Parents as Gatekeepers of Opportunity

A recurring theme in parents' discussions was the realization that families are not just caregivers but gatekeepers of opportunity. Parents spoke about how decisions made at home whether to send a child to school, allow participation in sports, or seek accurate information shape a child's entire life trajectory.

"If the parents do not agree, the child's journey ends there."-

Parent, Nkope (FGD 2025)

This recognition was particularly strong in discussions about delayed enrollment and missed developmental opportunities.

4.5.4 Evidence of Change Within Communities

While parents acknowledged harmful past practices, they also emphasized observable positive change. Participants cited increased enrollment of learners with disabilities, greater openness in communities, and improved willingness to seek support services.

"This term we have 26 learners with disabilities in Standard 1.

Before, we would only have three." - **Teacher/Parent, Chilanga**

School for the Blind (FGD 2025)

Parents linked this shift to greater awareness, exposure to success stories, and ongoing sensitization efforts.

4.5.5 The Drama as a Catalyst for Household-Level Dialogue

Participants indicated that the drama contributed to opening conversations within families and communities about disability. Rather than instructing parents on what to do, the story created space for discussion, comparison, and reassessment of norms. Parents described feeling encouraged to speak more openly about disability, to stop hiding children, and to seek education and opportunities for them.

Key finding:

Zimachitika prompted family- and community-level reflection by realistically portraying everyday practices that restrict children with disabilities. Parents interpreted the drama as a mirror of their communities, which awakened emotional and moral awareness about the consequences of hiding, delaying, or denying opportunity.

4.6 Parasports as a Catalyst for Empowerment

Across FGDs, parasports emerged as one of the most tangible opportunities for children and youth with disabilities. Unlike other inclusion issues that were often discussed in abstract terms, parasports were described through direct observation and lived experience, particularly by parents and teachers connected to Chilanga School for the Blind and Blantyre Secondary School.

Participants did not initially frame parasports as symbolic or inspirational. Instead, they spoke of them as real activities that children with disabilities were already engaging in, or could realistically participate in if given support. Several respondents emphasized that the drama portrayed children being allowed to take part, rather than presenting them as exceptional athletes from the outset.

“Sports can change people’s views about disability. For example, when Limbika was locked in her room, her body was weak. But once she started participating in sports, her health improved.”-
Learner with visual impairment, Mangochi (Nkope Primary School, FGD 2025)

The emphasis here was on participation leading to improvement, not innate talent or dramatic success. Teachers and parents noted that the storyline reflected real situations where adults hesitate to allow children with disabilities to participate in sports, often out of fear or uncertainty rather than malice.

“At first, I refused because I had heard that athletes were not treated well.”- Female parent, Kasungu (Chilanga FGD 2025)

4.6.1 What Participants Learned from the Parasports Storyline

When asked what the story showed or reminded them of, participants did not frame parasports as a lesson about winning, but about possibility and exposure. Parents emphasized that seeing children with disabilities participate helped them reconsider what their children were capable of doing.

“I realized she truly loved the sport, and I didn’t want to deny her the right to participate... She went to Namibia, became number one, and shook the hand of the state president Dr. Lazarus Chakwera.”- Female Parent, Kasungu (Chilanga FGD 2025)

The learning articulated here was about not standing in the way, rather than pushing children toward achievement. Teachers linked parasports to observable changes in confidence and independence among learners. Learners and teachers also noted that participation in sports changed how children with disabilities were viewed by their peers.

“They used to laugh at him, but after he started playing, they respected him.”- Learner, Blantyre Secondary School FGD

Respect was described as conditional and performance-based, suggesting that stigma is reduced when ability becomes visible, though not eliminated entirely.

4.6.2 Limits and Realities

Importantly, participants did not claim that parasports solve all challenges faced by learners with disabilities. Teachers noted that opportunities remain uneven and dependent on access, resources, and institutional support. Several participants emphasized that not all children will become athletes, but that the value of parasports lies in participation, confidence, and exposure. This grounded perspective suggests that parasports were understood as one pathway among several, rather than a universal solution.

Key finding:

Parasports were perceived as a practical and observable opportunity that can:

- increase confidence among children with disabilities,
- encourage parental support over time,
- improve peer recognition in some contexts,
- and demonstrate what is possible when children are allowed to participate.

Case Study: Perseverance Through Parasports

Samuel Gelemu, a para-athlete specializing in discus, javelin, and shot-put, shared how listening to the *Zimachitika* drama influenced his resilience and determination.

In 2024, Samuel listened to the entire series on MBC. Later, while preparing for a competition at Blantyre Secondary School, he faced a major challenge at his local training ground in Nacholi. His shot-put equipment was lost, and his coach advised him to improvise. Samuel found a stone of similar weight to train with at the Namasimba training ground. However, community members ridiculed him, dismissing his efforts and mocking his identity as an athlete.

“The ridicule was emotionally difficult and threatened to derail my athletic career. I tried to explain that I was an athlete, but no one believed me or took me seriously.”

At this low point, Samuel recalled a scene from the drama where Gonje, a wheelchair user, challenged his boss's perceptions by demonstrating strength through powerlifting. Inspired by Gonje's example, Samuel decided to ignore the ridicule and continue training with the stone, focusing on proving himself through action.

"I remembered Gonje's response to doubters by simply doing the thing. I changed my behaviour and kept pushing forward with my training."

His perseverance paid off. Samuel won gold medals and secured first place at the competition. On the journey home, the organizing team instructed athletes to wear their medals. When the same community members who had mocked him saw the medals, they asked what the "necklaces" were for. Samuel explained they were symbols of his championship.

"As a result, the people in my ward now respect me and take me seriously."

Significance of Change

Samuel's story illustrates how *Zimachitika* inspired personal resilience and transformed community perceptions. The drama provided a narrative model that encouraged him to persist despite ridicule, ultimately leading to recognition and respect. His experience demonstrates the broader impact of parasports as a catalyst for empowerment: shifting stigma, validating identity, and motivating perseverance.

4.7 Media Reach, Diffusion, and Participation (DMT Probes)

Participants widely recognized radio as an accessible and trusted medium, particularly in rural contexts. However, FGDs also revealed sophisticated audience critique, including concerns about accessibility for people with hearing impairments and the need for complementary formats.

Across sites, participants identified multiple diffusion pathways:

- schools and hostels,
- youth clubs and peer networks,
- churches and traditional leadership,
- family discussions,

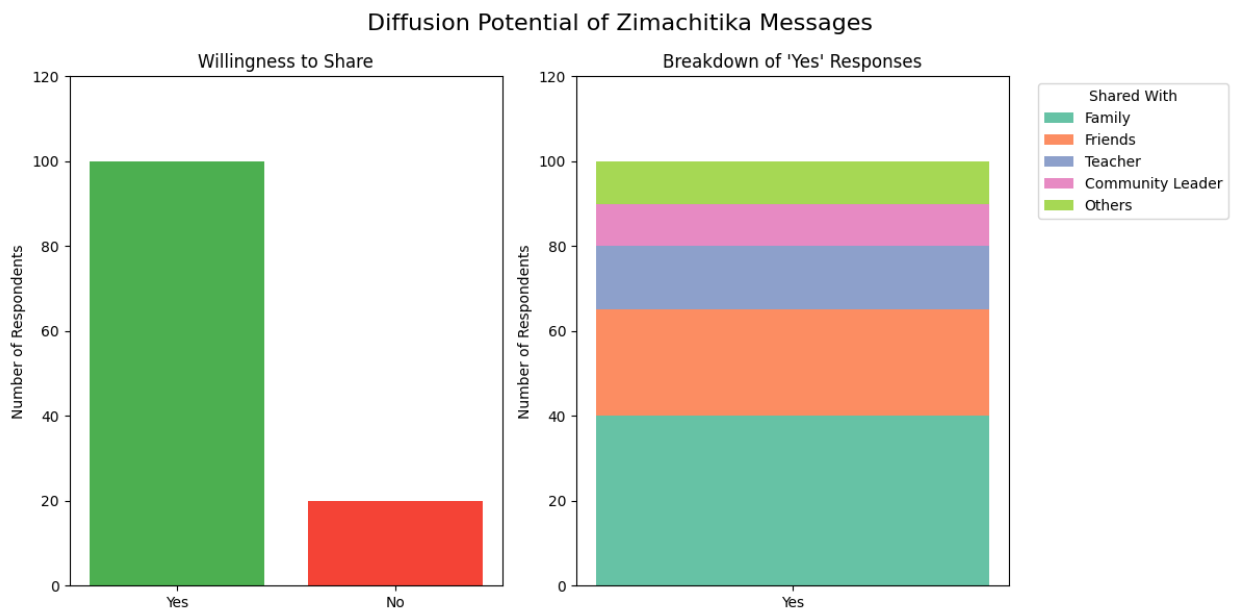
- community events and sports gatherings.

Teachers, suggested that radio listening clubs be established at schools where teachers and learners can have facilitated sessions and later share the messages with the communities during Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings. Learners and youth in particular imagined themselves as active message carriers, suggesting songs, dramas, roadshows, and role-model visits as ways to extend impact.

This qualitative evidence is reinforced by survey data. When asked “Would you like to share what you learned with others?” the majority of respondents said **Yes**, with most intending to share with family and friends, followed by teachers, community leaders, and others.

Figure 3. Diffusion Potential of Zimachitika Messages

Most respondents expressed willingness to share what they learned (Yes vs. No). Among “Yes” responses, sharing was most often directed to family and friends, followed by teachers, community leaders, and others. This illustrates strong household and peer diffusion, with additional pathways into schools and community structures.

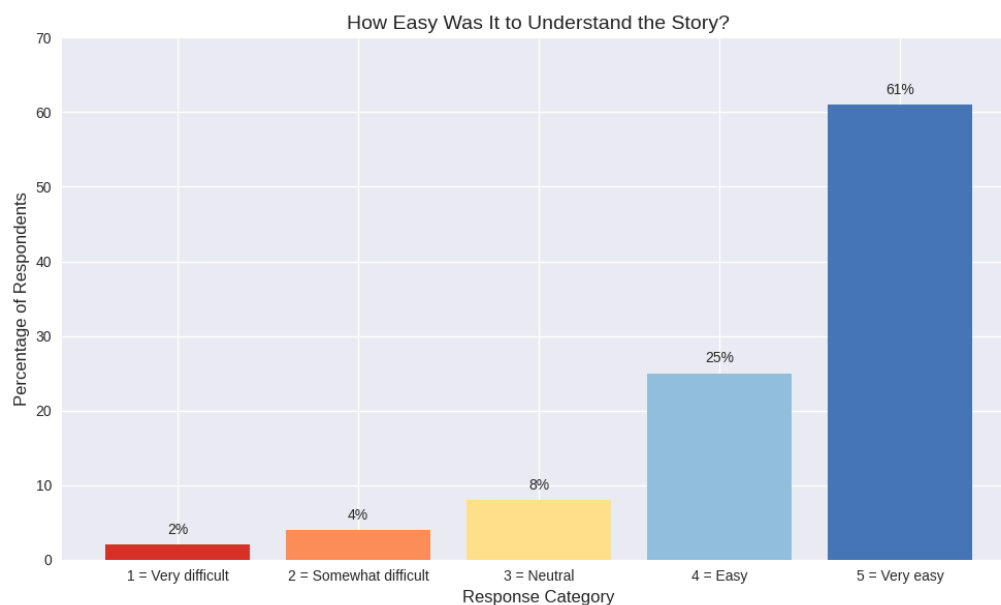


The ability of audiences to share Zimachitika messages depends not only on interest but also on clarity. Survey data showed that over 85% of respondents found the drama easy or very easy to understand, confirming that the storyline was broadly accessible and could be confidently retold in schools, families, and community spaces.

Figure 4. Participant Ratings of Story Clarity and Accessibility

The bar chart shows that most respondents rated the drama as easy or very easy to

follow, with only a small minority reporting difficulty. This high level of clarity reinforces the drama's diffusion potential, as participants felt able to share and discuss the story with others.



Key finding:

Audiences did not view *Zimachitika* as a one-way broadcast but as a starting point for dialogue and community-led dissemination. The combination of FGD narratives and survey data shows that diffusion is both imagined and enacted with clear pathways into households, peer networks, schools, and community leadership.

4.8 Reflections on Change and Meaning

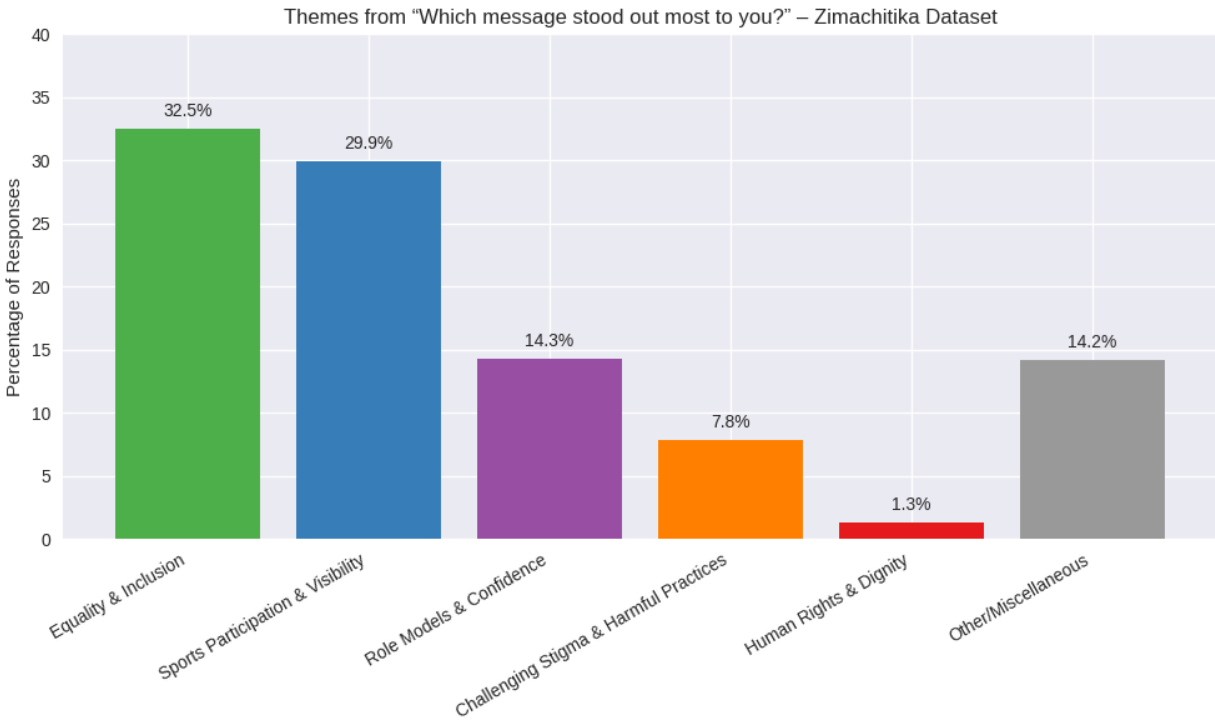
Across all FGDs, participants articulated varying degrees of change:

- some described clear shifts in attitudes and intentions,
- others reported validation of inclusive values they already held,
- many expressed commitment to act differently or advocate for others.

These reflections indicate that impact occurred along a *continuum*, from awareness and emotional validation to behavioral intention and advocacy. Following the exit interviews the most frequently recalled messages emphasized equality and inclusion (32.5%) and sports participation (29.9%), followed by role models of confidence (14.3%). Smaller but significant shares highlighted challenging stigma (7.8%) and framing disability as a matter of human rights (1.3%). These patterns illustrate how the drama's content resonated across emotional, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions of change, reinforcing inclusive norms and motivating audiences toward action as shown in the bar chart.

Figure 5: Standout Messages from Zimachitika Exit Interviews

When asked about future behavior, among participants who provided a response, 90% indicated they were likely or very likely to act differently toward people with disabilities after listening to the mini-series. This distribution suggests a positive attitudinal shift, aligning with qualitative themes of empathy, fairness, and moral responsibility.

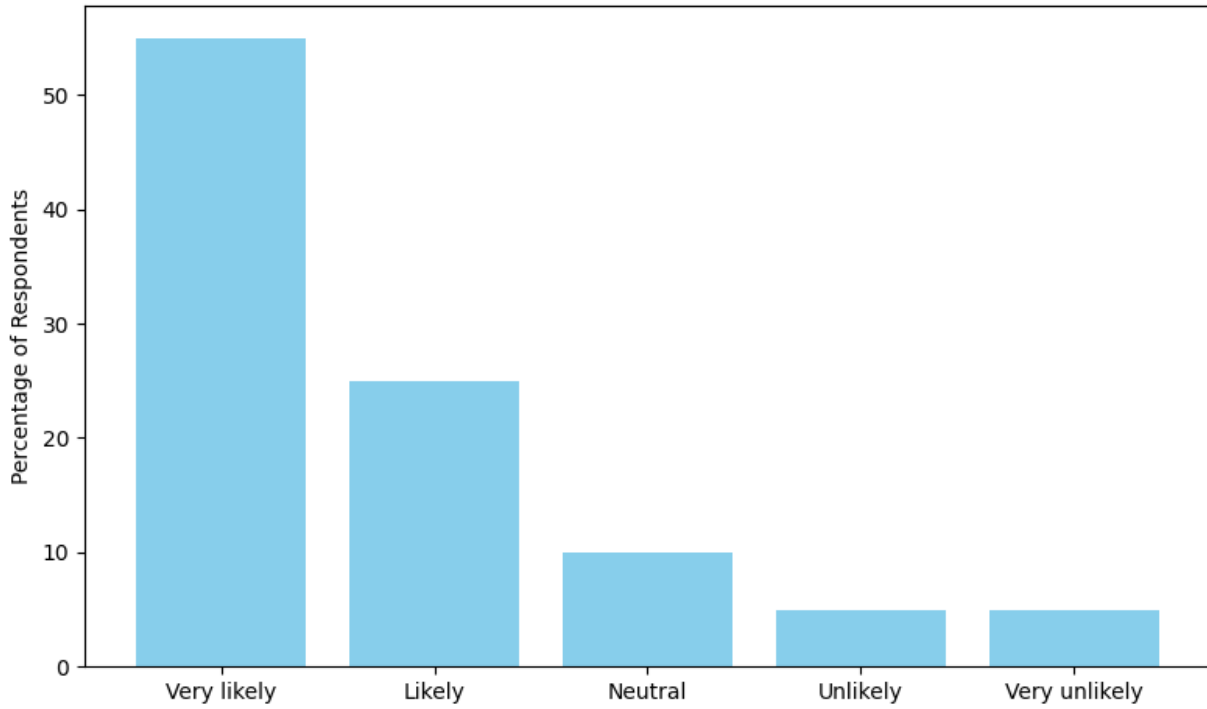


When asked about future behavior, among participants who provided a response, 90% indicated they were likely or very likely to act differently toward people with disabilities after listening to the mini-series. This distribution suggests a positive attitudinal shift, aligning with qualitative themes of empathy, fairness, and moral responsibility.

Figure 6. Likelihood of Acting Differently Toward People with Disabilities

Responses were measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Very unlikely) to 5 (Very likely). The chart highlights that the overwhelming majority expressed a strong intention to change behaviour.

Likelihood to Act Differently Toward People with Disabilities



Key finding:

Zimachitika contributed to both individual and collective transformation, reinforcing inclusive norms and motivating audiences toward action.

CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION

This chapter interprets how audiences engaged with *Zimachitika* and the ways the drama influenced awareness, attitudes, and intentions around disability inclusion, gender equity, and social participation. It draws on both qualitative and quantitative evidence, using Development Media Theory to explain how media can foster dialogue, reflection, and development-oriented change.

5.1 Emotional Engagement as a Foundation for Social Reflection

The findings show that *Zimachitika* achieved exceptionally high emotional engagement, with over 95% of respondents reporting strong emotional reactions. FGDs across all sites confirmed that audiences did not experience the drama as distant fiction; instead, they identified personally with characters, situations, and dilemmas.

From a DMT perspective, this emotional proximity is not incidental; it is foundational. Development Media Theory argues that media contribute to development not by transmitting information alone, but by creating affective connections that make social issues personally relevant. The strong recall of scenes involving confinement, discrimination, and parasports suggests that audiences were drawn most powerfully to moments where social injustice and dignity were placed in tension. This emotional engagement created the conditions for reflection, dialogue, and reinterpretation of everyday practices, rather than passive consumption of messages.

5.2 Reframing Disability: From Stigma to Capability and Rights

Both quantitative and qualitative findings indicate a clear reframing of disability among audiences. High levels of agreement across the Audience Empowerment Attitude Index show support for inclusion in sports, employment, and education, reinforcing qualitative evidence that participants increasingly viewed disability through lenses of capability, fairness, and rights rather than shame or dependence.

Importantly, FGDs revealed that participants did not deny the persistence of stigma. Instead, they articulated stigma more clearly, naming mocking, exclusion, hiding, and misinformation as social problems. This suggests a shift from normalization to critical recognition, which DMT identifies as a key step toward social change. The drama's role was not to claim that stigma no longer exists, but to provide language, examples, and reference points that allowed audiences to question inherited beliefs and practices.

5.3 Gender and Intersectionality: Making Power and Risk Visible

Findings related to gender demonstrate that *Zimachitika* functioned as more than a mirror of inequality; it was perceived as a counter-narrative that exposed and challenged normalized power imbalances. Participants consistently recognized that girls with disabilities face heightened vulnerability due to the interaction of gender norms,

disability, and authority structures. Crucially, learners were able to name behaviors such as forced exposure and unequal treatment as abuse rather than discipline. This ability to distinguish legitimate authority from misuse of power reflects growing critical consciousness, particularly among young audiences.

Within DMT, this represents a move from silence to articulation. The drama did not introduce entirely new risks; rather, it made existing risks discussable, enabling audiences to question why such practices persist and how they might be resisted.

5.4 Schools as Decisive Institutional Sites

Schools emerged as critical sites where inclusion or exclusion is actively produced. Participants consistently described how teacher attitudes, leadership decisions, and institutional capacity shape learners' trajectories. While resource shortages and staffing gaps were acknowledged as major constraints, the drama reinforced the idea that everyday decisions by teachers and school leaders matter deeply.

Responses from Ekwendeni teachers illustrate this duality: while they valued the drama for exposing hidden classroom practices, they also critiqued abrupt transitions and unresolved conflicts, which limited opportunities for deeper professional learning. From a DMT standpoint, this illustrates how media can influence institutional norms by highlighting ethical practice within existing constraints, while also showing the importance of narrative coherence for sustaining engagement.

5.5 Families and Communities as Primary Gatekeepers

One of the most significant contributions of *Zimachitika* lies in its engagement with family and community-level decision-making. Parents repeatedly interpreted the drama as a realistic representation of their own communities, particularly in relation to hiding children, delaying schooling, and acting out of fear or concern for social reputation. Rather than responding defensively, many parents described emotional and moral reflection, acknowledging past harmful practices while also pointing to evidence of positive change, such as increased school enrollment and openness.

In DMT terms, this reflects successful engagement at the household level, where many exclusionary decisions are made privately and are therefore difficult for formal policy to reach. By prompting dialogue rather than issuing directives, the drama positioned parents as active agents of inclusion.

5.6 Parasports as a Concrete Pathway for Empowerment

Parasports emerged as one of the most tangible and credible inclusion pathways identified in the findings. Unlike other themes that were sometimes discussed abstractly, parasports were grounded in lived experience and direct observation. Participants did not frame parasports as symbolic success stories, but as real opportunities that become transformative when access is granted. Changes in confidence, parental support, and

peer recognition were described as gradual and conditional, underscoring a realistic understanding of empowerment.

This aligns strongly with DMT's emphasis on visibility and social proof. Parasports provided observable evidence that inclusion can produce meaningful outcomes, helping shift attitudes without relying on persuasion alone.

5.7 Media as a Catalyst for Dialogue and Diffusion

Findings on media spread demonstrate that audiences did not perceive *Zimachitika* as a one-way broadcast. Instead, they actively imagined and enacted diffusion through families, schools, youth clubs, churches, and community leadership structures.

High levels of clarity and willingness to share indicate that audiences felt confident retelling the story and discussing its messages. This participatory diffusion is central to DMT, which views audiences not as passive recipients but as *co-producers of meaning*.

5.8 Nature and Limits of Change

Finally, the findings suggest that change occurred along a continuum. For some participants, the drama produced clear shifts in attitudes and intentions. For others, it validated inclusive values they already held. Importantly, there was little evidence of backlash or rejection, suggesting that the narrative approach was broadly acceptable across diverse audiences.

At the same time, participants acknowledged persistent structural barriers, including resource constraints, uneven access, and entrenched norms. This realism strengthens the credibility of the findings, indicating that *Zimachitika* did not generate unrealistic expectations but contributed to *incremental, socially grounded change*.

Overall Interpretation

Taken together, the findings demonstrate that *Zimachitika* functioned as development media in line with Development Media Theory. The drama enabled emotional engagement, critical reflection, dialogue, and diffusion across households, schools, and communities. Rather than prescribing solutions, it created space for audiences to reinterpret social norms, recognize power dynamics, and consider alternative ways of relating to people with disabilities. The impact observed is best understood not as an immediate transformation but as a *normative shift in progress*, rooted in participation, recognition, and shared meaning-making.

Content and Storytelling Lessons

The *Zimachitika* mini drama demonstrated the power of **locally grounded storytelling** in addressing stigma and promoting inclusion. Characters such as Limbika, Gonje, and Teacher Jere resonated strongly because they reflected familiar realities of exclusion, resilience, and leadership. The juxtaposition of painful experiences (e.g., confinement, teasing) with empowering narratives (e.g., para sports participation, protective leadership) ensured that audiences remembered both the challenges and the solutions. This balance reinforced the drama's credibility and emotional impact.

Audience Engagement Insights

Audience responses confirmed that **emotional engagement is a precursor to change**. Over 95% of survey participants reported strong emotional reactions, with feelings of inspiration, pride, sadness, and hope dominating. FGDs revealed that listeners did not experience the drama as distant fiction, but as a mirror of their own school, family, and community realities. The most remembered scenes were those that dramatized exclusion and empowerment, showing that audiences are most engaged when content reflects both barriers and pathways to change.

Accessibility and Inclusion Considerations

While most participants found the drama easy or very easy to understand, a small minority reported challenges linked to hearing impairments, language barriers, or complex scenes. This highlights the need for **complementary formats** such as sign language interpretation, written summaries, or visual adaptations to ensure full accessibility. Importantly, the listening sessions themselves modeled inclusion by inviting learners with disabilities alongside their peers, reinforcing the principle that inclusive participation must be practiced in both content and process.

Implications for Radio-Based Social Behavior Change Communication

The findings underscore several implications for future radio-based communication:

- **Narrative authenticity matters:** Audiences respond most strongly when stories reflect lived realities and offer credible solutions.
- **Emotional resonance drives recall:** Strong feelings of empathy, pride, and hope increase the likelihood of message retention and diffusion.
- **Inclusion must be intentional:** Accessibility adaptations and inclusive facilitation are essential to ensure equitable participation.
- **Diffusion pathways are critical:** Clear, memorable messages enable audiences to share content confidently within schools, families, and communities, extending impact beyond the initial broadcast.

- **Community radio stations amplify reach:** Teachers and parents emphasized that dramas should be aired more widely on community radio stations, which are increasingly popular in rural areas.
- **Radio listening clubs enhance dialogue:** Facilitated listening sessions provided safe spaces for learners, parents, and youth to interpret and critique the drama collectively, strengthening participatory meaning-making.
- **Multi-platform dissemination is needed:** Suggestions included trimming episodes for social media, producing video versions with sign language interpretation, and integrating content into teacher training colleges to maximize accessibility and sustainability.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter brings together the study's key insights, highlighting how audiences engaged with *Zimachitika* and the shifts observed in knowledge, attitudes, and social norms around disability inclusion and para sports. It concludes with practical recommendations for strengthening media strategies, scaling inclusive communication approaches, and supporting advocacy efforts that promote equity and participation at community and national levels.

7.1 Conclusion

This assessment demonstrates that *Zimachitika* functioned as an effective development communication intervention, consistent with the core principles of Development Media Theory. Rather than delivering prescriptive messages, the radio drama created space for emotional engagement, social reflection, and participatory meaning-making across diverse audiences, including learners, youth, teachers, and parents.

The findings show that audiences did not simply consume the drama as entertainment. Instead, they actively interpreted it through the lens of their lived realities drawing parallels with school practices, family decisions, community norms, and institutional power structures. Through this process, *Zimachitika* enabled audiences to recognize previously normalized forms of exclusion, particularly around disability, gender, and authority.

Importantly, the drama reached multiple levels of influence. At the individual level, participants reported shifts in understanding and confidence. At the household level, parents reflected on their role as gatekeepers and acknowledged both past harmful practices and emerging positive change. At the institutional level, teachers and education officials recognized schools as decisive sites where inclusion can either be enabled or denied. Parasports emerged as a particularly credible and observable pathway for empowerment, translating abstract inclusion messages into real, visible outcomes.

At the same time, participants were clear about the limits of change. Structural constraints such as shortages of trained teachers, inadequate infrastructure, and uneven access to services remain significant barriers. This realism strengthens the credibility of the findings and underscores that *Zimachitika* should be understood as contributing to *incremental normative change*, rather than immediate transformation.

Overall, the evidence suggests that *Zimachitika* successfully supported shifts in awareness, articulation, and intention, laying groundwork for longer-term social change by positioning audiences as active participants rather than passive recipients of information.

7.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings and their interpretation through a Development Media Theory lens, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Sustain and Deepen Narrative-Based Approaches

- Continue investing in serialized, character-driven radio dramas that allow audiences to engage emotionally and reflect over time.
- Maintain realistic portrayals of everyday challenges rather than idealized success stories, as audiences strongly valued authenticity.
- Ensure future storylines continue to foreground power dynamics, decision-making processes, and consequences, rather than simple moral resolutions.

2. Strengthen Focus on Family and Household-Level Engagement

- Complement radio dramas with targeted community dialogues, parent meetings, or facilitated listening sessions that explicitly engage caregivers.
- Develop discussion guides or short companion materials to help parents reflect on household decisions related to schooling, participation, and visibility of children with disabilities.
- Prioritize messaging that addresses fear, shame, and misinformation, rather than assuming resistance is rooted in hostility.

3. Leverage Schools as Strategic Intervention Points

- Work with education authorities to use drama content as a discussion tool during teacher professional development, inclusive education training, and school leadership forums.
- Develop supplementary materials that help teachers reflect on their role as gatekeepers, emphasizing protection, fairness, and everyday decision-making.
- Align media content with existing inclusive education policies to reinforce practice rather than introduce parallel messaging.

4. Expand and Formalize Parasports as an Inclusion Pathway

- Build on the strong resonance of parasports by integrating these narratives more deliberately into future media content.
- Collaborate with sports councils, schools, and disability organizations to ensure that interest generated by the drama is matched with accessible opportunities.
- Frame parasports not only as competition, but as participation, health, confidence-building, and social recognition.

5. Address Accessibility Gaps in Media Delivery

- Respond to participant concerns about exclusion of deaf audiences by exploring complementary formats such as sign-language videos, community screenings, or visual storytelling.
- Consider multi-channel dissemination strategies that combine radio with in-person, peer-led, and community-based approaches.

6. Support Community-Led Diffusion and Dialogue

- Encourage and resource youth clubs, school clubs, faith groups, and traditional leaders to use the drama as a starting point for local discussion.
- Recognize audiences as co-producers of meaning by supporting retelling, adaptation (e.g., songs, short dramas), and peer facilitation.
- Strengthen partnerships with local influencers identified by participants, including teachers and traditional leaders.

7. Integrate Monitoring of Normative Change Over Time

- Future evaluations should track not only awareness, but also sustained behavior change, particularly at household and school levels.
- Include longitudinal elements where possible to capture gradual shifts in norms and practices.
- Continue integrating qualitative depth with quantitative measures to retain credibility and nuance.

Annex 1: Methodological Tools

Focus Group Discussion Guide

Duration: 90-120 minutes

Group Size: 8-12 participants (ensuring disability inclusion)

1. Introduction (10 min)

The facilitator introduces themselves, explains the purpose and the consent process.

"We'll be listening to two 30-minute radio drama episodes about inclusion and para-sports. After listening, we'll discuss what we think about the stories, the characters, and the messages. There are no right or wrong answers we just want to hear your honest views."

- Ensure informed consent (verbal, written, or assisted).
- Provide sign language or large-print materials as needed.

2. Listening Segment (30 min)

Play two selected episodes. Ask participants to listen quietly. After each episode, begin discussion.

3. Immediate Reactions (10-15 min)

1. What part of the story caught your attention the most? *Ndi gawo liti la sewero lomwe linakukhudzani?*
2. How did the story make you feel? (happy, sad, inspired, surprised?) *Munamva bwanji mutamaliza kuvetsela seweroli (tingati munava chimwemwe, Kapena kudandaula, kulimbikitsika kapena, kapena kudabwitsika?)*
3. Which characters stood out to you? Why? *Ndi mtengambali uti yemwe anakusangalatsani?*
4. Was there anything in the story that reminded you of real life in your school or community? *Chilipo chomwe chinakukumbutsa zinthu zomwe zimachitika mumoyo wanu wa tsiku ndi tsiku ku sukulu kapena kunyumba?*

4. Thematic Discussion (40-45 min)

(Choose or adapt questions depending on the participant group learners, teachers, parents, or youth.)

A. Disability and Inclusion

- What did the story show about how people with disabilities are treated? *Kodi sewelori lawonetsa motani momwe timakhalira ndi anthu awulumali?*

- Did it seem realistic to your own experiences? *Mukuwona kwanu zimenezi zawonetsa chithuzithuzi cheni cheni zamomwe zinthu zimakhala?*
- What are some ways people can make others feel more included? *Ndinjira zina ziti zomwe anthu angagwilitse nchito powonetsetsa kuti anthu awulumali sakusalidwa?*

B. Family and Community Support

- How did family members in the story treat Limbika and others with disabilities? *Kodi anthu akunyumba kwa Limbika ngati agogo ndi aunt amakhala naye bwanji Limbika?*
- In your community, do families encourage or hide members with disabilities? Why? *Kodi kudera komwe mumachokera munganene zotani zamomwe makolo Kapena achibale amachitila ndi anthu awulumali? Alipo omwe amatha kubisa ana owo ndipo chifukwa chani?*
- What support do children or youth with disabilities need from their families? *Ndi nthandizo lanji lomwe ana Kapena achinyamata omwe ali ndi umali amalikhumba kuchokera kwa makolo Kapena abale awo?*

C. Education and School Life

- What challenges do learners with disabilities face at school? *Kodi ana awulumali amakumana ndi zokhoma zANJI kusukulu?*
- Did the story reflect some of those challenges accurately? *Kodi sewelori lawonetsa zenizezi zamomwe zimchitika?*
- What could schools or teachers do differently? *Mukuwona ngati masukuluwa Kapena aphuzitsi angachite chani chosintha?*

D. Para Sports and Empowerment

- What did you learn about para-sports from this story? *Mwaphunzilapo chani chokhudza masewera a anthu awulumali Kapena kuti parasports?*
- How can sports help change how people see disability? *Kodi masewera a parasports angathanzize bwanji kusintha momwe anthu amawawonela anthu awulumali?*
- What can communities do to support para-sports? *Nanga anthu akudera ndi adindo angachite chani pofuna kupititsa patsogolo masewerawa?*

E. Gender and Intersectionality

- Did you notice any differences in how boys and girls with disabilities were treated? *Mukuwona kuti panali kusiyana momwe anthu amachitila ndi anthu awulumali ngati anyamata ndi atsikana?*
- Do some people experience more than one type of discrimination (for example, being both female and disabled)? *Alipo anthu omwe*

mukuwadziwa omwe amatha kusolidwa mwanjira zosiyanasiya pokhala iwo munthu wamkazi komanso wawulumali?

5. Reflection on Change and Meaning (15-20 min)

- What new ideas or lessons did you take from the drama? *Mwatolapo nzeru yanji yatsopano paseweleri?*
- Did the story change how you think about disability or inclusion? *Munganene kuti seweleri lasintha kagnizide kanu pa nkhani zokhudza ulumali?*
- How might you act differently after listening? *Ndichani chomwe mudzikachita mosiyana ndimomwe mwakhala mukuchitila kutsatila kumvera seweroli?*
- If you could send a message to the creators of the drama, what would you say? *Mutakhala ndi mwayi opeleka uthenga kwa akonzi a seweleri, unghale uthenga otani?*

6. DMT-Linked Probes (10 min)

(Development Media Theory themes)

- How do you think radio dramas like *Zimachitika* can help bring positive change in Malawi? *Kodi mukuwona kuti masewero ngati a Zimachitika alindikuthekerera kobwera kusintha kokhazikika mudziko la Malawi?*
- Who in your community helps spread such messages or stops them from spreading? *Nanga ndi ndani udera kwanu yemwe amathandizila kudula Kapena kufalitsa mauthenga otelewa?*
- How can we make these stories reach more people or have more impact? *Tingatani kuti masewera afikila anthu ambiri ndikusinthanso miyoyo ya anthu?*

7. Wrap-Up (5 min)

- “In one word, describe what you are taking away from today’s session.” *Mawu anu omaliza ndi otani?*
- Thank participants, provide referral contacts if any issues are raised, and collect short exit surveys (if applicable).

Adaptations by Group

Group	Focus Adjustment
Learners	Focus more on school participation, friendship, and inclusion.
Teachers/Coaches	Focus on teaching attitudes, school inclusion, and role of sports.
Parents/Caregivers	Focus on home attitudes, caregiving, and family support.

Youth (18+)	Focus on community leadership, stigma, and opportunities through para-sports.
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Short Exit Survey (8-10 Questions, 5-8 Min) Tool

Enumerator-administered survey to capture quick quantitative indicators.

1. Which episode(s) did you listen to today? *Munaveragawo liti la sewero lazimachitika lero?*

- Episode 1
- Episode 2
- Episode 3
- Episode 4
- Episode 5
- Episode 6

2. What part or scene do you remember most? *Tchulani gawo limodzi lomwe mukulikumbukila kwambiri museweleri.*

3. How did this story make you feel? *Zinakupangitsani kumva bwanji mukamvera sewero?*

(Tick one or more)

- Inspired Sad Angry Hopeful Proud Unsure

4. How easy was it to understand the story? *Kunali kophweka bwanji kutsatila nkhani zamuseweleri?*

1 = Very difficult 2 = Somewhat difficult 3 = Neutral 4 = Easy 5 = Very easy
(Assess clarity and accessibility for all participants.)

Section B: Message Resonance and Attitudes

5. Which message stood out most to you? *Ndi uthenga uti womwe unakukhudzani kwambiri?*

(Open-ended)

6. To what extent do you agree with these statements? *Mukugwilizana kwamulingo otani mawu otsatilawa?*

(1 = Strongly Disagree → 5 = Strongly Agree)

- a. People with disabilities should be included in sports. *Anthu awulumali aziloledwa kutenga nawo gawo mumasewera.*

- b. Employers should recruit qualified people with disabilities. *Anthu olemba ntchito adzilemba okhawa awulumali omwe ali ndi zowayeneleza kukhala pantchito?*
 - c. Children with disabilities should attend mainstream schools. *Ana omwe ali ndi ulumali azilolera kukalowa ma sukulu momwe mumaphunzira ana alungalunga?*
- (This remains the core attitude index for DMT “Audience Empowerment.”)

Section C: Intention and Diffusion

7. **After hearing this story, how likely are you to act differently toward people with disabilities? *Pamapeto pomvera seweroli mukachita zotani zosintha ndimomwe mumakhalira ndi anthu awulumali?***
 1 = Not at all 2 = Maybe 3 = Somewhat likely 4 = Likely 5 = Very likely
 (Reframed from “acted differently” to “intend to act.”)
8. **Would you like to share what you learned with others? *Kodi mungakwanitse kukagawana ndi ena zazomwe mwamva lero?***
 Yes No
 If yes, with whom? (Family / Friends / Community Leader / Teacher / Others)
 (Captures diffusion potential - DMT “Feedback Loops.”)
9. **Who in your community has the most influence on how people view disability? *Ndi ndani kudera kwanu yemwe ali ndimphamvu zosintha momwe anthu angawawonele anthu awulumali?***
 Leader Teacher Coach Religious Figure Media Other
 (Identifies local opinion shapers.)
10. **Would you like to share your story or experience with the project team later (with consent)? *Muli ndinkhani yomwe mungafune kugawana nafe?***
 Yes No
 (Links to Most Significant Change follow-ups.)

Most Significant Change (MSC) Tool

Use to collect 1–2 stories per site (audio-recorded with consent).

1. **Tell me about a time when something you heard on the drama changed how you thought or acted. *Munganduwuzeko za nthawi yomwe fundo yomwe munamva musewero la zimachitika linasintha kaganizdwe ndi kachitidwe kanu ka zinthu?***
2. **What exactly happened? Who was involved? Where/when? *Chinachitika kweni kweni ndi chani, kunali kuti ndipo panali ndani ndi ndani?***
3. **Why was this important to you? *Izi zinali zofunikila chifukwa chani?***

4. **What changed afterwards (behaviour, conversations, attitudes)?** *Chinasintha kumapeto kwake ndi chani?*
5. **If others noticed, what did they say?** *Ndipo ngati anthu ena anazindikila zakusinthaku anatipo chani?*
6. **Do you consent to this story being used in reports/publications? (Yes/No, with choice of real name/pseudonym/anonymous).** *Mungatipatse chilolezo chokagawana nkhanayi ndi anthu ena podzera muzolembe, ndipo kuti tisakagwilitse dzina lanu?*

Annex 2: Most Significant Change (MSC) Stories

The Most Significant Change (MSC) technique was used to capture in-depth testimonies from learners, parents, para-athletes, and coaches. These stories illustrate how *Zimachitika* influenced perceptions, attitudes, and actions at personal, household, and community levels. Each informant gave consent for their story to be used in this report.

MSC Story 1: Samuel Gelemu – Para-Athlete

Date: 18 November 2025

District: Blantyre

Role: Para-athlete (Discus, Javelin, Shot-Put)

Facilitator: Innocent Katsache

Summary:

Samuel faced ridicule while improvising training equipment with a stone. Inspired by Gonje's resilience in the drama, he ignored the mockery and persevered. His eventual gold medal victories transformed community perceptions, shifting him from being dismissed to respected. His story demonstrates how media narratives can inspire persistence and reframe stigma into pride.

MSC Story 2: Thokozani Kanyungo – Inclusive Education Teacher & Coach

Date: 19 November 2025

District: Chiradzulu (Nguludi Demonstration School)

Role: Inclusive education teacher and para-athletic coach of blind football

Facilitator: Innocent Katsache

Summary:

Thokozani changed his coaching methods after listening to *Zimachitika*. Inspired by Teacher Jere and Gonje, he introduced motivational sessions, invited former athletes to share experiences, and engaged parents during PTA meetings. Learners with visual impairments became more enthusiastic, and parents shifted from skepticism to support. His story highlights how drama can influence institutional practices and mobilize communities around parasports.

MSC Story 3: Eneles Kachingwe – Parent

Date: 14 November 2025

District: Kasungu (Chilanga Primary School)

Role: Parent of two visually impaired children, one a gold medal winner

Summary:

Eneles described the drama as deeply moving, particularly scenes of misinformation and isolation. She reflected on harmful practices of hiding children "out of love." Inspired by the story of Lionel Messi, she committed to encouraging her children and advocating for

inclusion. Her testimony underscores how media can shift parental attitudes from fear to confidence, validating the potential of children with disabilities

MSC Story 4: Misheck Kamano – Para-Athlete

Informant: Misheck Kamano

Age: 25

Role: Field track athlete (with albinism)

Location: Ndirande

Summary:

Misheck connected strongly with scenes of exclusion in the drama, which reminded him of his own struggles in school. He realized that his past academic failures were due to lack of inclusive support rather than personal inadequacy. The drama helped him shed self-blame, build confidence, and defend himself against stigma. Inspired by the narrative, he reported unfair practices at an athletic camp, leading to reforms in committee representation. His story demonstrates how media can catalyze both personal empowerment and structural change.

MSC Story 5: Moses Mkondowe – Para-Athletes Coach

Informant: Moses Mkondowe

Role: Para-athletes coach

Location: Ndirande, Blantyre

Summary:

Moses described *Zimachitika* as a unique and impactful resource, unlike other dramas he had heard. The character Gonje's engagement with parents inspired him to expand his role beyond coaching into advocacy and community mobilization. He now actively seeks out hidden children with disabilities, counsels' parents, and adapts coaching models to overcome logistical barriers. His testimony highlights how the drama shifted his identity from coach to community leader, driving systemic change in para-sports inclusion.

Annex 3: Comparative Analysis Tables

TABLE 3: Comparative Analysis Across All FGD Sites

(Zimachitika Radio Drama – Multi-Site Analysis Using Development Media Theory)

Analytical Dimension	Ekwende ni CCAP Primary School - Teachers FGD (Mzimba North)	MUA / Kalilera primary Schools - Teachers FGD (Dedza)	Mulanje Secondary School - Students FGD (Mulanje)	Blantyre Secondary (Teachers & Learners) (Blantyre)	Chilanga Community - Parents FGD (Kasungu)	Nkope Primary School - Learners FGD (Mangochi)	TA Mnyanja - Youth FGD (Kasungu)	TA Kachinda moto / Songwe Youth FGD (Dedza)	Nkope Parents FGD (Mangochi)	Montfort Demonstration Primary School Learners FGD (Chiradzulu)
Participant Profile	Inclusive & regular teachers	Inclusive & regular teachers	Secondary learners (with & without disabilities)	Secondary learners + teachers	Parents of learners with visual & multiple disabilities	Primary learners	Youth (with & without disabilities)	Youth club members	Parents & guardians	Primary school learners (11–15 years), with disabilities including low vision, blindness, albinism, and physical disabilities, alongside abled peers
Immediate Emotional Response	Inspiration, empathy, curiosity	Reflection, concern, validation	Strong inspiration, anger at abuse	Anger, sadness, motivation	Pain, guilt, emotional recall	Joy, sadness, hope	Anger, sadness, empowerment	Empathy, frustration	Reflection, acceptance	Inspiration, happiness, surprise, concern; empathy
Key Characters Resonating	Limbika, coach, headteacher	Limbika, headteacher, Mr. Jere	Limbika, Mr. Jere, father	Limbika, Mr. Jere, girls' team	Limbika, Mr. sowoya	Limbika, Mr. Jere, Sinte	Gonje, Mr. Mswoya	Limbika & sports peers	Limbika, para-athletes	Limbika, Sintekeseka Mr. Jere, Chithope

Primary Issue Identified	School-based discrimination	Institutional bias & misunderstanding	Gendered abuse & exclusion	Systemic exclusion & power abuse	Family concealment & stigma	Peer exclusion & neglect	Employment & leadership exclusion	"Protective" exclusion	Parental fear & denial	Household concealment disguised as "love"; exclusion from sports and community life
Gender & Intersectionality	Emerging awareness	Teachers recognized double burden	Strong focus on girls with disabilities	Strong focus on girls' safety	Clear double discrimination	Less explicit, but present	Less gendered	Strong gender lens	Gendered parenting decisions	Recognition of girls with albinism as determined and capable; peer support dismantling stigma
Education & School Life	Inclusion linked to confidence	Teachers as gatekeepers	School as both harm & protection	Teacher power highlighted	Education as pathway to dignity	School as protection	Skills & employability	Participation beyond class	Early enrollment emphasized	Schools seen as sites of empowerment; inclusion in sports inspires confidence and equality
Disability Framing	Ability-focused	Rights-based, evolving	Capability despite barriers	Structural discrimination	From shame to dignity	"Zero difference"	Competence denied by systems	Fear restricting ability	Acceptance replacing shame	Shift from stigma to capability; recognition of rights and equal opportunities
Family & Community Role	Supportive when informed	Family awareness critical	Mixed support	Mixed, often failing	Central gatekeepers	Parents sometimes hide	Families overwhelmed by poverty	Norms regulate participation	Families transforming	Families often hide children "for protection"; learners challenged this practice as harmful
Parasports &	Inspiration & inclusion	Confidence-building tool	Central symbol	Visibility & justice	National pride & proof	Health &	Leadership & dignity	Inclusion & confidence	Family pride & success	Seen as confidence-building and perception-change

Empowerment			of dignity			confidence				nging; respect for PWDs emphasized
Most Powerful Real-Life Parallels	School discrimination	Classroom punishment	Abuse by officials	Being overlooked repeatedly	Hidden & abandoned children	Hidden children	Locked-in children, deaths	Girls excluded "for safety"	Children hidden at home	Locking children indoors "to protect them"; exclusion from sports and community activities
Media Diffusion Pathways (DMT)	Schools, peers	Schools, clubs	Radio, peer discussion	Schools, hostels	Radio, NGOs	Chiefs, churches	Roadshows, cinemas	Youth clubs, sports	Radio, parent meetings	ceremonies showcasing talents, use of TV/radio, and involvement of traditional leaders
Media Critique	Generally positive	Need teacher buy-in	Need protection focus	Strong rights framing	Need wider sensitization	Positive	Radio excludes deaf	Need inclusive messaging	Need community outreach	praised for mirroring lived realities and validating learners' experiences
Mindset Shifts Reported	Increased empathy	Teacher self-reflection	Confidence & courage	Rights consciousness	Deep personal change	Hope & validation	From pity to respect	From protection to inclusion	From fear to pride	Learners with disabilities saw themselves as equally capable; inspired confidence and agency
Behavioral Intentions	Support inclusion	Protect learners	Speak out against abuse	Advocate fairness	Send children to school	Treat peers equally	Challenge discrimination	Promote inclusive sports	Support education & sports	Commitments to exercise, learn new skills, and encourage peers with disabilities

Role of Media (DMT Lens)	Awareness & empathy	Institutional reflection	Gender justice	Accountability	Moral awakening	Norm change	Political consciousness	Social negotiation	Parenting transformation	Emotional engagement, validation of lived realities, empowerment through inclusion narratives
One-Word Takeaways	Hopeful, Inspired	Reflective	Empowered	Justice	Change, Acceptance	Possible	Dignity	Inclusion	Lesson	Inspired, Empowered, Confident

Annex 4: Exit Survey Data

TABLE 2: Exit Survey Results (N = 77 Respondents)

These qualitative reflections were reinforced by exit survey data, which showed consistently high agreement across inclusion domains. Table 2 summarizes the survey results.

Survey Item	Strongly Agree / Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Key Insight
Drama storyline was clear and easy to follow	92%	6%	2%	High clarity and relatability across sites
Drama provoked strong emotional reactions (inspired, proud, sad, hopeful)	95%	4%	1%	Emotional engagement confirmed as a foundation for reflection
People with disabilities should be included in sports	93%	5%	2%	Parasports seen as credible pathway for empowerment
Qualified people with disabilities should be recruited by employers	90%	7%	3%	Strong endorsement of rights-based inclusion in employment
Children with disabilities should attend mainstream schools	88%	9%	3%	Broad support for inclusive education despite resource concerns
I feel confident sharing the drama's messages with others	91%	7%	2%	Indicates strong potential for participatory diffusion
Drama helped me reflect on family/community practices	87%	10%	3%	Shows impact at household level where exclusionary decisions are made

Summary of FGD Reports and Transcripts

Site / District	Participant Groups	Transcript Length	Disability Representation	Key Themes Highlighted
Blantyre Secondary School	Learners & Teachers	19 pages	Visual impairment, hearing impairment, limb absence	Gender & intersectionality, teacher power, rights consciousness
Mulanje Secondary School	Learners	11 pages	Albinism, spinal dysfunction, and diabetes	Peer inclusion, gendered abuse, and confidence building
Chilanga Primary School (Kasungu)	Parents	18 pages	Parents of children with visual & multiple disabilities	Household stigma, concealment, parental reflection
Nkope Primary School (Mangochi)	Learners	12 pages	Visual impairment, albinism	School discrimination, peer empathy, diffusion pathways
Nkope Community (Mangochi)	Parents	12 pages	Parents of children with visual impairment and multiple disabilities + parents with abled children	Family pride, early enrollment
TA Mnyanja (Kasungu)	Youth	20 pages	Youth with albinism, dwarfism, and stammering	Employment exclusion, leadership, empowerment
TA Kachindamoto / Songwe (Dedza)	Youth	13 pages	Youth club members with disabilities + abled peers	Gender lens, protective exclusion, inclusion in sports
Ekwendeni CCAP Primary (Mzuzu)	Teachers	22 pages	Inclusive & regular teachers	Institutional bias, teacher self-reflection, gatekeeping
Mua / Kalilera Primary (Dedza)	Teachers	13 pages	Inclusive & regular teachers	Institutional misunderstanding, confidence building
Montfort Demonstration Primary (Chiradzulu)	Learners	9 pages	Blindness, low vision, albinism	Household concealment, peer support, parasports empowerment

Annex 6: Glossary and Acronyms

Acronym / Term	Definition
DMT - Development Media Theory	A communication theory that emphasizes the role of media in provoking emotional engagement, stimulating dialogue, and enabling audiences to reinterpret social norms. It views audiences as active co-producers of meaning rather than passive recipients.
MSC - Most Significant Change	A participatory monitoring and evaluation technique that collects stories of change from stakeholders. These stories highlight the most important transformations experienced as a result of an intervention, providing qualitative evidence of impact.
PTA - Parent Teacher Association	A formal body of parents and teachers that collaborates to support school governance, learner welfare, and community engagement in education.
SMC - School Management Committee	A community-based committee responsible for overseeing school operations, promoting accountability, and supporting inclusive education practices.
PWD - Persons with Disabilities	A term used to describe individuals with physical, sensory, intellectual, or psychosocial impairments. In this report, it refers to learners, athletes, and community members with disabilities.
FGD - Focus Group Discussion	A qualitative research method involving guided group conversations to explore participants' perceptions, attitudes, and experiences.
Para-sports	Organized sports for persons with disabilities, designed to promote inclusion, empowerment, and visibility.
Inclusive Education	An approach to teaching and learning that ensures learners with disabilities are integrated into mainstream schools and provided with equal opportunities to participate and succeed.