

LIVELIHOODS IN MALAWI

A rapid
livelihoods
assessment
using the
Integral Human
Development
conceptual
framework



ASSESSMENT

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Sincerely,

Michael D. DeVries

TANGO International



ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AIDS: Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome

ADC: Area Development Committee

ARC: American Red Cross

BERU: Biotechnology and Ecological Research Unit

CADECOM: Catholic Development Commission

CBBC: Community-Based Child Care

CBO: Community-Based Organization

CCJP: Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace

CHC: Catholic Health Commission

CPAR: Canadian Physicians for Aid and Relief

CRS: Catholic Relief Services

EI: Emanuel International

FFP: Food for Peace

HH: Household

HIV: Human Immuno-deficiency Virus

HQ: Headquarters

IGA: Income-Generating Activity

IHD: Integral Human Development

I-LIFE: Improving Livelihoods Through Increased Food Security

M&E: Monitoring and Evaluation

MASAF: Malawi Social Action Fund

MVAC: Malawi Vulnerability Assessment Committee

MYAP: Multi-Year Assistance Programme

NGO: Non-Governmental Organization

PLA: Participatory Learning and Action

PLWA: People Living With AIDS

PRA: Participatory Rural Appraisal

RRA: Rapid Rural Appraisal

SCUS: Save the Children USA

SPP: Strategic Programme Plan

TSA: The Salvation Army

WV: World Vision

LOCAL TERMS

BOMA: A headquarters, usually used to refer to a District capital

GANYU: Working for others for a daily wage or for piece meal work

BANJANDIMA: Name of a spring near Utenda Village

KULOWA OR KUPITA KUFA: Spiritual cleansing ritual for a new widow

KUKONZA OR KUPITA MICHINGWA: Spiritual cleansing ritual for a new widow

KUPONDERA NGALAWA: Spiritual cleansing ritual for a new canoe

KUPITA MOTO: Spiritual cleansing ritual before putting fire to bricks

INTRODUCTION

Beginning in mid-2007, CRS Malawi embarked on a two-year process to develop a 5-year Strategic Program Plan (SPP) to guide programming for the country office. One of the planned key activities in this process was to conduct a rapid livelihoods assessment to collect and analyze community-level data to begin to understand the constraints affecting the livelihoods of poor Malawians and the opportunities for improving their livelihoods.

CRS Malawi is also the grant recipient for the Food For Peace-funded Title II programme, Improving Livelihoods through Increased Food Security (I-LIFE), being implemented by a consortium of NGOs.¹ The I-LIFE Programme is scheduled to be completed in 2009, and there is interest on the part of the I-LIFE Consortium to design a programme to follow I-LIFE. This programme will not necessarily be implemented in the same areas in which I-LIFE is being implemented nor with the same interventions, and there is keen interest to identify areas of highest food insecurity and vulnerability in the country to target in the next programme. It was decided that the proposed rapid livelihoods assessment being done as part of the SPP process offers a good opportunity to gather information to inform the design process for the next food security programme to propose to Food For Peace (FFP).

Since 2005, CRS has been building capacities of country offices worldwide to be able understand and use a conceptual framework for programming called the Integrated Human Development Framework. In order to build capacities of staff and key partners in Malawi, the IHD Framework was used to guide the development of tools and analysis of data in this rapid livelihoods assessment.

This report summarizes the rapid assessment that was conducted in April 2008 to meet the objectives outlined above. The sections which follow describe the methodology that was used, key findings from the assessment, a summary of major findings to consider in strategic planning, additional research that is needed, and lessons learned for future assessments.

¹ Africare, American Red Cross (ARC), CARE, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Emmanuel International (EI), Save the Children US (SCUS), The Salvation Army (TSA) and World Vision (WV)

MALAWI LIVELIHOODS



METHODOLOGY



ASSESSMENT PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES, OUTPUTS AND SCHEDULE

Purpose

The primary purpose of the assessment was to consult with people at the community-level to obtain detailed information in order to begin to understand the constraints and opportunities that exist for families living at the lower end of the poverty continuum. As described further below, it is intended that this information will inform both the development of the CRS Malawi SPP as well as the design of a food security programme to propose to FFP to follow the current I-LIFE programme. The assessment was also used to strengthen CRS staff and partner capacities to be able to understand and use the IHD Framework as a conceptual framework for understanding and analyzing the livelihoods of families targeted in development programmes.

Objectives

The 2008 IHD Assessment was designed to meet three specific objectives, as already inferred above. Information is needed to inform the design of the next Multi-Year Assistance Programme (MYAP) to submit to FFP, and the 2008 IHD Assessment was designed to obtain information on food insecurity. The 2008 IHD Assessment was also used to obtain information on priority targeting and critical intervention themes to feed into the process of developing a five-year Strategic Programme Plan. Finally, to support the global efforts of CRS to introduce the Integral Human Development conceptual framework to guide programming, a third objective of the 2008 IHD Assessment was to build the capacities of CRS and her partners to be able to understand and use the conceptual framework. The box summarizes the assessment objectives.

Outputs

Specific outputs produced by the assessment include this report. A mass of field notes (in Chichewa), maps, charts, and diagrams has also been compiled in a second document (available from CRS Malawi). A small quantitative survey was conducted as part of the assessment process, and the database from this survey is available for additional analysis. Finally, the assessment has expanded capacities of a number of staff from CRS and key partners to be able to understand the IHD Framework and use it in a rapid livelihoods assessment process.

Schedule of Activities

Data collection for the 2008 IHD Assessment was undertaken over the period April 14 to 24. However, planning for the assessment began much earlier than that. In March and early April, preliminary process planning and draft tools development was undertaken by the CRS Malawi M&E Technical Unit. Over the period April 7 through 11, a five day workshop was organized with the first two days dedicated to providing orientation and training on the IHD Framework and with the final three days focused on assessment planning and tools finalization. External facilitation was provided by CRS HQ staff for the first two days. A pre-test of the assessment tools was also conducted on April 10 as part of the training and preparation process. Field data collection was undertaken over the period April 14 to 24, and a Post-Data Collection Debriefing and Analysis workshop was held on April 28. In May, quantitative data was processed and qualitative data was compiled. This report was drafted in early June of 2008.

2008 IHD Assessment

OBJECTIVES

SPP Objective

To obtain information on community priorities and the priorities of the poorest and most vulnerable families to inform development of CRS Malawi's five year strategic plan.

MYAP Objective

To obtain information on food insecurity and vulnerability to inform the design of the next MYAP.

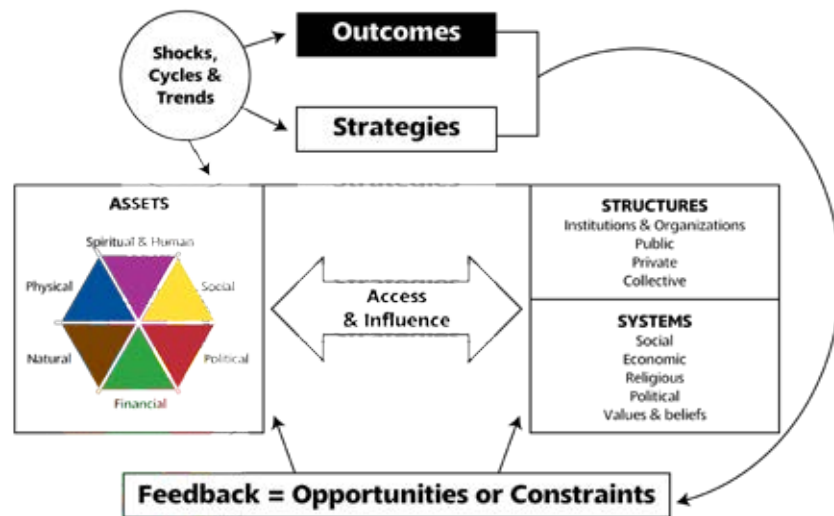
Capacity Building Objective

To build the capacities of CRS Malawi staff and partners to use the Integral Human Development (IHD) conceptual framework for programming.

THE INTEGRAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT (IHD) FRAMEWORK

The development of assessment tools and analysis of data collected was undertaken using CRS's Integral Human Development (IHD) Framework as shown in Figure 1. Information gathered and key findings are oriented around the assets, strategies, outcomes, structures and systems and the vulnerability context that affect the decisions made by poor families.

Figure A: The CRS Integral Human Development (IHD) Framework



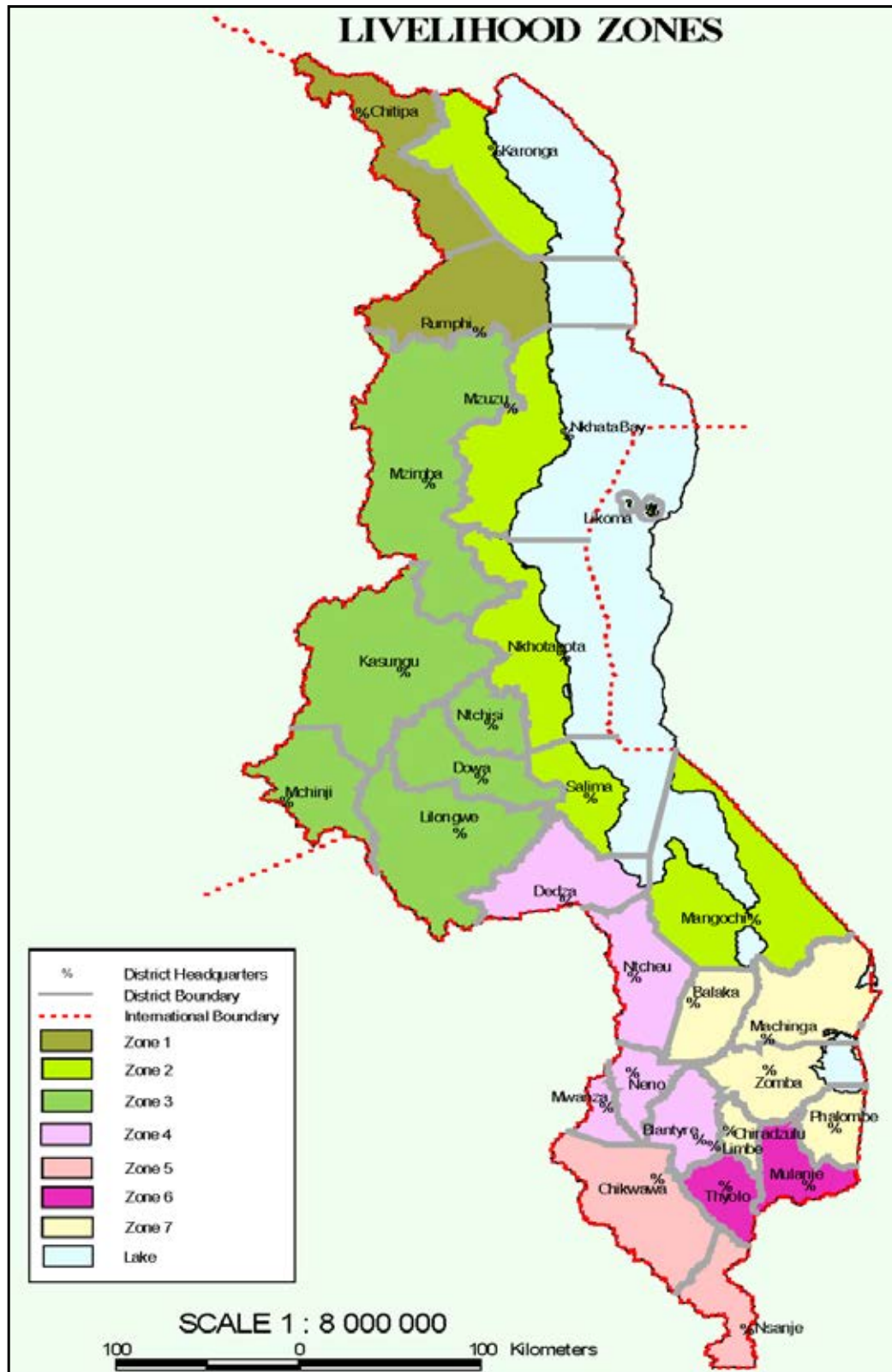
VILLAGE SELECTION

The Malawi Vulnerability Assessment Committee (MVAC) has been undertaking a process of identifying livelihood zones in Malawi. Based in part on results from this exercise, CRS Malawi has identified seven livelihood zones. Given the time and human resources available for undertaking the assessment, four villages were selected for data collection in the 2008 IHD Assessment representing three of the seven zones. The selection was based on obtaining information from different distinct livelihood zones across the country and especially from areas where food insecurity is highly significant. The villages that were selected are shown in Table 1 and their locations are shown in Figure B.

Table 1. Villages Selected for the 2008 IHD Assessment

VILLAGE	DISTRICT	DIOCESE	TRADITIONAL AUTHORITY	GROUP VILLAGE HEADMAN	LIVELIHOOD ZONE
Juma	Machinga	Mangochi	Nsanyama	Pangolani	Phalombe Plain/Shire Highlands (Zone 7)
Lundu	Nsanje	Chikwawa	Malemia	Mbeta	Lower Shire (Zone 5)
Mwalupondo	Karonga	St. Mary's	Kyungu	Kalambo	Lake Shore (Zone 2)
Utenda	Nsanje	Chikwawa	Ndamera	Chinzeti	Lower Shire (Zone 5)

Figure B. Location of 2008 IHD Assessment Villages Within Seven Livelihood Zones



ASSESSMENT PREPARATION WORKSHOP

A five-day workshop was held from April 7 through 11 to complete preparations for conducting the assessment. The first two days of the workshop were an orientation to the IHD concept framework. The third day of the workshop focused on the assessment process and orientation to the draft data collection tools that had been developed before the workshop. On the fourth day of the workshop, the pre-tools were pre-tested by field teams in three locations near Lilongwe. The experience from the pre-test was used to further refine the tools and make final preparations for undertaking the assessment.

DATA COLLECTION PROCESS

Assessment data was collected over the period April 14 to 24 by three field teams for the three districts in which selected villages were located, Nsanje, Machinga and Karonga. Not all members of the field teams were able to participate in the IHD/Assessment Preparation Workshop, so the first day after arriving in the district headquarters was spent orienting new field team members and conducting courtesy calls with local government and church authorities.

A four day process was then used in each village to gather and analyze data. On the first day, community-level consultations were held along with household interviews. On the second day, consultations were held with livelihoods clusters which are groups of households with similar livelihoods strategies, such as small farmers, fishermen, labourers, petty traders, etc. On the third day, field teams worked together to analyze the data that had been collected on these two days. On the fourth day, the field teams returned to the village to present back key findings as well as to obtain clarification on any issues that may have emerged from the analysis the previous day. The Machinga and Karonga field teams completed this process for one village. The Nsanje team obtained data from two villages over an eight day period. Annex A contains a list of the individuals who served on each of the field teams. Annex B contains the Data Collection Process Guide which describes the process outlined above in more detail.



Household Interview in Juma Village.

Qualitative Data

Qualitative data was collected through large group interviews, focus group discussions, key informant interviews, and various mapping and diagramming exercises. On the first day in a village, group interviews were conducted with groups of men and women, separately. One or more key informant interviews were also conducted on this first day, and small groups of participants were consulted in developing community maps, Venn diagrams and community wealth rankings. At the end of the day, based on the information that was obtained, field teams identified the most important livelihoods clusters for the village and requested village leadership to arrange meetings on the following day with representatives from the different livelihoods clusters. On the

second day, focus group discussions were held with these representatives from the different livelihoods clusters.

The various data collection tools (in English) including the Community Interview Checklist, Key Informant Topical Outline, Focus Group Discussions Topical Outline, and Community Mapping/Venn Diagram/Wealth Ranking Process Guidelines, can be obtained from CRS Malawi.

Quantitative Data - Household Survey

In each village, household interviews were also conducted with individual households to complement the information obtained from the qualitative tools used in the assessment. Representatives from the most important livelihoods clusters were identified and an individual interview was held with the household head. The main objective of this household survey was to obtain detailed information about some of the topics which people may be reluctant to discuss in an open forum such as a large group discussion or a focus group discussion. Because of the small sample size and sampling approach used (purposive selection of participants from qualitative interviews), robust parameter estimates are not possible from the data. However, comparison across different livelihoods clusters is possible, and information from these interviews was used to cross-check information from the other tools used. The Household Survey Questionnaire can be obtained from CRS Malawi.

Village Feedback

On the fourth day of data collection, field teams returned to the village and presented back to the village the key observations that had emerged from the analysis up to that point. In a typical PRA or PLA process, it is standard practice to use the information that has been obtained with a village to begin working with them to develop a community action plan. However, because there are no plans or resources currently available to continue working with villages following the 2008 IHD Assessment, the purpose of this last day in the village was to share information for ground-truthing and to obtain additional information to clarify questions that may have emerged from the analysis up to that point.

KEY INFORMATION TARGETED IN THE ASSESSMENT

Given the objectives of the assessment, field teams were asked to be particularly sensitive to information required to meet the assessment objectives.

STRATEGIC PLANNING PRIORITIES

For the strategic programme plan, decisions will need to be made on at least three issues, (1) who should be targeted with CRS programmes, (2) in which parts of the country, and (3) with which types of interventions. Field teams were asked to be rigorous in identifying livelihoods clusters since these represent potential target groups for CRS programmes. If that is done well and the IHD Framework is used to understand their livelihoods constraints and opportunities, priority intervention themes will emerge. Comparison across the geographic zones in which the assessment was conducted will provide information for geographic prioritization.

FOOD INSECURITY

Field teams were requested to obtain information about the sources of food insecurity, especially for different livelihoods clusters. They were asked, in particular, to consider the supply of food, access to the food that is available and the utilization of food. They were also asked to analyze vulnerability in terms of the risks that poor families face and their ability to cope with the risks.

HIV/AIDS

CRS is committed to addressing the risks and impact of HIV/AIDS around the world and given the prevalence rates in Malawi, this will be an obvious component of the SPP. Field teams

2008 IHD Assessment Themes

Be Consultative (listen to what communities have to say) –

Mumvetse zonena za anthu, funsani, njira, ndipakamwa chifukwe muyang’ana dzuwa anasokera.

Be Curious (probe deeper in order to understand) - Khaani ndichidwi koposa.

Be Creative – (look for new ways to capture or present information) – Wonetsani luso, kuti mumve osati zonedwa kapera zoyankhulidwa.

were requested to gather information specifically on the prevalence and impact of HIV/AIDS in the villages visited.

ASSESSMENT THEMES

Finally, field teams were asked to implement the assessment in ways to maximize the quality of the information collected. These assessment “themes” are shown in the box.

DATA ANALYSIS

ANALYSIS PROCESS

Data analysis and interpretation was done throughout the assessment process. At the end of each of the first two days of data collection, each field team met together to share observations and ideas from the day. The third day of data collection was devoted entirely to analyzing and documenting information. Much of the value of using different data collection tools is to be able triangulate information. If a common observation is made using a number of different tools, then there is a high probability that the observation is accurate. These internal field team discussions were used to triangulate observations to derive valid findings. At the end of the data collection phase of the assessment, additional time was taken for field teams to continue analyzing data and documenting information. Field teams then shared their observations with other field teams in a one-day Debriefing and Analysis Workshop, which provided an additional opportunity to analyze information. Finally, in preparing this report, additional analysis was undertaken, particularly to compare quantitative information with the qualitative documentation.

INFORMATION SUMMARY TABLES

Each of the field teams completed three formats for each village summarizing information from the assessment. These were (1) a Community Summary documenting information obtained through community consultations, (2) Livelihoods Cluster Descriptions documenting descriptive information from the focus group discussions with livelihoods clusters, and (3) an Analysis Summary-Major Issues and Opportunities which documented the products of the field team analysis of the data. In addition to these summary formats, a set of Household Survey Summary Tables was also developed to capture information from the household survey. These completed formats for each of the four villages surveyed and the Household Survey Summary Tables are included in Annex C.

KEY FINDINGS



VILLAGE DESCRIPTIONS

JUMA VILLAGE (MACHINGA DISTRICT)

Juma Village is located about 1.5 kilometers off of the main road between the towns of Liwonde and Ntaja, around 24 kilometers from the Liwonde Boma. Machinga Boma lies to the southwest. The village was established around 80 years ago when people from Mozambique came in search of better land. The area at that time had thick forest, and the land was fertile for slash and burn agriculture. The village currently has 64 households, split approximately equally between Muslim (Yao tribe) and Christian (Lomwe tribe) families. The wealth ranking done with villagers in the assessment estimated that around 50% of the village could be classified as "poor", 38% as "rich" and 12% as "very rich".

Major livelihoods activities undertaken by people living in Juma include farming, *ganyu*¹ labour, capture fishing and various income-generating activities such as bicycle hire², mat-making, and petty trade. There is also significant temporary and seasonal migration out of the village to other parts of Malawi as well as to South Africa by men seeking work. There has also been some new in-migration by families from Zimbabwe, Zambia and Mchinji. Many of the poorest households in the village are primarily dependent on *ganyu* for income.

Major crops produced include maize, rice, sorghum, groundnuts, millet, chili pepper and a variety of other horticultural crops.

While there is a high incidence of tuberculosis and other signs of HIV, villagers do not know the prevalence of HIV/AIDS, and they seem to have relatively little knowledge about HIV transmission and protection.

Significant environmental changes or problems affecting the village include declining soil fertility as the rotation period for slash and burn cultivation shortens and deforestation also due to increasing population density.

Potable water is obtained from either a water tap system located in the village or from a protected well in a neighbouring village. A fee of 10 Kwacha per month per household is assessed on the tap water, but it is highly rationed. When the tap water is off, the well in the neighbouring village is used.

The nearest hospital is located in Liwonde, 24 kilometers away. There is also a private clinic in Liwonde that charges fees and is accessible to people who can afford the minimum 1000 Kwacha charge. There is a government Community-Based Child Care (CBCC) Center clinic for children under five years in Mulipa Village around five kilometers away in the headquarters of the Group Village Headman. A government Health Surveillance Assistant also visits periodically to provide chlorination for water and health education.

While there is no school in Juma Village, there are primary schools nearby that are accessible in Kasawulo Village (1.5 kilometers) and Likweme Village (1.5 kilometers). School fees are around 20 Kwacha per term.

There is cell phone access in the village, and six people have cell phones, Eleven families in the village have radios.

¹ **Ganyu** is the Chichewa term used to describe working for others for a daily wage. *Ganyu* can take many forms from agricultural labour in the fields, to processing grain, through construction labour and other forms of non-agricultural labour.

² As a form of taxi service.



Water point in Juma.

In terms of community decision-making, the village is divided into six clusters with a clan leader responsible for each cluster. Disputes within a clan or cluster are resolved by the clan leader or referred to the village headman if the dispute requires higher level mediation.

There are two markets located nearby within reasonable distance in which produce can be sold and consumables purchased.

A number of committees are functioning in the village with varying degrees of effectiveness. The water committee which manages the tap system is reasonably effective at fund raising and maintaining the water point, although water is not always available. The agriculture committee is also functioning and mobilizing people. The forestry committee is dormant, however. At one point, there was also a community policing group that was formed but is now inactive.

External linkages between the village and others include relationships with the Mulipa Police Unit, the agricultural extension department, Ministry of Water, Department of Forestry, Water Aid (an International NGO) and Orphan Support Africa (an International NGO) is supporting a CBO in the village.

Major shocks and stress cited by villagers include road accidents which happen four to five times per month, dry spells affecting crop harvest, flooding affecting agricultural production in fields near the river, crocodiles injuring people, and diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis, cholera and gastro-intestinal infections.

Major trends affecting the village include declining soil fertility resulting in reduced crop production. This in turn results in increasing food insecurity. Population is increasing, although migration in and out has remained relatively constant, with new families coming in and some youth leaving the village. More children are attending school nowadays, but more students are dropping out after primary school than in the past. There are mixed reports that physical security has improved in the last five years. Some people say it has improved while others report that the situation has improved for some people but not others.

The priority constraints and obstacles cited by participating villagers were no access to capital, difficulties in accessing secondary education, reduced flow of money (“people have money for three to four months of the year”), and declining productivity of land.

LUNDU VILLAGE (NSANJE DISTRICT)

Lundu Village is a peri-urban community located approximately five kilometers from Nsanje Boma on the main road to Chikwawa. The Shire River constituting the border with Mozambique runs on the eastern edge of the village. Lundu is an old village. People have been living there for many generations, and stories in the village go back as far as when the Portugese and English were negotiating colonial borders.

There are 270 households in the village, approximately 1600 people. There is one Village Headman for the whole village. The wealth ranking done with villagers indicated that 1% to 2% of the households were considered rich, 5% to 6% were middle class, 87% to 88% were poor and 5% were extremely poor. Major livelihoods activities in the village include farming with both upland and lowland agricultural systems, capture fishing from the Shire River, *ganyu* labour, charcoal production, firewood harvest and sales, grass (thatch) harvesting and sales, and beer production. The extremely poor households are entirely dependent on handouts from other households. Poor households undertake a variety of activities, but many are dependent



Boys in Juma.



Treadle pump in Lundu.

on *ganyu*. Given the proximity to the Nsanje Boma market and available fishing resources, capture fishing is a fairly lucrative activity for families with access to capital for nets. Most of the middle class as defined by the village are fisher households.

Declining soil fertility on upland soils was cited by villagers as the major environmental problem. Also, however, much of the forest vegetation around the village has been cut allowing erosion to occur. People also feel that there is less rain nowadays, and rainfall patterns have changed with rain now coming more often in downpours.

Lundu is a village that has been severely impacted by HIV/AIDS. The last mortality in the village occurred as a result of AIDS the day before the assessment, and there have been many AIDS mortalities. The village has been able to accommodate AIDS orphans with extended families, however, the capacity to absorb orphans is nearing saturation.

Villagers were not sure how they were going to accommodate the four new orphans resulting from the most recent mortality.

Because of the proximity of the Shire River, farming families have significant irrigated land through treadle pumps and canals with the support of Goal Malawi on the Malawi side. Farmers also cross the river to rent land in Mozambique to cultivate rice and sweet potato. Major crops observed in the village were sweet potatoes (major cash crop), rice, sorghum, millet, and some maize.

Four bore holes, all presently functioning, provide potable water for the village. It was reported that some boreholes go dry in the dry season, but there is always water in the village. The boreholes appear to be well-sealed. Run-off from the boreholes, however, is neither used for cultivation nor treated properly. There was a recent government project implemented to promote latrines and hygiene. In this project, if a family built a latrine, they were eligible to receive a plastic bucket and bar of soap from the project. As a result, 120 new latrines were completed. However, the quality is poor, and many are not really complete. The village headman himself does not have a latrine, and the villagers mentioned that there has been cholera in the village.

The Nsanje District Hospital is 4 kilometers from the village. There is also a village health volunteer in the village through which a Concern Worldwide health project is providing child health education and services.

There is a school nearby in the next village that is operating two sessions per day, and most children in the village are attending school. The school has at least one volunteer teacher paid by the community. Since the village is close to the Nsanje Boma, there are opportunities for post-primary school. Despite the proximity of school facilities, adult literacy for women appears to be very low in Lundu. Only 8 of 50 women participating in the community interview had attended school.

Organizations working in Lundu include Goal Malawi (irrigation and agriculture), Concern Worldwide (health and malnutrition), Civil Liberties Commission (human rights), Department of Forestry, Department of Fisheries (have formed a committee in the village), and World

Vision (Capacity building of CBOs working with orphans and the chronically ill). A CBO, Chirlungamo CBO, is working on many things related to health and human rights through various committees that exist in the village, including the school committee and the health committee (although there appears to be a lot of defecation within the village and the effectiveness of this committee is questionable). Representatives from Lundu are also on a committee of villages formed by the Malawi Union for the Blind.

There are some small markets and shops in Lundu. However, the Nsanje Boma market is relatively nearby, providing opportunities for selling produce and buying consumption items.

There appear to be no formal lending opportunities in Lundu, although there is informal lending at high rates of interest for emergencies. A group working with the Department of Forestry has deposited part of their *ganyu* earnings in a common account to be used as collateral for loans at some point in the future.

Major shocks and stress cited by villagers include AIDS-related illnesses, drought affecting crop harvest, flooding affecting agricultural production in fields near the river, and crocodiles injuring people.

With regard to important trends in the village, population is still increasing in the village with people coming into the village to live with relatives or with strangers coming in some cases. This is offsetting the loss of lives due to HIV/AIDS. The population profile is changing, however, with declining productive adult population and lower life expectancy rates.

In the past, farmers did not farm the lowland. Now, due to pressure to produce more food, they have discovered the opportunity to produce more in the lowlands and are now exposed to the impact of floods on crops there.

Sweet beer production for sale is a relatively recent development. In the past, it used to be made mainly for home consumption. Because of the profitability, more people are joining the capture fishing industry. Charcoal production is also increasing. Commercial sex, especially with women from Lundu going to Nsanje Boma has become more visible. Some women feel compelled to undertake this activity to generate income.

There has been a recent proliferation of CBOs and committees being formed as organizations seek to provide assistance to the village, but there is little coordination in the village.

Declining soil fertility as a result of shorter fallow periods in shifting cultivation is resulting in lower production levels. Lowland areas produce more food but are at risk of floods. So, the supply of food at the community level is reduced relative to the population density. There is plenty of food in Nsanje Boma, but low incomes constrain access. Poor sanitation in the village also results in poor utilization of food. People in the village report that they are generally less food secure than in the past.

Theft and violence along the road also seems to be more common than in the past. People choose to travel early in the morning to Nsanje Boma to be able to return before



Ganyu Workers in Lundu.



Road to Mwalupondo.

dark to avoid problems.

The priority constraints and obstacles cited by participating villagers were the spread of HIV/AIDS, food shortage, declining forest resources and limited access to capital.

MWALUPONDO VILLAGE (KARONGA DISTRICT)

Mwalupondo Village is located 15 kilometers from Karonga Boma between the North Rukuru and Mwasha Rivers. Although the distance is not far, access roads are rough, and the village is more remote in terms of services and support than other villages located along main roads. The village was formed almost two hundred years ago around 1817.

Mwalupondo is a large village with over 300 households. Wealth rankings done with villagers indicated that around 20% of the village are considered “well-off”, 30% are “poor” and 50% are the “poorest”. Major livelihoods activities

include petty trading, farming, beer brewing and skilled labour. In the past, people used to go to South Africa in order to work in the mines. Nowadays, there is still some seasonal migration from June to August for agricultural labour, and some men go to neighbouring villages to mold bricks, but few people go to South Africa again. Women from households in which the men have migrated undertake *ganyu* to earn income.

The major environmental problems cited by villagers include deforestation and the resulting erosion causing the river to become more silty than in the past.

Mwalupondo has also been significantly affected by HIV/AIDS with at least six persons in the village recognized as currently fighting the disease. The impact of HIV/AIDS has been significant in reducing household labour capacities. Time must also be spent, at the expense of other livelihoods activities, in caring for the sick. There are also medicine and transport costs incurred, and occasionally after the death of a husband, a woman can struggle with realizing inheritance property rights.

Major crops grown, mostly for subsistence, include maize, cassava, soy beans, millet, and ground nuts. Tobacco and cotton are also produced and sold. Because of the success of maize cultivation, villagers feel that Mwalupondo is more developed today, and land is relatively scarce.

There are no landline telephones in Mwalupondo. The cellphone network does not work except when one goes up on a hill to speak.

There are three Community-Based Child Care Centers, three Primary Schools, and a Secondary School in Mwalupondo. In the first primary school that was established in the village, school fees were being paid but now education is virtually free. There is a perception on the part of villagers, however, that the quality of education has gone down due to low teacher motivation and more lenient testing. In comparing enrollment rates for boys and



Women in Mwalupondo.

girls, some people believe there is a fair balance. There is evidence, however, that girls drop out in disproportionate numbers in both primary school and early secondary school. This is due to girls marrying, and there are reported cases of children who fail to continue their education due to high school fees. Red Cross pays school fees for some of the children and provides donations to some of the orphans in the community. There is also one Teacher Development Center in the village.

There are five boreholes, one semi-permanent well, and three semi-permanent wells providing potable water in the village. People are required to make a small contribute on a monthly basis to support maintenance of the boreholes. The village uses pit latrines to dispose of human waste, but not every household has access to a pit latrine.

Health services are available in Karonga Boma (14 kilometers or 1.5 hours) through the Karonga District Hospital, a private clinic, or NGO-managed services. More locally, an indigenous medical practice (1.5 km) is located nearby, and a government clinic exists in Mwalupondo.

With regard to community decision-making, the Mwalupondo Village Headman has subordinates who are “ministers” who support him in decision-making. Apparently, people in the village are allowed to choose his/her own minister for representation. While women are able to vote on issues in theory, many times they are systematically excluded from the voting process. There are three CBO’s functioning in the village that facilitate collection of information and advocate on behalf of the people to the Area Development Committee (ADC). The ADC then takes the requests to the District Assembly level to be heard. There are a number of committees functioning in the village including a Village Development Committee, a CADECOM committee, and a committee associated with the BERU Program.

External technical relationships include occasional technical support from Ministry of Agriculture agricultural advisors and health workers from the Ministry of Health who come to the village to discuss sanitation practices. The Red Cross and Canadian Physicians for Aid and Relief (CPAR) provide relief, donations, and medical care to the community.

There are money lenders in the community that give 500 to 1000 Kwacha and usually ask for 25% interest in return when the money is paid.

Major shocks and stress cited by villagers include sudden or chronic (AIDS-related) illnesses, drought affecting crop harvest, poor transportation networks and poor access to capital.

With regard to important trends in the village, population is increasing, although the resident population fluctuates with seasonal migration which occurs during the harvest season. In the past, men primarily migrated, but now women also migrate to Tanzania and neighboring districts/villages to conduct business. In recent years there has been a proliferation of committees to serve as conduits for external support by various organizations.

The priority constraints and obstacles cited by participating villagers were poor transportation infrastructure, retention of girls in the education system, illnesses, and limited access to capital.

UTENDA VILLAGE (NSANJE DISTRICT)

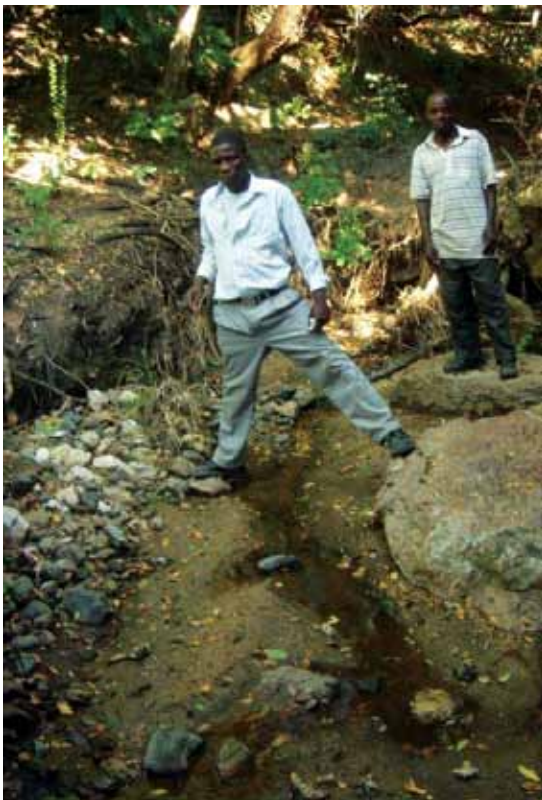
Utenda Village is located southwest of Nsanje Boma in the highlands near the Mozambique border. The distance by road from the Boma is 60 kilometers, half of which is over a very rough road requiring four-wheel drive. The village was established around fifty years ago when a group of Sena tribespeople from Mozambique fled a local tribal war.

There are currently 76 households in the village divided into three village subdivisions. Wealth ranking done with villagers resulted in estimates of 1% to 2% of the village classified as “rich”, around 15% as “middle class”, around 75% as “poor” and around 8% as “extremely poor”. Major livelihood activities include farming, basket weaving, petty trade, *ganyu* labour, and begging. Basket-weaving is a major activity for a number of households in the village. There is significant seasonal migration with men going to work in the agricultural sector in Mozambique or on the sugar estates.

The major environmental problem affecting the village is declining soil fertility.

The prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the village seems to be significantly less than in other villages surveyed, although there are indications that it is present and people are aware of the disease, even if they are not knowledgeable about transmission and management.

Major crops grown entirely through rain-fed cultivation systems are maize, groundnuts, pigeon peas, sorghum, cassava and sweet potatoes. There are three small intermittent streams that run through or near the village, but there is no irrigation. Wild animals (antelope) are occasionally seen grazing in fields.



Contaminated stream.

Access roads are constructed primarily through self help, although a section of the road to the village was constructed with cash-for-work through the Malawi Social Action Fund (MASAF) in collaboration with the member of parliament representing the area.

There are no protected water systems to provide potable water in Utenda. The village draws water from the intermittent streams. When the flows dry up, shallow depressions are dug along the streams. These eventually dry up and the sole source of water is a spring in the Nyachipere River drainage called **Banjamdima** (“don’t go at night”). The streams are contaminated with livestock dung since animals also drink from the same water sources, so water-borne illness is fairly common in the village. The most common diseases in the village are malaria, diarrhea, dysentery and shingles.

There is a health committee under the village headman, and the Health Surveillance Assistant from the Ministry of Health visits the village once a month. There are no Traditional Birth Attendants in the village. Pregnant and lactating mothers must travel 14 to 30km away for pre-natal checks and delivery.

Children attend government primary schools located in two neighboring villages; 30 minutes and one hour away, respectively. More boys than girls generally attend school.

There is no cell phone coverage in Utenda. People have access to information through radio.

In terms of external technical support, Goal Malawi is promoting limited soil and water technologies interventions with field agents coming approximately once every two months.

The Ministry of Health provides an under-five clinic on a monthly basis, and a CBO based in a nearby village registers the elderly, orphans and disabled persons.

There is a very small market at a maize mill in the village, where people are able to sell and buy produce, fish, salt, and soap. Some production is sold within the village, for some crops middlemen buyers come to the village, and some production is sold in the nearest larger markets located 30 kilometers either at a location in Malawi or at a location in the other direction in Mozambique. There is one former shopkeeper living in the village who closed his shop (not profitable) and started working as a middleman for marketing baskets produced in the village in these larger markets.

Utenda currently has one Village Headman. However, the village is being partitioned into three separate villages despite its relatively small size, partly as a result of power disputes in the village. The current headman is fairly democratic in his decision-making, engaging his counselors as well as the likely future headmen (apart from one) from the other parts of the village.

Major shocks and stress cited by villagers include the lack of safe drinking water, food shortages and poor access to health facilities, particularly for children and pregnant women.

With regard to important trends in the village, population has been steadily increasing, primarily from natural growth. In the past, very few cash crops were grown, however the need for cash prompted increased production of crops for sale. Basket-making as an income-generating activity is a fairly recent development. There is a common perception that, while in the past there may have been occasional droughts, now droughts occur fairly regularly. There is also the perception that the occurrence of diseases is more common and with more diverse illnesses than in the past.

The priority constraints and obstacles cited by participating villagers were food shortages, diseases primarily because of poor potable water quality, physical security and poor access to health services especially for pregnancies.

VILLAGE-LEVEL HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE HOUSEHOLD SURVEY

Included in Annex C are tables summarizing key information from the household survey that was done as part of the assessment. Table 2 summarizes some of the most distinguishing information emerging from the survey relative to comparison across villages. As described above, Lundu Village appears to be significantly affected by the impact of HIV/AIDS. Families hosting orphans is a proxy indicator in Malawi for the likely impact of HIV/AIDS, and the household survey clearly shows more Lundu families hosting orphans than in the other villages surveyed. The data from the household survey also suggests that Mwalupondo in general is better off than the other villages surveyed in terms of both food insecurity and estimated annual income. All villages report significant dependence on markets for food, with over half of the food consumed in the last month as coming from the market.

Table 2. Comparison Across Villages - Household Survey

VILLAGE	AVERAGE HH SIZE	PERCENTAGE OF HH WITH ORPHANS	NUMBER OF MONTHS WITH 3 MEALS PER DAY	PERCENT OF FOOD CONSUMED IN THE LAST MONTH PURCHASED FROM THE MARKET	AVERAGE ANNUAL INCOME (KWACHA)
Juma	4.8	25%	2.4	62.0%	32,557
Lundu	6.1	42%	3.3	51.3%	41,147
Mwalupondo	4.7	17%	12.0	58.3%	75,321
Utenda	5.6	25%	3.9	47.7%	29,230
All Villages	5.3	27%	5.8	54.8%	44,564

MAJOR LIVELIHOODS CLUSTERS

Table 3 summarizes the different livelihoods clusters identified in each of the four villages surveyed. Farmers were a significant group in all of the villages, as were those households dependent on *ganyu*. The table shows the relative scale of the cluster in that village (large, medium or small) and their wealth category according to the wealth ranking with villagers in each location. The sections which follow describe the characteristics of each of the livelihoods clusters according to their assets, activities, structures and systems and vulnerability.

Table 3. Livelihoods Clusters Identified in Each Village

VILLAGE	LIVELIHOODS CLUSTERS	SCALE OF CLUSTER	WEALTH CATEGORY
Juma (Machinga District)	Small-holder farmers	Large	Mostly "poor" but some "Rich"
	Dependent on IGAs	Medium	Mostly "poor" but some "rich"
	Dependent on <i>ganyu</i>	Large	All "poor"
Lundu (Nsanje District)	Small-holder farmers	Large	"Poor", "middle" and "rich"
	Fishers	Medium	All "middle class"
	Dependent on <i>ganyu</i>	Large	All "poor"
	Firewood & charcoal sellers	Small	All "poor"
Mwalupondo (Karonga District)	Small-holder farmers	Large	All "poor"
	Fishers	Medium	All "poorest"
	Skilled labourers	Small	All "well-off"
	Dependent on IGAs & petty trade	Medium	"poorest", "poor" and "well-off"
Utenda (Nsanje District)	Cash crop farmers	Medium	"Poor", "middle" and "rich"
	Basket makers	Medium	"Poor" and "middle"
	Dependent on <i>ganyu</i>	Large	"Poor" and "extremely poor"
	Doing <i>ganyu</i> and hosting orphans	Small	"Poor" and "extremely poor"

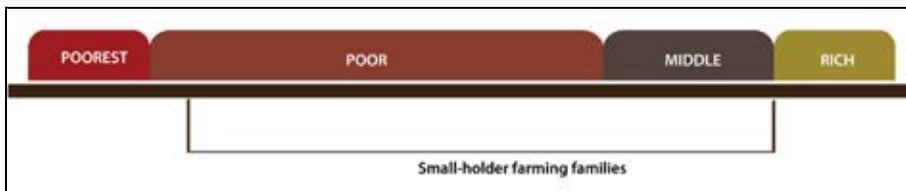
SMALL-HOLDER FARMING FAMILIES

Small-holder farmers are a significant group in each of the four villages surveyed and depending on the quality of their land resources can fall almost anywhere on the poverty

continuum as shown in figure C.

Typical Assets. Land is the most critical asset for farming families, and there are two kinds of land that are used for cultivation, rain-fed upland and lowland areas along rivers which may or may not be irrigated. Cultivated landholdings are typically around two to three acres with little variation between the four villages surveyed. Where a small-holder farming family lies on the poverty continuum is a function of the quality of their land resources. Families entirely dependent on rain-fed upland areas for production are generally lower on the poverty continuum. Given the higher population densities, the rotation cycle under the traditional slash and burn cultivation system has been shortened so land is no longer able to naturally recover fertility between cultivation periods. Farmers are more dependent on fertilizer and access to fertilizer is declining. Access to land is not usually a constraint.

Figure C. Small-Holder Farming Families on the Poverty Continuum



Those farmers who have access to lowlands along rivers generally have higher levels of production although they face the risk of flooding which may destroy crops. Those lowland areas which are under irrigation through treadle pumps or other technologies have higher levels of productivity with multiple crops in a year possible.

Farming families typically also have livestock and poultry, including cattle, goats, chickens, guinea fowl, ducks, doves and hogs, which generally serve as a form of savings. Obviously, the more animals or birds a household owns, the higher they are on the poverty continuum.

Small-holder farm families, especially those lower on the poverty continuum generally have only hand tools. In lowland areas near Juma village (and probably elsewhere), it was reported that treadle pumps can be leased for between 100 and 250 Kwacha per day. In Mwalupondo Village, animal-drawn plows can be hired at a cost of 1500 Kwacha per acre.

On average in Lundu, a small-holder farming family earns around 6500 Kwacha in a year. Groundnut farmers in Utenda, on the other hand on average make around 15,000 Kwacha per year. Any savings is usually held in the house and not deposited in banks, usually because there are no banks nearby. Theft from the household was reported as a problem in Utenda.

There is little or no access to capital from loans except through moneylenders who provide small loans (500-1000 kwacha) with interest (25%)

Men in this livelihoods cluster have a range of education and literacy levels from Standard 1 through Form 4. Men are generally better educated than women. In comparing to other livelihoods clusters in the same village, members of this livelihoods cluster experience the same levels of health status with diseases associated with water and sanitation systems. They appear to be less exposed to HIV/AIDS, however, since they do not travel extensively outside of the village, especially if middlemen purchase cash crops from them.

Relative to social capital, most small-farmer households have inherited land and have lived in the village their entire lives. Their social capital is fairly strong unless they have done something to alienate family, friends and neighbours. For similar reasons, they are also generally well represented in churches, village committees and other community-based organizations. Also because they have typically grown up in the village, they have stronger political capital relationships than other households. Exceptions are women-headed households.

Livelihood Activities. Small-holder farm households produce most of the food that they consume although very few produce more than 80% of their food needs. In Utenda, the average farm households produced only four months of their food needs and used sales of cash crops to obtain the rest. Cash crops vary from location to location. In Utenda, the major cash crops is groundnuts. In Mwalupondo, the major cash crops are cotton and tobacco. And in Lundu, the major cash crops are sweet potatoes and rice.

While farming is the major activity of smallholder farm households, they are also engaged in a wide range of other types of activities for generating income, including basket-making, petty trade and when there is time, *ganyu*. The latter is an income supplement, however, and these households are not dependent on *ganyu* (a cluster described below). They also do not migrate to work elsewhere.

Even though they produce their own food for consumption, there is significant participation by small-holder farm households in the local market for food.

Structures and Systems. The most important structures and systems that affect decisions made by small-holder farm families include the system of selling cash crops to middlemen, the systems for accessing government-subsidized fertilizer, and the Ministry of Agriculture extension system. In the first case, middlemen pay prices to farmers that maximize their margin, and because of the scarcity of price information from external markets, farmers basically accept the price offered, even though they should negotiate a higher price. Regarding the systems for providing subsidized fertilizer, there are reports that the system is not equitable, and those farmers who have more influence and power receive a disproportionate share of the fertilizer benefits. With regard to agricultural extension services, remote villages receive less support than villages that are more easily acceptable. The Ministry of Agriculture has limited resources to be able to reach the hard-to-reach villages.

Vulnerability. The most important risk that farmers face is, of course, the continuing decline of soil fertility on the upland areas. Given rising population densities, the traditional slash and burn farming system is no longer sustainable without significant external fertilizer inputs which, as they become more expensive, become less available. Farmers unable to obtain fertilizer can only hope for the best until new, more sustainable farming systems are developed. Soil fertility will continue to decline under the current farming systems making not only small-holder farm households more vulnerable, but also those other households who depend on the food produced by small-holder farmers.

A second important risk is drought. There is a consistent observation that weather patterns have been changing. There are more dry periods nowadays and when rains come, they tend to come in massive downpours that result in significant run-off rather than in water percolating into the soil to support cultivation.

Floods are also cited as an important risk for small-holder farmers who are cultivating on riverside lowlands.

Other risks cited by villagers surveyed include crop pests and diseases, and crop losses from poor storage systems.

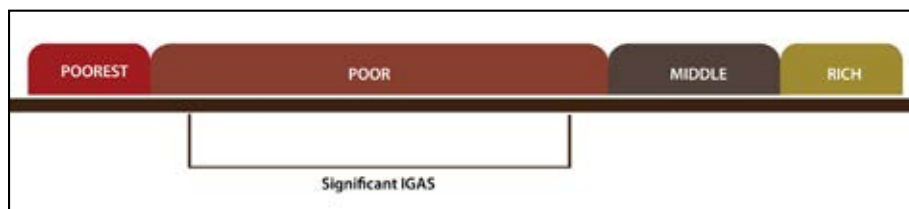
FAMILIES WITH SIGNIFICANT IGAS

A second large cluster of households in most villages are those that are significantly dependent on some form of income-generation activity that usually complements small-scale farming.

The type of income generation activity varies from location to location depending on access to markets and local comparative advantage. In the villages consulted during the assessment, for example, many households were engaged in basket-making in Utenda, charcoal and fuel wood sales were significant in Lundu, mat-making in Juma, and baking in Mwalupondo.

On the poverty continuum, these households tend to be bunched within the poor classification as shown in the figure below. They usually do not have enough land to produce significant food or income.

Figure D. Families Dependent on Income Generation Activities



Typical Assets. Families in this livelihoods cluster generally have access to at least some land and are able to produce some of their own food and generate some income from sales of agricultural produce. They also usually have some livestock. Their income-generating activities produce a fairly steady, but small cash flow of around 200 to 300 kwacha per month. Villages with access to larger markets can earn as much as 700 kwacha per month. The demand for charcoal in the Nsanje Boma, for example, provides a good market for charcoal producers. Education levels for families in this cluster tend to be lower, although children also regularly attend school because families have some cash to pay the moderate school fees.

There are exceptions to this, however. Given the risks and costs of charcoal production (discussed below), this activity is usually undertaken by people who do not have alternatives and who also tend to be less educated. In addition to the normal dimensions of social capital that exist in villages, families in this livelihoods cluster often have special relationships with others undertaking similar income-generating activities.

Livelihood Activities. Families in this cluster generally have some land and produce some food for their own consumption. They are heavily dependent on their cash income from income-generating activities to purchase food for most of the year. The types of significant income-generating activities encountered in the assessment, as mentioned above, include beer making in all locations, petty trade (buying products wholesale and selling locally retail) in all locations, basket making in Utenda, harvesting charcoal/firewood in Lundu, baking in Mwalupondo, mat-making in Mwalupondo and Juma, and bicycle hire in Juma and Lundu.

In some places, it would be possible to scale up income-generating activities because of the proximity of larger markets. The main constraint is access to capital. However, there are no lenders apart from traditional moneylenders who provide emergency loans with an interest rate

of 50% per month.

Structures and Systems. The major structures and systems that influence decisions for households with income-generating activities are markets and the government regulatory system, especially for products that use natural resource materials. Basket-makers, for example, have to pay a “tax” to the forest department for the use of materials in baskets. Similarly, charcoal producers have to either pay for a “permit” to harvest wood or a “tax” to the forest department. While these fees may be legitimate in principle, they are not very transparent and open to negotiation. In addition to these forest department fees, there are also market fees that may need to be paid to access space in larger markets.

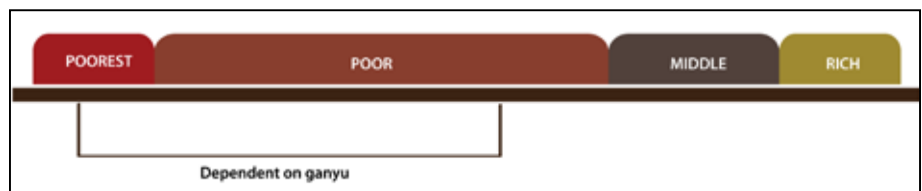
Vulnerability. The major risks faced by families in this livelihoods cluster are road accidents since they are traveling to the market regularly, wild animal attacks when collecting raw materials, and dry spells which affect their agricultural production. As with all households in villages where water and sanitation systems are a problem, they are also affected by illnesses that result in costs to the household both in cash and time lost caring for sick members. Since men from these households go to the market regularly and they do obtain cash as a result of selling their production, the exposure to HIV/AIDS is greater for households in this livelihoods cluster. A longer term risk is the continuing harvest of raw materials, for example, palm for baskets and reeds for mats, which may have negative environmental impact over the long term.

FAMILIES DEPENDENT ON GANYU

Ganyu is the term used to describe piecemeal work or daily wage work. It takes many forms as described further below, and many households undertake *ganyu*. What distinguishes this particular cluster, families dependent on *ganyu*, is that when an opportunity comes up to earn income through *ganyu*, they will take this work at the expense of other activities, including tending to their own farm. Families dependent on *ganyu* tend to be bunched toward the lower end of the poverty continuum as shown in Figure D. For those at the very lowest end, *ganyu* is sometimes the only source of income for extremely poor households.

Typical Assets. Although there are some families in this livelihoods cluster who do not have land, many families do have access to land and produce some agriculture products. However, as mentioned, a distinctive characteristic is that they have to forego working in their own farms when *ganyu* opportunities arise. As a result, their agricultural production tends to be lower than for other families farming similar land but able to undertake farming tasks regularly. Families in this cluster also have some livestock or poultry. They also usually have sufficient tools, but there are reports (from Juma) of people having to rent hand tools for 50 to 100 Kwacha.

Figure E. Families Dependent on Ganyu on the Poverty Continuum



The typical earnings from *ganyu* range from 100 to 1000 kwacha per month. Payments are also made in kind, for example, for shelling maize or millet, part of the payment is some of the commodity.

Education levels for families in this cluster tend to be lower, and children from many of these households are not able to attend school regularly because families do not have sufficient cash to pay school fees or children have to be pulled from school to work or care for younger siblings while the parents work.

There are reports that people in some villages are reluctant to identify themselves as dependent on *ganyu* since the perception is that these are some of the poorest people in the community.

LIVELIHOOD ACTIVITIES

As mentioned, some of the families in this livelihoods cluster have parcels of land and do produce food, but they also abandon their own fields when an opportunity to do *ganyu* arises. The forms of *ganyu* described by villagers in the assessment include various farming task, digging/building latrines, molding bricks, fetching water for brick making, or shelling maize or millet. Men will travel elsewhere to undertake *ganyu*.

For families at the lower end of the poverty continuum, the money earned in a day is often used the same day to buy food. Since these families only produce a relatively small proportion of their own food for consumption, they are heavily dependent on access to food in markets for their food security.

The irregularity of *ganyu* opportunities means that occasionally cash flow problems require these households to sell animals in order to meet food needs.

Structures and Systems. Two elements of structures and systems that affect the livelihoods of families in this cluster are the labor relationships, including wage rates, and community decision-making practices. There is a reported bias against households in this cluster by community leadership in not selecting them for participation, especially if they are women-headed or the husband has migrated elsewhere to look for work. This is particularly a problem for villages that receive a lot of external assistance from NGOs and government. When asked to form groups or committees for projects implemented by these organizations, those households highly dependent on *ganyu* are excluded, sometimes for legitimate reasons, but also many times because they are considered the poorest in the village or the household head is not available because he has migrated.

Relative to wage rates, the terms of trade tends to favor the employer since there are many more people available for work than there are *ganyu* jobs. However, there is not a lot of evidence that the wage rate or compensation, if in kind, is perceived to be unfair...except in the case of the differential between wage rates paid to men and to women for the same work. Women generally get paid less.

Vulnerability. Families in this livelihoods cluster are exposed to many of the same village level risks as other households in the village, including exposure to diseases and theft, for example, but their abilities to cope are lower because they have fewer assets including physical and natural assets that can be sold for cash and their irregular cash flow from *ganyu*. Their high dependence on *ganyu* work means that risks that other holds face, such as drought or floods



Woman doing *ganyu* (millet) in Lundu.

for farming families, also have impact on them with reduced work opportunities. If there are no crops in the field, there are no *ganyu* opportunities in agriculture.

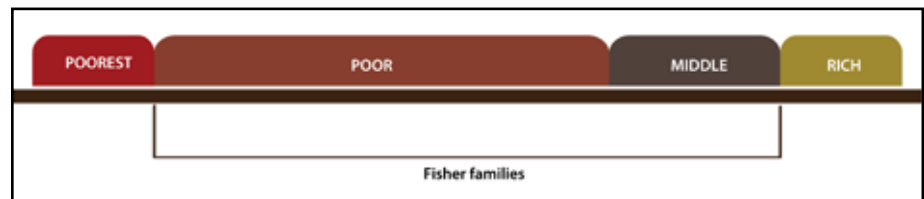
Although men from these households travel outside of the village seeking work, they are not earning a lot of disposable income. Even if they are going to larger towns, they are not facing the same level of risks of exposure to HIV/AIDS as others such as men selling various products (described in the previous section) because they do not have income to spend. Many of those seeking *ganyu* outside the village are actually going to other villages and not larger towns.

FISHER FAMILIES

In villages located along rivers and lakes, a significant livelihoods cluster are families who depend on capture fishing. Depending on proximity to markets and the status of fisheries resources, these families can range across nearly the entire poverty continuum as shown in Figure F.

Typical Assets. Fishing families are important in two of the four villages visited during the assessment, Lundu which is located on the lower end of the Shire River in Nsanje District and Mwalupondo Village in Machinga District located between two smaller rivers. The poverty status of the two clusters is very different, however. In Lundu, fishing households tend to be some of the better off families in the village because of the proximity to the Nsanje Boma market. Fisheries resources are still fairly abundant so if a family has capital to obtain nets and are willing to take on the risks associated with capture fishing in the river from crocodiles, snakes and hippos, they can earn significant income, as much as 500 kwacha per day. They tend to own significant assets in addition to fishing equipment including bicycles, radios, cell phones and even land. There is a fishing committee in Lundu that is also fairly strong.

Figure F. Families Dependent on Capture Fisheries on the Poverty Continuum



In Mwalupondo, on the other hand, the fishing livelihoods cluster falls within the “poor” classification on the poverty continuum, primarily because of the decline in fish catch. The fishing group seems to be quite cohesive, even fishing together in groups of up to 50 fishermen.

Livelihood Activities. Where fishing provides a stable livelihood, families are not usually engaged in other food production or income-generating activities. However, families who are fishing in areas where they are unable to meet food or income needs, they will be engaged in other activities including farming, *ganyu* and small income-generating activities.

Some of the fish caught is also consumed. Those households making a good living more often consume some of the fish they catch. Those families at the other end of the poverty continuum only consume fish they are unable to sell.

Fishing is seasonal in some areas. Fishing is difficult and dangerous when water is high during the flood stage.

Structures and Systems. There are two significant features of the context that influence decisions that fishing families make. One of these is a fishing season that is being introduced by the Fisheries Department to protect fisheries resources. At a certain time of the year corresponding to the spawning period of the major species of fish, fishermen are not allowed to fish legally. The fishing season, however, is not enforced, and fishermen still fish as normal, since the Fisheries Department does not have sufficient resources to monitor fishing. Fishermen recognize the value of the closed season for maintaining fisheries stock; however, they are so dependent on income from fishing, that they feel compelled to continue fishing illegally.

The second feature of the context that affects fisher households is the allocation of fishing grounds along the river to different villages, putting a limit on the fishing grounds that a village can access.

Vulnerability. Fisher households are exposed to certain dangers associated with being on or near rivers and lakes, including threats from wild animals such as crocodiles, snakes and hippos as well as the risk of drowning from high water or waves caused by bad weather.

In Lundu, fisher households reported that they seemed to be particular targets for thieves, primarily because they tend to have more assets than other households.

A long term risk already being seen in some areas is the decline of fishing resources from over-fishing.

Most fisher households sell their catch to middlemen buyers who sell locally or take the fish to larger markets. Therefore, they are not exposed to the risks of HIV/AIDS that reside in towns with larger markets. However, where fishing is relatively lucrative, fishermen have more disposable income to use for commercial sex or to support women to whom they are not married.

OTHER LIVELIHOOD CLUSTERS

The four livelihoods clusters described above generally encompass 80% to 90% of the village population in villages surveyed. Other smaller livelihoods clusters include livestock producers, large and medium scale farmers and skilled trade labourers. All of these groups tend to be at the upper end of the poverty continuum.

LIVELIHOODS CLUSTERS HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE HOUSEHOLD SURVEY

Table 4 provides some distinguishing highlights from the survey in comparing across the different livelihoods clusters. One of the most significant observations from the survey is that families dependent on *ganyu* rely the most on food purchased from the market to meet their food needs, and they are also the cluster with the lowest estimated annual income. The inference is that they are more food insecure relative to the other livelihoods clusters. The small sample of fisher families surveyed support the description above that fisher families tend to be a bit better off, at least in some locations.



Fishermen in Mwalupondo.

Table 4. Comparison Across Livelihoods Clusters - Household Survey

VILLAGE	AVERAGE HH SIZE	PERCENTAGE OF HH WITH ORPHANS	NUMBER OF MONTHS WITH 3 MEALS PER DAY	PERCENT OF FOOD CONSUMED IN THE LAST MONTH PURCHASED FROM THE MARKET	AVERAGE ANNUAL INCOME (KWACHA)
Juma	4.8	25%	2.4	62.0%	32,557
Lundu	6.1	42%	3.3	51.3%	41,147
Mwalupondo	4.7	17%	12.0	58.3%	75,321
Utenda	5.6	25%	3.9	47.7%	29,230
All Villages	5.3	27%	5.8	54.8%	44,564

MAJOR LIVELIHOODS ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES AT THE VILLAGE LEVEL

JUMA VILLAGE (MACHINGA DISTRICT)

The assessment team that visited Juma Village identified the most vulnerable families in the village to be female-headed households who rely on *ganyu* and households headed by grandparents caring for orphans. HIV/AIDS has had significant impact in the village, and these families are highly vulnerable give their limited assets and ability to cope with the impact of AIDS. Based on the analysis, the team suggested that the priority intervention themes should be food security programming focusing on irrigation, farm input loans and small livestock in order to stimulate economic growth at the village level. This will in turn result in additional jobs for the most vulnerable, i.e., those dependent on *ganyu*. The following sections summarize results of the analysis with particular focus on food security, HIV/AIDS and other issues and opportunities. Annex C contains the completed analysis summary formats for each of the villages visited.

Food Security Issues and Opportunities. On the food supply side, particularly for the many households who produce food they consume, developing low external input sustainable agriculture systems that restore or maintain soil fertility, can contribute substantially to reducing food insecurity. Similarly, for those households that have lowland fields near the river, introducing low cost irrigation systems that capitalize on the availability of water in the river is an opportunity to increase land productivity and the local supply of food. Expanding production has the opportunity to also create more jobs for those who depend on *ganyu*. Expanding marketing systems for products produced in the village as well as building the negotiation skills of producers to be able to obtain better prices for the produce should increase disposable income and provide better access to food obtained from the market. Table 5 below summarizes the food security analysis in terms of which factors, i.e., the supply of food, access to food or utilization of food, are critical, important or minor factors affecting the food security of the major livelihoods clusters identified in the village.

Table 5. Food Security Analysis - Juma Village (Machinga District)

LIVELIHOOD CLUSTER	PERCENT OF VILLAGE	FOOD AVAILABILITY	ACCESS TO FOOD	UTILIZATION OF FOOD	MOST IMPORTANT RISK
Households Who are Dependent on <i>Ganyu</i>	30%	Important, labour diverted from farms to <i>ganyu</i> and yields dependent on inputs	Critical, these households are nearly hand to mouth, cash income dependent on <i>ganyu</i>	Critical, use surface water as only water source	Drought reducing availability of agricultural-related <i>ganyu</i>
Households who Depend on Petty Trade or Significant IGAS	20%	Important, limited capacity to buy farm inputs	Important, petty trade has very low returns, insufficient income to buy enough food	Critical, use surface water as only water source	Seasonality of markets
Smallholder Farmers	50%	Critical, these households produce most of the food they consume and yields are declining.	Minor, these households produce most of the food they consume.	Critical, use surface water as only water source	Declining soil fertility, floods on the lowlands

HIV/AIDS Issues and Opportunities. The assessment team observed that while the actual prevalence rate in Juma Village is unknown, there appeared to be significant evidence of the existence of HIV/AIDS in the form of orphans and opportunistic infections such as tuberculosis. Issues related to HIV/AIDS identified by the team were the migration of men to towns to seek work or sell produce, relatively high divorce rates and remarriages, and widows remarrying. There is a significant need to increase knowledge in the village on the sources of transmission and management of HIV/AIDS.

Other Issues and Opportunities. Apart from food security and HIV issues and opportunities, the only other major issues and opportunities identified by the team were in the area of education including basic education for girls and the quality of education at all levels. For various reasons, including security, risk of pregnancy, and the need to keep girls at home to work or care for siblings, many parents discourage girls from attending school. Quality issues at all levels are considered to be behind the fact that many youth complete secondary education but are still unemployed (or semi-literate).

LUNDU VILLAGE (NSANJE DISTRICT)

The assessment team that visited Lundu Village identified the most vulnerable families in the village to be households dependent on *ganyu* or charcoal or firewood sales, especially those affected by HIV/AIDS. As with Juma Village, HIV/AIDS has had significant impact on families in the village. Based on the analysis, the team, in fact, suggested that the priority intervention themes should be HIV/AIDS livelihoods programming targeting orphans, adolescents, households with people living with AIDS (PLWA), and widows to enable them to attain sustainable livelihoods.

Food Security Issues and Opportunities. A number of major issues and opportunities related to food security were identified by assessment team in Lundu Village. There are many HIV/AIDS orphans facing severe food insecurity that could be assisted through CBCC Centers or household food distribution to vulnerable households. Poor sanitation systems (despite recent support from the MOH) in the village are resulting in relatively high incidence of water borne disease, including cholera. There are significant numbers of families living with people with AIDS that may require food distribution complemented by other livelihoods activities. The lack of access to capital limits expansion or start-up of IGAs, and community committees (health, water, forestry, irrigation, etc.) do not seem to be particularly effective. Table 6 summarizes the food security analysis in terms for the major livelihoods clusters identified in the village.

HIV/AIDS Issues and Opportunities. HIV/AIDS has resulted in large numbers of orphans in Lundu Village, such that the community hosting capacity appears to be nearly saturated, requiring another sort of intervention. Older orphans need to be targeted with mechanisms to enable them to complete basic education or vocational training. People are relatively aware of HIV/AIDS but need to practice appropriate behavior for limiting the spread of HIV. There are significant numbers of families living with people with AIDS that require support for undertaking sustainable livelihoods activities. The significant practice of commercial sex in the village contributes to the spread of HIV, and cultural practices that force women to have sex with strangers also may contribute to the spread of HIV. Chronic illness and death from AIDS of productive adults in families is a major livelihood shock.

Table 6. Food Security Analysis - Lundu Village

LIVELIHOOD CLUSTER		FOOD AVAILABILITY	ACCESS TO FOOD	UTILIZATION OF FOOD	MOST IMPORTANT RISK
Households Dependent on <i>Ganyu</i>	40%	Minor, food is generally available if not in the village then in the Boma	Critical, these households are nearly hand to mouth, cash income dependent on <i>ganyu</i>	Important, sanitation is poor, therefore water-borne illness is present	Irregular income earning opportunities from <i>ganyu</i>
Households Dependent on Charcoal and/ or Fire Wood Income	40%	Minor, food is generally available if not in the village then in the Boma	Critical, these households are like the <i>ganyu</i> households nearly hand to mouth, dependent on cash income		Small income earning opportunities from producing charcoal (which is also seasonal) and/ or selling fire wood
Small-Holder Farmers	5%	Important, these households produce a significant portion of the food they consume	Important, these households also have to purchase some of the food they consume		Declining soil fertility on rain-fed lands
Fisher Households	5%	Minor, these households do not farm and food is available in the village or the Boma	Minor, these households are currently making sufficient income to purchase		Declining fisheries resources

Other Issues and Opportunities. A number of other issues and opportunities were identified by the assessment team in Lundu. A major issue is the rights of women over their own bodies are being constrained by cultural practices that force them to have sex with strangers (discussed further below in the section on gender). A development opportunity in Lundu is the presence of a number of NGOs/CBOS in the village which offers an opportunity to use alliances and coalitions for advocacy. A related issue is that Lundu is receiving lots of assistance from outside organizations, both government and NGOs, but the approaches used have cultivated a sense of dependency, i.e., waiting to see what organizations will provide. A second opportunity is that the proximity to the Nsanje Boma means the village has better access to government departments. The lack of coordination of external organizations operating in Lundu village constrains impact, however. Finally, theft of property (livestock, fishing nets and household goods from houses) seems to be on the rise.

MWALUPONDO VILLAGE (KARONGA DISTRICT)

The assessment team that visited Mwalupondo Village identified the most vulnerable families in the village to be smallholder farmers solely dependent on farming. Based on the analysis, the team suggested that the priority intervention themes should be capacity building of small-holder farmers to use small-scale irrigation and other appropriate technologies for increasing productivity.

Food Security Issues and Opportunities. Most of the households in Mwalupondo Village produce at least a portion of the food they consume, and land productivity is declining because of soil fertility. There are also recurring floods on the lowlands that reduce productivity. Farming families need to have better access to sustainable agriculture technologies, especially for small-scale irrigation and inputs. There are also limited opportunities for accessing capital and markets. There is also evidence that poorer households are not getting equitable access to government programs to support agriculture and government safety nets. Table 7 summarizes the food security analysis in terms for the major livelihoods clusters identified in the Mwalupondo Village.

Table 7. Food Security Analysis - Mwalupondo Village

LIVELIHOOD CLUSTER		FOOD AVAILABILITY	ACCESS TO FOOD	UTILIZATION OF FOOD	MOST IMPORTANT RISK
Households Who Farm and Also do <i>Ganyu</i>	64%	Important, although these households do farm, they are forced to abandon their own farm activities when a <i>ganyu</i> opportunity arises.	Important, these households are dependent on cash income from <i>ganyu</i> which is seasonal	Important, medical facilities are available in the village or within 15 kilometers, but quality is substandard and the incidence of illness significant.	Declining soil fertility on rain-fed lands, flooding and water-logging on lowlands
Fisher Households	23%	Minor, these households do not produce food they consume and relative proximity to Karonga means food is available	Critical, income from fishing is used to obtain food and fishing income is declining.		Declining fisheries resources
Households who Depend on Petty Trade	18%	Minor, these households do not produce food they consume and relative proximity to Karonga means food is available	Important, income from petty trade is used to obtain food.		Scarcity of raw materials
Households Who Have Skilled Labour	5%	Minor, these households do not produce food they consume and relative proximity to Karonga means food is available	Important, income from jobs is used to obtain food.		Low demand for skilled labour

HIV/AIDS Issues and Opportunities. As with other villages severely affected by HIV/AIDS, there are relatively large numbers of orphans in Mwalupondo. Families living with people with AIDS have to spend significant time providing care and, in addition to the lost income from being unable to work, there are additional costs associated with medicine and transport. Children are also pulled from school to care for the chronically ill. There are also indications that when husbands pass away, wives are occasionally challenged on their inheritance rights, losing assets to in-laws. There do not appear to be many, if any, organizations working on the HIV/AIDS issue in Mwalupondo.

Other Issues and Opportunities. A number of other issues apart from food security and HIV/AIDS were identified by the assessment team in Mwalupondo. These include increasing theft in the village, particularly of animals. As in Juma Village, the quality of education is perceived by villagers to be an issue with children becoming educated but not realizing much improvement in their lives, and girls are either dropping out of or being pulled out of school. Village participants in the assessment also cited the increasing fragmentation of land resources and the stress on other household assets that comes as a result of marriage, dowry and the creation of new households. When a marriage occurs, the boy's family must provide land to the son and a dowry to the girl's family. The function of this custom, of course, is to help a new household become established and to compensate a girl's household for the loss of a key household asset, the daughter. However, the impact of land fragmentation and the drain on resources needs to be weighed against the benefits.

UTENDA VILLAGE (NSANJE DISTRICT)

The assessment team that visited Lundu Village identified the most vulnerable families in the village to be households dependent on *ganyu*, especially female-headed households having orphans. Based on the analysis, the team also felt that the priority intervention theme for this village should be water and sanitation.

Food Security Issues and Opportunities. There are certainly opportunities to increase food production in Utenda Village which is facing the same declining soil fertility issues as other villages, although to a lesser degree since the village was more recently established than other villages. The major food security issue in Utenda Village, however, is related to the utilization dimension of food security. The water supply and sanitation systems in the village are very poor, consequently, there is significant morbidity from water-borne diseases. Compounding this is the virtual absence of primary health care services in or near the village. Table 8 summarizes the food security analysis in terms of the major livelihoods clusters identified in the Utenda Village.

Table 8. Food Security Analysis - Utenda Village

LIVELIHOOD CLUSTER		FOOD AVAILABILITY	ACCESS TO FOOD		MOST IMPORTANT RISK
Households Dependent on <i>Ganyu</i>	55%	Minor, food is generally available, land productivity is declining but relatively higher than older villages	Important, these households are dependent on cash income from <i>ganyu</i> which is seasonal	Critical, use only surface water sources. Community also poor sanitation and limited access to health care.	Irregular income earning opportunities from <i>ganyu</i>
Small-Holder Farmers	20%	Important, these households produce a significant portion of the food they consume	Important, these households also have to purchase some of the food they consume		Declining soil fertility on rain-fed lands
Households who Farm and Also Make Baskets	20%	Important, these households produce some of the food they consume.	Important, these households are dependent on cash income from the sale of baskets		Exhausting raw material for baskets and access to markets for baskets

HIV/AIDS Issues and Opportunities. While people living in Utenda Village are aware of the existence of HIV/AIDS, their knowledge about transmission and management appears to be very limited. Fortunately, exposure to HIV/AIDS outside of the village is fairly limited because of its remoteness, although there are indications from the presence of orphans and some indications of opportunistic diseases to suggest that HIV/AIDS is present. However, it seems apparent that the prevalence rate in Utenda is lowest among the four villages surveyed. This could change, however, since there are people in the village who do travel occasionally to market centers to sell production, mainly some of the basket producers. There are also people coming to the village from outside, the middlemen buyers of agricultural produce and baskets, who may be conduits for the disease. People also travel outside to seek *ganyu*, but it appears that they are mostly going to neighbouring villages in Mozambique. The sugar plantations do recruit young men from the village, but few so far have been able to realize jobs on the plantations.

Other Issues and Opportunities. Two other areas were identified by the assessment team as sources of significant issues affecting the lives of people in Utenda. These are low literacy levels among women. Families fear that when their girl children attend school, they are more likely to become pregnant reducing their potential to earn significant dowry when they are married. The second important area identified was related to cultural practices that appear to abuse the rights of women and make them more vulnerable to sexually transmitted diseases. Examples of these are practices such as the “spiritual cleansing” required after the death of husband through *kulowa kufa* or *kukonza michingwa* in which a brother-in-law or his designate is required to have relations with the widow before she can remarry. This practice represents the abuse of a woman’s rights over her own body and also may facilitate the spread of HIV/AIDS.

MAJOR FOOD SECURITY ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES SPECIFIC TO LIVELIHOOD CLUSTERS

Specific observations emerged from the analysis relative to the major livelihoods clusters identified. There are community level interventions, for example, with improving water supply and

sanitation systems that will impact all families in a village. The sections below describe additional issues and opportunities for food security interventions targeting specific livelihoods clusters.

SMALL-HOLDER FARMING FAMILIES

Since most of the food consumed by small-holder farm families is either produced on their farms or purchased using income earned from their farms, increasing farm productivity needs to be the focus of interventions to reduce food insecurity for these families. Of most critical importance is to identify sustainable agricultural practices that restore soil fertility, either through crop rotation systems, organic fertilizers, or cost effective commercial fertilizers, that will be effective and profitable within the Malawi context.

INTEGRATED FARMING AND IGAS

Families that are dependent on a combination of farming and significant IGAs will also benefit from farm productivity interventions. However, of equal or greater importance is to capitalize on ways to expand income generated from income generation activities. A significant amount of food consumed by these households is purchased, and expanded income will increase the food security of the household. Often the best intervention for increasing income from income-generation activities is to expand or strengthen market linkages. In Utenda Village, for example, there is an emerging marketing system for baskets being made in the village with a resident of the village assuming the role of middlemen, buying local baskets and them transporting them to local markets. Expanding this marketing channel by linking the middleman to larger markets will benefit producers in the village.

Some IGAs that were observed in the assessment are not sustainable, such as the charcoal producers, and environmental sustainability of all IGAs that use natural resources must be monitored. A significant expansion of mat making or basket making will put strain on the raw materials used unless interventions are also made to expand or conserve the supply of raw materials. For those households undertaking unsustainable income-generation activities, project interventions should be undertaken to facilitate the transition of those families to more sustainable livelihood activities.

With some income-generating activities, a significant constraint is limited access to capital. Interventions that expand access through establishing village level savings and lending or building linkages with suppliers of credit can have impact on food security, if markets and input supply systems exist and can be expanded.

FAMILIES DEPENDENT ON GANYU

The assessment identified families dependent on *ganyu* as a significant and highly food insecure livelihoods cluster in almost every village. Increasing farm productivity for farmers may generate additional job opportunities for *ganyu* workers. Increasing farm productivity for the *ganyu* households themselves may increase the supply of food in their households. Finding ways to enable these families to continue working on their fields instead having to undertake *ganyu* may also increase food and income from own production. Introducing savings mechanisms is one possibility so that households have their own cash (or animals) to fall back on when they would normally have to do *ganyu* or providing access to consumption loans.

Other issues that affect households dependent on *ganyu* are the terms of trade, especially for those people who work outside of the village. In some areas, the wages paid, particularly to

women, are below the market wage rate.

FISHER FAMILIES

In some areas, such as in Lundu Village in Nsanje, fisher households are presently not highly food insecure since they have access to strong markets for fish and fish catch has not yet started to seriously decline. In other areas, such as in Mwalupondo, fishing households are much more food insecure, primarily because fish catch is declining. It is expected that even in places like Lundu, someday fisher households will become food insecure because strategies for maintaining fish stocks are not being implemented. The Department of Fisheries has developed the strategies, but they do not have the resources to enforce fishing season closures to protect fisheries resources. Instituting sustainable fisheries would also benefit those fisher households that are currently food insecure by restoring fish stocks.

NOTABLE SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE VILLAGES SURVEYED

A couple of observations emerged from the assessment in comparing information from different villages that are important to consider for programming.

DEPENDENCY AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY

Remote villages such as Utenda receive very little support from government or the NGO sector, while villages close to a boma like Lundu, receive lots of support. The result is that levels of self-sufficiency are much higher in the remote areas, with more economic activity visible around houses. Levels of dependency appear greater in villages near a boma that receive lots of assistance. The leadership in villages close to the boma have become adept at seeking out, inviting and negotiating external assistance obtaining terms that are favorable to village residents. In Lundu Village for example, participants are paid by a local NGO to dig canals to bring water to their own fields. As a result, when a new organization comes to these kinds of villages, the initial response from villagers is to assess what they can expect to get from the new organization. They cite the support they receive from other organizations coming to the village in order to leverage greater support from the new organization. This creates a very different working context for development organizations than is found in remote villages.

VILLAGE UNIQUENESS

Each village is unique in terms of its problems and opportunities. In some villages, water and sanitation is a critical problem while in other villages, water supply is less of a problem. In some villages, HIV/AIDS has been devastating while in other villages, it may still be possible to maintain prevalence rates below the threshold. Some villages have significant potential for increasing farm productivity on lowland areas through irrigation, while other villages are entirely dependent on rain-fed agriculture. The implications of this diversity is that development interventions need to be flexible to be able to address the different priority problems and opportunities in different villages, and the selection of villages for a programme must match the interventions planned in the programme.

OBSERVATIONS RELATIVE TO GENDER

A number of observations were made in the assessment relative to gender, particularly on the roles, responsibilities and rights of women.

LIVELIHOOD ACTIVITIES

Some livelihood activities are traditionally restricted to men. This includes fishing, for example, and traveling outside of the village for *ganyu* in some villages. In other villages, women are more mobile and do travel outside to earn income.

There appears to be a wage differential between the *ganyu* compensation paid to men and the compensation paid to women for the same piecemeal work.

In at least one village, there was significant practice of commercial sex within the village and in the boma that was nearby. There were accounts, for example, of poor women trading sexual favors in order to receive fish to sell. It's not likely that women choose to undertake these activities but are more likely compelled to do so because of lack of alternatives.

STRUCTURES AND SYSTEMS - HOUSEHOLD DECISION-MAKING

In discussions around management of household savings, villagers indicated that while all household members might contribute to accruing savings, the man of the household is responsible for making decisions on how to use the savings.

The literacy rates for women and girls are much lower than for men. As mentioned, only 8 of 50 women participating in the community interview in one village had attended school. Decisions made in the household on sending children to school reflect a strong bias against girls education. Families fear that when their girl children go to attend school, they are more likely to either lose their virginity or have a child outside of wedlock. This reduces the value of a dowry that the family might receive when she gets married. It doesn't appear to be offset by increased value from having an education if a girl child finished school. Girl children are also more likely to be withdrawn from school to care for sick persons in the household or younger siblings.

STRUCTURES AND SYSTEMS - COMMUNITY DECISION-MAKING

Women tend to be excluded from community decision-making. In one village, participants affirmed that women do not vote on issues. There are some exceptions, for example, in matrilineal villages such as Juma in Machinga, where villages are led by women. But even here, it was reported that men still dominate decision-making in the household.

SYSTEMS AND STRUCTURES - CULTURAL PRACTICES

There were some traditional cultural practices described in the villages visited in Nsanje District that require women to have sex with men who are not their husbands. These practices locally called *kupita* or *kulowa kufa* (ritual performed by a brother-in-law or his designate after a woman becomes widowed), *kupondera ngalawa* (ritual performed before a new canoe is launched), *kupita moto*, and *kupita michingwa* are perceived to be required for spiritual cleansing. The rights of women over their own bodies are constrained by these practices, and the practices may also contribute to the spread of HIV/AIDS. Relatives of woman are reluctant to perform their responsibilities. They have the right to designate someone in their stead, and there are "professionals" available who offer their services and, probably, contribute to the spread of HIV.

SYSTEMS AND STRUCTURES - INHERITANCE

There were reports from a couple of villages in the assessment that, after the death of a husband, at times the widow can struggle with realizing inheritance property rights. Apparently, relatives of the deceased try to recover his assets so they are not lost to their side of family.

SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS TO CONSIDER IN STRATEGIC PLANNING



In developing a strategic program plan, decisions will be made on priority targeting, priority geographic areas and priority intervention themes. Some observations from the 2008 IHD Assessment that might be useful to consider in this process are described below.

TARGETING PEOPLE

For poverty and food security targeting, it is apparent from the assessment that the most vulnerable and food insecure households in most villages are those that are dependent on ganyu. It is also evident that there are not many programmes which specifically target these types of households, and there are very few interventions that have been identified that are likely to have impact on their livelihoods. In the villages visited in the assessment, there were both government departments and NGOs working with farmers and fishermen. And, it is possible that increasing the productivity in these sectors will provide jobs for people dependent on ganyu. The strategies that were being employed, however, were not specifically targeting having impact on jobs and families dependent on ganyu. "Trickle down" strategies can have impact on these groups, but that impact should be monitored to ensure that results are achieved. More important, these strategies should be complemented by other strategies that are specifically designed to achieve impact on this highly vulnerable group, such as alternative IGAs, savings mobilization, access to capital, literacy/numeracy, advocacy for fair compensation and benefits from ganyu, and social capital development through group formation and strengthening.

TARGETING LOCATIONS

In terms of poverty and food insecurity, there did not appear to be a great difference between the different villages at the level of outcomes. The sources of poverty and food insecurity were different across the villages, however, with water and sanitation being important in one area while the impact of HIV/AIDS more important in others. The assessment teams were asked to recommend whether or not the village they visited should be considered for programming by CRS and her partners. Following are the recommendations from the different teams.

JUMA VILLAGE (MACHINGA DISTRICT)

The assessment team would recommend that villages of this type be targeted because of easy accessibility, identified needs, no other private players working there, and the self-help spirit of the community. Challenges will be finding appropriate sustainable interventions to address soil infertility, the lack of clean water supply, and the low participation of men in patriarchal culture.

LUNDU VILLAGE (NSANJE DISTRICT)

The assessment team would recommend that villages of this type be targeted but with the following qualifications: (1) There must be a clear niche for CRS and her partners that is not being addressed by other organizations and (2) there must be a satisfactory level of coordination with other organizations working in the village. The main reason for selecting this village would be to address the severe impact of HIV/AIDS. This village, in fact, could be a node for transmission. There are also opportunities to have impact on development with the proximity to water resources and markets. There are already many organizations working in the village but the expected impact is not being achieved, and new approaches may be needed that CRS and her partners can bring. Major challenges that CRS and her partners would face are to change the culture of dependency that has evolved in the village. There will also be challenges working with other organizations working there that have fallen into the trap of supporting the dependency culture.

With HIV/AIDS programming, there will be the additional challenge of trying to change cultural practices that will change slowly, too slowly perhaps for impatient donors.

MWALUPONDO VILLAGE (KARONGA DISTRICT)

The assessment team that visited Mwalupondo would recommend that villages of this type be considered because of the high levels of vulnerability to food insecurity. The challenges would be the poor road access; and, if fisher households were a key target for programming, CRS and her partners would have to use alternative work hours to reach fishermen since they are fishing every day from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm from March through August

UTENDA VILLAGE (NSANJE DISTRICT)

The assessment team would recommend that villages of this type be targeted and actually given highest priority. There are serious water and health problems, and there are few organizations working there. The village receives very little attention because of its remoteness. The people of Utenda do not show a dependency culture and exhibit relatively high degrees of self-reliance, making it easier to facilitate development. It will probably be easier to see impact in this village. The challenges will be access to the area since the roads are very bad. Communications will be difficult, and it may be difficult to find staff willing to work with such a remote village.

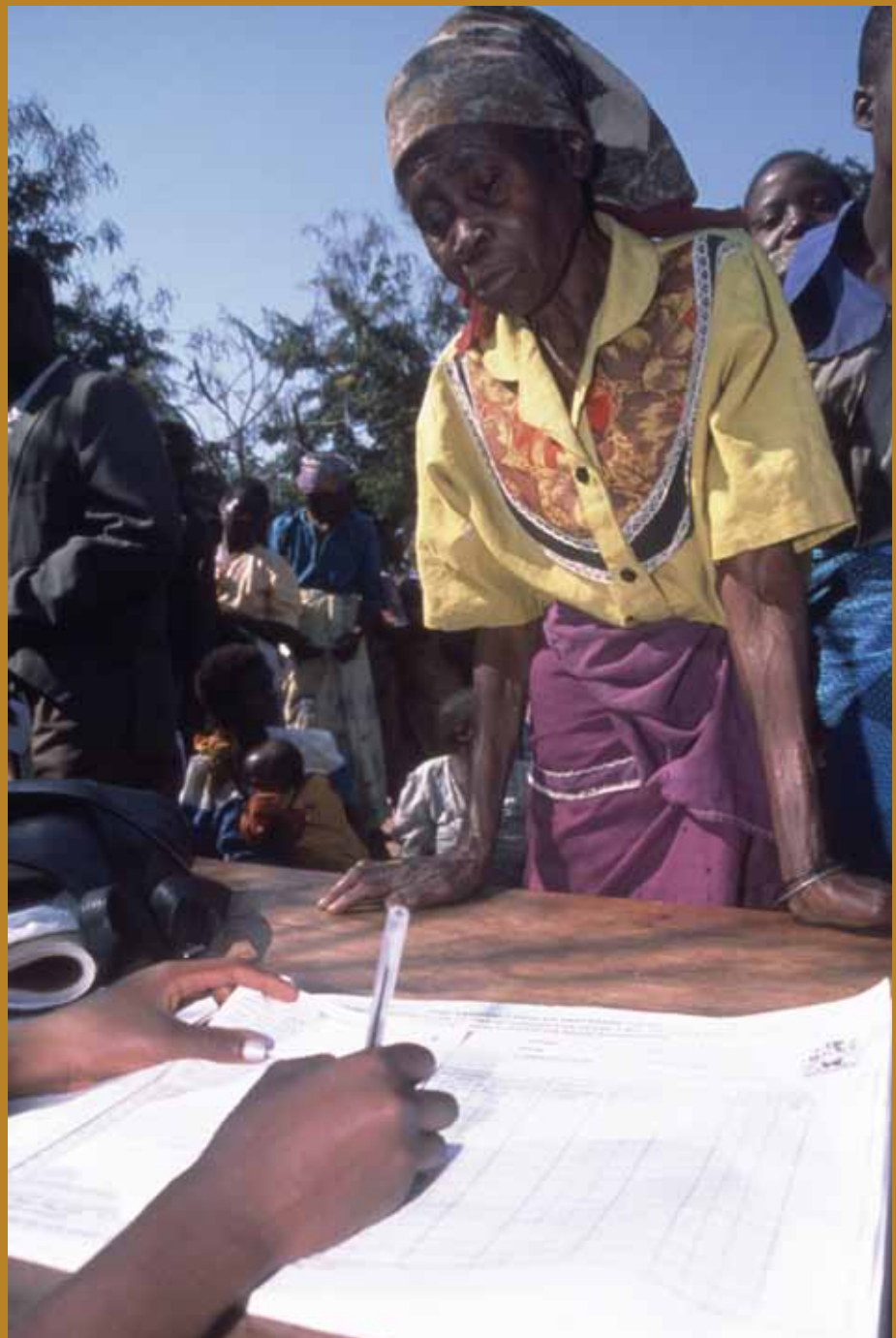
INTERVENTION THEMES

A number of intervention themes emerged from the assessment, including sustainable farming systems for rain-fed agriculture, irrigation systems for lowland agriculture, sustainable river fisheries, HIV/AIDS, water and sanitation, market development for income-generation activities, and girls' education, to name the most recurring themes. Some of these are important for everyone living in the village and others are more important for certain livelihoods clusters living in the village. The importance of any theme can vary from location to location, as well. What may be important in one village may not be as important as another village.

Given the number of families dependent on agriculture directly or indirectly as agricultural ganyu labourers, developing and promoting a sustainability agricultural farming system will likely be a priority regardless of the decision on geographic focus. The strategy should seek to promote labour intensive practices that generate jobs for ganyu labourers. And, given the rising impact of HIV/AIDS, addressing this challenge with effective programming should also be a key element of a long-term strategy.

In some villages, however, significant impact can be achieved with interventions in other areas such as water and sanitation or market development. The SPP may want to be flexible enough to be able to mobilize resources to capitalize on these needs and opportunities to address the priority issues in selected villages.

ADDITIONAL RESEARCH



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION NEEDED TO INFORM PROGRAMMING

During the assessment and in the analysis period following the assessment, a number of additional research and information needs were identified in areas likely to be important to either the development of the SPP or the design of the next MYAP. These are outlined below.

SUSTAINABLE UPLAND AGRICULTURE

The traditional shifting cultivation practices for rain-fed agriculture have been disrupted by higher population densities resulting in shorter fallow periods and declining soil fertility. Farmers are using fertilizer to restore soil fertility, but fertilizer costs and limited availability are constraining access. It would be useful for the design of the MYAP to have information on alternative, more sustainable agricultural systems for rain-fed agriculture. The question to answer is what alternative farming systems offer the best sustainable land use for rain-fed areas currently being cultivated with traditional crops? The answers may include, for example, promoting perennial crops that have market potential or using organic fertilizers for small areas. University agricultural researchers in Malawi are probably already investigating this question. There may also be ideas relevant from neighboring countries.

POST-HARVEST STORAGE AND HANDLING

Significant post-harvest losses are occurring for key crops, including maize, sorghum and millet. It would be good to have a review of the available secondary data on this issue, and more important, to have information on some of the interventions that are being promoted to address post-harvest losses, for the key food crops as well as for other important cash crops such as groundnuts, cowpeas, sweet potatoes, etc.

GANYU EMPLOYMENT PATTERNS

Some of the most food insecure families in Malawi are those that depend on ganyu for income. Many of these families will stop working their own fields when an opportunity to earn money through ganyu arises. The ganyu opportunities that arise are fairly location specific. It would be useful to have a more in depth understanding of the various forms that ganyu takes, the types and scale of payments made, and an analysis of both the positive and negative impacts of ganyu on the food security of a household that depends on this income-source.

INSTITUTIONAL INVENTORY

In order to understand what services and interventions are already being provided by other organizations in the sectors likely to be relevant for the MYAP, including health care, upland agriculture, irrigated agriculture, agro-marketing, food distribution, and micro-finance, an institutional inventory of organizations working in the geographic areas selected for the program would be useful.

GIRLS EDUCATION AND FOOD SECURITY

It was apparent from the assessment that, while girls enrollment may not be a problem, retention is a serious problem. Few girls go on to secondary school. It would be useful to have a better understanding on the reasons why girls leave school and an analysis of the food security impact, both positive and negative, that this has on their current households with implications for their future households when they marry.

"SPIRITUAL CLEANSING" CULTURAL PRACTICES

There are a number of cultural practices usually associated with spiritual cleansing or protection against evil that involve sexual behavior. These appear to be tribal specific. In general, if the person culturally delegated to perform the service wishes to decline, someone else is hired to provide the service. There are suspicions that this behavior facilitates the spread of HIV. It would be useful to have a clearer understanding on this behavior, what actually happens usually (there are stories of women who are able to somehow negotiate their way out of having to perform the ritual), and what the church and others are doing to change the behavior. It would also be helpful to understand how these practices originate and the benefits that they were originally intended to provide.

FUTURE ASSESSMENTS



LESSONS FOR FUTURE ASSESSMENTS

It's always useful to learn from assessment in order to improve future assessments. Following are some observations made by the assessment team to consider for future assessments.

ASSESSMENT TRAINING

In this assessment, not all team members participated in the preparation training because of logistics and cost. The intent was to train half of the teams and then these team members would orient the remaining team members before going to the first village. This did not work as well as planned and it is suggested that in the future either all team members should be included in the full assessment training or additional time should be allowed for training staff who did not participate in the full training. The one day available in this assessment for that task was disrupted by courtesy calls to district government and church officials, and new team members were not fully trained going into the actual assessment.

TOOLS PRE-TEST

Only one day was allowed to make changes to the data collection tools after the pre-test. In the future, there needs to be more time after the field test to review changes on the tools made as a result of the field test.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS PROCESS

A number of observations for improving future assessments were made relative the assessment process. In this assessment a four day process was used and teams felt that the time allowed for data analysis was too short. Therefore, it is suggested the following five-day process be tested in the future:

Day 1 - Community Consultation

Day 2 - Analysis of Day 1 Data

Day 3 - Livelihood Clusters Consultation

Day 4 - Analysis of Day 3 Data

Day 5 - Village Feedback and Information Gap Filling

It was also suggested that if more than one village is visited during the assessment, the team should have a break between villages if logistically possible.

Finally, it is important to respect the schedules of villagers in order not to disrupt their activities, e.g., meeting with fishermen before or after the period when they are fishing.

DATA COLLECTION - HOUSEHOLD SURVEY

In the household survey, on one team, every member did household interviews, while in other teams, one team member was delegated to do all household surveys. The latter approach ensures better consistency between questionnaires. The former approach allowed all team members to have a chance to interview individual households in seclusion, asking sensitive questions, giving them an additional perspective to bring to the analysis. It is worth continuing to test both methods.

COMPENSATING VILLAGERS FOR THE OPPORTUNITY COSTS OF THEIR TIME

On opportunity costs, or providing some sort of compensation to villagers for extended participation, there is no clear lesson. One team had good participation without providing anything. Another team felt that providing a goat and having the village cook a traditional meal on the last day worked very well in cultivating positive relations with the village. The third team felt that the provision of drinks/buns in one village (an isolated village) was appropriate for cultivating positive relations, but in the other village, providing drinks/buns only reinforced the dependency culture and expectations of that village.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

A wealth of information has been obtained in the 2008 IHD Assessment, some of which has been presented here. The annexes to this report contain some of the detailed information obtained in the assessment. In addition under separate cover and available from CRS Malawi are the data collection tools, field notes, data collection tables, charts, diagrams and photographs compiled during the assessment. There is also a small database of household survey data that can also be obtained from CRS Malawi. All of these provide opportunities for further analysis.

There are also staff from various organizations who participated in the assessment during the various phases. As mentioned, Annex A contains a list of the field teams in the assessment. Not all of the information obtained from a village gets documented, much remains in the minds of those who went to the villages, and programmers should seek ways to engage the staff who participated in the assessment in programme development to continue to draw out ideas and information obtained from the assessment.



ANNEX A

2008 IHD ASSESSMENT FIELD TEAMS

NAME	ORGANIZATION
MACHINGA TEAM	
Scholastica Mkandawire (Co-TL)	Zouiba CADECOM
Oliver Mkwamba (Co-TL)	CRS
Alisha Myers	CRS
Stivelia Mdala	Mangochi CADECOM
Josephine	Zouiba CADECOM
Salim Phiri	Zouiba CHC
Richard Mankhwazi	Mangochi CHC
NSANJE TEAM	
Paul Manyamba (Co-TL)	CCJP Chikwawa
Fidelis Mgowa (CO-TL)	CRS
John Mwenye	CADECOM
Mark Nyanga	CCJP CK
Matthias Mtima	CADECOM
Innocencia Majawa	CCJP CK
Mike DeVries	TANGO
KARONGA TEAM	
Steven Nyirenda (CO-TL)	CCJP Mzuzu
Owen Chamdimba (CO-TL)	CRS
James Kasambala	CADECOM Mzuzu
Chauzuka Nyondo	CHC Mzuzu
Jennifer Brower	CRS
Martias Viyuyi	CCJP Mzuzu
Vifularo Mbale	Lusuwilo

ANNEX B

CRS MALAWI IHD ASSESSMENT FIELD PROCESS GUIDE

Day	Activities	Tools/ Materials	Outputs for the Day	Participants
Day 1 Orientation for New Team Members and Preparation for Implementing the Assessment Beginning the Next Day.	<p>Introduction of Team</p> <p>Review of program for week</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates • Site to visit • Methodology • Team Member roles and responsibilities • Introduce tools and methodology (new team members) <p>Logistics</p> <p>Role playing/rehearsing use of tool</p> <p>Telephone conversation with other teams</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IHD training workshop materials • Final Data Collection and Summary Tools Formats • Flip charts • Pens • Laptop 	<p>Clear plan for implementing the data collection for the assessment with team member roles and responsibilities assigned</p>	<p>7 team members for each field team</p>
Day 2 First Day of Data Collection in Selected Villages Focused Mostly on Community Level Consultation	<p>Introduction to community on arrival</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose • Proposed process for having discussions <p>Village Assets, Structures and Systems (one team)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transect walk • Community map and demographics • Venn diagram <p>Community Consultation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Interview with Men • Community Interview with Women • Key Informant Interview <p>Household Interviews</p> <p>Field debriefing and next day work plan in village</p> <p>Research team evening reflection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lessons learned • Call to other teams 	<p>Data Collection Tools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Interview Topical Outline • Key Informant Interview • Topical Outline • Community Mapping/ Venn • Diagram Checklist • Household Survey Questionnaires <p>Writing materials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flip chart paper • Pens • Markers <p>Equipment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tape Recorder • Camera 	<p>1 Community Map</p> <p>1-2 Venn Diagrams</p> <p>2 Community Interviews</p> <p>1 Key Informant Interview</p> <p>6-8 HH Questionnaires Completed</p> <p>Other Descriptive Illustrations (Maps, Timelines, Calendars, etc.)</p> <p>Identification of livelihood clusters for Focus Group Discussions the following day</p>	<p>7 team members with 2 team members each delegated to do interviews and mapping, one person facilitating the discussion and the other to record</p> <p>I-2 team members delegated to do HH interviews</p>

ANNEX B (CONT.)

Day	Activities	Tools/ Materials	Outputs for the Day	Participants
Day 3 Second Day of Data Collection in Selected Villages Focused Mostly on Livelihood Cluster Consultations	<p>Consultation with Livelihood Clusters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus Group Discussions <p>Household Interviews</p> <p>Field debriefing and next day work plan in village</p> <p>Research team evening reflection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lessons learned • Call to other teams 	<p>Data Collection Tools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FGD Topical Outline • Household Survey • Questionnaires <p>Materials</p> <p>Writing materials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flip chart paper • Pens • Markers <p>Equipment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tape Recorder • Camera 	<p>At least 4 FGD</p> <p>6-8 HH</p> <p>Questionnaires</p> <p>Completed</p>	<p>7 team members with 2 team members each delegated to do interviews and mapping, one person facilitating the discussion and the other to record</p> <p>1-2 team members delegated to do HH interviews</p>
Day 4 Data Analysis by Field Teams	<p>Discussion of notes from two days of data collection</p> <p>Team Analysis of information and documentation of key findings and observations in summary formats</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Summary Formats • Community Summary • Livelihood Clusters • Description • Analysis Summary • 1-2 Laptops 	<p>First draft of the three data summary formats</p>	<p>All team members</p>
Day 5 Report-back to community participants and ground-truthing (Nsanje Team will travel to second village in the late afternoon)	<p>Brief Village Head and other key stakeholders on data finding feedback</p> <p>Convene village feedback and validation session (include Village Development Committee) and both Men and Women</p> <p>Follow up on any information gaps identified in data analysis the previous day</p> <p>Research team final reflection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Summary Formats (may be revised following discussions) • Community Summary • Livelihood Clusters • Description • Analysis Summary • Paper • Pens 	<p>Revised draft of the three data summary formats</p>	<p>All team members</p>
<p>Day 6 : Nsanje Team begins process from Day 2 above in a second village. Karonga and Machinga Teams disperse.</p>				

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