

Rapid Gender Analysis for EcoIPM: Agro-Ecological Management of the Fall Armyworm in Eastern and Southern Africa Project



Title of the project: EcoIPM: Agro-Ecological Management of the Fall Armyworm in Eastern and Southern Africa Project

Country: Malawi

Author of the gender analysis/ assessment: Molosoni Billy, Katuya Leah & Muriithi Beatrice

¹International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology (*icipe*)

Date: October 2023



Implemented by

giz Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----------|
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS | 3 |
| LIST OF ACRONYMS | 4 |
| EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | 5 |
| 1.0. INTRODUCTION | 6 |
| 1.1. RAPID GENDER ANALYSIS | 6 |
| 2.0. RAPID GENDER ANALYSIS KEY FINDINGS | 8 |
| 2.1. THE AGRICULTURE AND GENDER CONTEXT | 8 |
| 2.2. PREVAILING GENDER NORMS RELATED TO AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES..... | 11 |
| 2.3. GENDERED ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND TIME USE | 12 |
| 2.4. HOUSEHOLD DECISION-MAKING | 15 |
| 2.5. ACCESS TO AND CONTROL OVER AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES, EXTENSION SERVICES AND TRAINING. | 17 |
| 2.6. WOMEN AS LEADERS IN AGRICULTURAL AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES..... | 19 |
| 2.7. VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE SECTOR | 21 |
| 3.0. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS..... | 22 |
| 3.1. MAIN CONCLUSIONS | 22 |
| 3.2. KEY RECOMMENDATIONS..... | 23 |
| 4.0 REFERENCES | 26 |

LIST OF TABLES

| | |
|--|----|
| Table 1: Agricultural related tasks | 14 |
| Table 2: Household Decisions according to Women's FGD..... | 15 |

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This rapid gender analysis report was produced through the Agro-ecological innovations for smallholder pest management (EcoPM) project in Malawi. The project was commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) under the Fund for the Promotion of Innovation in Agriculture (i4Ag). The authors are grateful to the International Center of Insect Physiology and Ecology (*icipe*) and Total Land Care in Malawi for providing guidance throughout the exercise. Special thanks also go to the dedicated enumerators who collected data, as well as the supervisor who conducted the preliminary data analysis, making this study possible. We also appreciate the drivers for their logistical support. Finally, we sincerely thank all the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) participants for their openness in sharing invaluable information and for their commitment to the study by generously giving their time.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

| | |
|--------------|---|
| ADC | Area Development Committee |
| EPA | Extension Planning Area |
| FGD | Focus Group Discussions |
| GBV | Gender Based Violence |
| ICT | Information, Communication and Technology |
| IEC | Information, Education, and Communication |
| <i>icipe</i> | International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology |
| KII | Key Informant Interviews |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organization |
| SBCC | Social Behavioral Change Campaigns |
| SDG | Sustainable Development Goals |
| TWG | Technical Working Group |
| VDC | Village Development Committee |
| VSU | Victim Support Unit |
| WASH | Water, Sanitation and Health |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Total Land Care and International Centre of Insect Physiological and Ecology (*icipe*) conducted a swift gender analysis to enhance the efficiency of their strategies and activities. The study identified significant disparities in gender and power dynamics, as well as disparities in knowledge, attitudes, and practices that could impact programme results. The study also identified potential remedies for these issues. The survey was carried out in two districts, namely Mzimba and Salima, within distinct extension planning areas.

Notably, men are more inclined to engage in activities that have financial implications or lead to higher household earnings. Conversely, women are primarily occupied with daily childcare responsibilities, which restricts their involvement in other pursuits. The allocation of resources to agricultural activities is influenced by the level of decision-making power held by men in the household. In contrast, married women lack authority and are dependent on their husbands. Restrictions on the control and utilisation of resources, assets, and services are imposed by social norms, culture, and attitudes.

Particularly, entrenched patriarchal beliefs pose a substantial barrier to women's authority over essential household assets and resources. While women are found in agriculture related decision-making committees and structures, they don't have influence as they are relegated to second positions. Even when they are elected as leaders, the few men dominate. Women's exercise of agency in household decision-making and control over resource results in gender-based violence mostly physical and emotional.

Ultimately, the study emphasises the significance of tackling gender and power disparities in agricultural practices and decision-making procedures in Malawi.

1.0. INTRODUCTION

The Agro-Ecological Management of the Fall Armyworm in Eastern and Southern Africa project aims to address the critical issue of fall armyworm infestation, which poses a significant threat to maize production in Malawi. Malawi is heavily reliant on maize as a staple crop and a major source of livelihood for a significant portion of the population. The fall armyworm infestation has devastating consequences for maize production, food security, and the livelihoods of smallholder farmers, especially women. On the other hand, gender disparities often exist in agricultural systems, with women farmers facing distinct challenges in accessing resources, information, and decision-making power. However it is important to understand the gender-specific needs and constraints within the maize farming community, enabling the project to promote gender-inclusive strategies, hence a rapid gender analysis.

1.1. Rapid Gender Analysis.

1.1.1. Overall Objective

The rapid gender analysis aims at strengthening the effectiveness of the Total Land Care and International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology among maize growers of Malawi Project in addressing gender disparities by identifying gender and power inequalities, knowledge, attitudes and practices that may affect program outcomes and potential ways to address them.

1.1.2. Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the rapid gender analysis exercise were to.

- a) Develop the capacity of staff in gender and gender integration approaches and strategies.
- b) Analyze the quantitative gender data from secondary data.
- c) Develop appropriate qualitative questions and methodology to gather data on priority topics namely.
 - ✓ Gendered Maize production responsibilities and practices to inform social and behavioral change communication activities and messaging.
 - ✓ Patterns of household decision-making especially on decisions impacting maize productivity
 - ✓ Trends of access to and control over resources
 - ✓ Participation and influence of women in local governance and agricultural structures
 - ✓ Violence against women, girls, and children
- d) Conduct qualitative research (key informant interviews, focus group discussions), and analyze the data.
- e) Synthesize the qualitative and quantitative data and draft the rapid gender analysis report. The report will include recommendations for how gender barriers can be addressed through program activities.

1.1.3. Methodology

Data for the rapid gender analysis was collected primarily using qualitative methods from the primary source using participatory methodologies. A few documents were reviewed to support the findings.

1.1.3.1. Participatory Gender and Power Analysis

The key gender thematic issues that formed the focus of the analysis were selected in alignment with the *icipe* and Total Land Care Program objectives (determined by the potential gender risks and challenges that seem to appear within specific objectives). This ensured that the study captures the multiple dimensions of gender-power relations that are addressed within each intermediate result where relevant. A gender analysis matrix with questions covering areas of the assessment was developed further.

1.1.3.2. Participatory Exercises

Participatory exercises were conducted using focus group discussions with adult women and men in different EPAs such as Tembwe in Salima, and Katungubiri in Mzimba districts. The discussions

explored women and men's perceptions, experiences, attitudes, opinions, needs, and practices of maize productivity. The process used adapted participatory tools such as the pile sort. **The Pile Sort Tool**-With roots in anthropology, *pile sorting*, also known as **card sorting**, is used to explore and contextualize relationships between individual and group norms, values, feelings and fears, and complex constructs by grouping similar cards, or that participants feel belong to the same category. In the gender analysis, the tool was adapted to collect information on two domains of household decision-making and access to and control over resources.

Each tool guide had questions focusing on the domain for facilitated discussions with each group. Each tool guide was administered to male and female groups. A total of 32 FGDs-16 in Salima and 16 in Mzimba were conducted. A total of 262 people participated in the survey with 64% of them being female; 51% from Salima; and 53% being below the age of 35 years.

1.1.3.3. Data Analysis.

The discussions and interviews were recorded on tape and transcribed and translated verbatim. Content analysis was used to analyze the data thematically, using codes and themes.

1.1.4. Strengths and Limitations of the methodology

1.1.4.1. Strengths

Participatory approaches bring to light some of the complexities and nuances of gender and power relations that are difficult to capture with statistics or surveys, including aspects of well-being such as status, self-esteem, empowerment (or disempowerment), social norms and, most importantly, self-perceptions by communities of what it means to be "empowered".

A participatory gender analysis is also a learning process for the program participants and program staff as it also encourages them to utilize the information from the process for future project or program implementation. For FGD participants, it provides an opportunity for them to reflect and discuss some of the gender inequality issues within their community and start challenging some of those issues as they engage in a discussion.

1.1.4.2. Limitations and mitigation measures.

Participatory gender analysis requires strong facilitation skills, and it was assumed that the team are well grounded on participatory tools. Upon noting that the data collection team were not extensively experienced in qualitative research and did not always probe in depth during their interviews on the first day of data collection; the lead person and *icipe* and Total re-oriented the team on conducting FGDs and probing techniques during the initial data analysis. The lead team observed changes on day two of the data collection exercise.

2.0. RAPID GENDER ANALYSIS KEY FINDINGS.

2.1. The Agriculture and Gender Context

2.1.1. The Gender and Agriculture Machinery

According to studies, even though Malawi's designated national gender machinery is the Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability, and Social Welfare, the ministry's activities and programs are not fulfilling its mandate of leading, formulating, coordinating, monitoring, and evaluating gender policy, programs, projects, and activities at all levels¹. Furthermore, the Ministry of Gender is one of the least funded ministries, receiving only 1% of the national budget. Gender Equality and Economic Empowerment, which is responsible for coordinating gender mainstreaming across sectors, ensuring proper response to gender-based violence, and responsible for social and economic empowerment, receives the smallest allocation. In the 2018/19 budgetary allocation, for example, this component received a meager 0.44 percent share of the Ministry of Gender budget.² In addition, the ministry receives only the bare minimum of support from other ministries, departments, and agencies to carry out its mandate. At the district level, the same is true.

Following a function review at the district council, KII in all districts indicated that a Principal Gender Officer is supposed to head the department of gender affairs, which is supposed to have three district gender officers responsible for Gender Mainstreaming, Women Political Empowerment, and Women Economic Empowerment. So far, in both Mzimba and Salima districts, the office of Gender office was established with 1 officer in each district. Because the department is new, it does not have its own staff in the communities and relies on extension workers from other departments depending on the nature of the task—which could be difficult if there are competing interests. The department is further hampered by insufficient funding, which is typical of the Ministry of Gender because it is more dependent on development partners.

While there are functional structures at various levels and for specific technical areas, such as the District Gender TWG and its sub-committees and local governance structures such as the ADC and VDCs; a critical examination of the structures reveals low women representation and, where women are represented, they are not in leadership positions to influence decisions that are responsive to their needs.

The Decentralized Agricultural Extension Services System (DAESS)³ is a decentralized extension system that seeks to enhance collaboration and coordination of service providers in agricultural extension and advisory services to promote harmonization and integration in service provision. The DAESS which is based on the demand-driven agriculture extension service approach lays out how the agriculture machinery should be set up from the district to the community levels.

All the two districts have generally all the structures set out in the DAES Guidelines which ranges from Village Agriculture Committee (VACs) to the District Agriculture Extension Coordination Committee (DAECC), which is an advisory committee of the District Agriculture Stakeholder Panel and District Executive Committee. However, in both districts, it was observed that the structures

¹ Ali, E.S and Dr. Mbilizi, M.A. 2011. White paper for Strengthening National Gender Machinery in Malawi.

² UN Women, 2018, The 2018/19 National Budget Analysis Focusing on the Social & Community Affairs and Local Authorities & Rural development Sectors.

Composition District Agriculture Extension Coordination Committee

The District Agriculture Extension Coordination Committee (DAECC) will comprise stakeholders from agriculture and other related sectors within the district council. These include stakeholders from Directorate of Agriculture, Environment and Natural Resources, Development and Planning, Community Development, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Health, Education, micro-financing institutions, private sector and farmer organisations. The DAECC is will comprise a maximum of

³ 15 member representatives from 15 different institutions.

are vibrant at the district level and weak at the lower levels. The District Agriculture Office has AGRESSO who is responsible for ensuring that gender roles in agriculture are addressed.

In terms of gender programming, the Ministry of Agriculture through the Agricultural Extension Directorate have been promoting household approaches which have a strong gender component. The tools used for instance, the household vision facilitate discussion on issues of household decision-making and access to and control over assets and resources among others.

Despite these obstacles, opportunities for strengthening the gender machinery at the district level exist. The existence of a Gender Affairs Department that works in collaboration with other departments officers to provide guidance and support in gender trainings is significant.

Gender integration at the community level is enabled by agriculture and nutrition-related structures as well as local governance structures. Most extension workers, particularly those in community development, social welfare, and agriculture, have knowledge of gender, and strengthening their capacity in transformative gender approaches such as Gender Action Learning Systems and gender dialogues would not only strengthen their capacity but also provide an opportunity for the transformative gender approaches to *ICIPE* can influence some gender-related policy issues as an expert informant to policy implementers or explore how it can influence adoption of some of the gender transformative approaches it will employ.

2.1.2. Gender and Agriculture-Related Statistics and Figures.

2.1.2.1. Increased Gender Inequality

Malawi ranks 173 out of 188 on the UN's Gender Inequality Index (GII) and has the eighth highest child marriage rate in the world with 42% of girls marrying before their 18th birthday.⁴ With the total fertility rate of 4.2 children per woman⁵, vulnerability to external shocks such as weather and health, environmental degradation, the spread of HIV/AIDS, and widespread corruption have left the country struggling to improve developmental outcomes.⁶ Women and girls are the greatly affected by the climatic shocks and disasters.

2.1.2.2. Gender Roles and Responsibilities:

Malawi is predominantly a patriarchal society, with men holding most of the authority within the family unit. Women and adolescent girls aged 15+ spend 8.7% of their time on unpaid care and domestic work compared to 1.2% spent by men.⁷ Women constitute 70% of full-time farmers, carry out 70% of the agricultural work, and produce 80% of food for home consumption.⁸ Generally in Malawi women and adolescent girls are more involved in caregiving roles compared to men and adolescent boys. 51% of females collected water and/or firewood compared to 39% of men. In terms of the time, the overall average daily hours spent on collecting is 0.4⁹. Women are also responsible for caring for the sick, the elderly and the orphaned. High HIV prevalence has resulted in orphaned children- 11% of children aged 0-17 years are orphans with a majority of them-61% having lost father only¹⁰.

2.1.2.3. Household Decision-Making

At household level, decision-making including decisions over women's health buying agricultural assets, major household purchases and income expenditures is usually done by men. About 33% of women reported not having the final say on their own health care¹¹. 44.1% of women in Malawi indicated that their husbands have exclusive control over large purchases¹².

⁴ UNDP Human Development Reports 2021. http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/MWI.pdf

⁵ Malawi Government, 2016, Demographic and Health Survey

⁶ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/malawi/overview>

⁷ UN Women Malawi sheet <https://data.unwomen.org/country/malawi>

⁸ National Gender Policy

⁹ NSO, 2016, Integrated Household Survey 4

¹⁰ NSO, 2018, Population and Housing Survey

¹¹ Malawi Demographic and Health Survey, 2016

¹² Ibid

2.1.2.4. Access to and Control Over Resources.

Access to safely managed water and sanitation is poor for females. Although 86.7% of the population live in households with an improved water source; 11% live in households with improved, non-shared toilet facilities and 10.5% in households with soap and water¹³. With 27.1% of the population living in households with water 30 minutes or longer away round trip¹⁴, women and girls face significant challenge regarding WASH, as the responsibility for household water, sanitation and hygiene management are largely borne by women. Lack of water and sanitation also increases women and girl's vulnerability to infection around menstruation and reproduction. Women are information-poor due to a variety of reasons. On household access to ICT, 51.7% have a mobile phone, 33.6% own a radio, 11.8% have a television and 16.4 % have access to the Internet¹⁵. Due to intra household power dynamics, women's access to these household communication sources is limited. A higher proportion of male-headed households own a radio compared to female-headed households¹⁶.

2.1.2.5. Women Participation, Influence and Leadership in Public Decision-Making

Despite having had a female president from 2012-2014, overall women's participation in Malawian politics is limited. Malawian women face marginalization from constructively participating in various levels of governance.¹⁷ At the cabinet level, female representation stands at 22%.¹⁸ Female representation in public senior management (principal secretaries) is at 29%¹⁹. female representation in national parliaments (single/lower house) stands at 23%²⁰. Malawi has had its first female speaker of the house. Several women are also heading constitutional bodies. At the local level, representation of women in local governance structures like village development committees and area development committees are well beyond 30%.²¹

2.1.2.6. Gender-Based Violence

The prevalence of violence against women in Malawi is very high with 45 % girls (aged 15-19) experiencing physical or sexual violence; 20 % of girls reporting an incident of sexual abuse prior to age 18; 68% of those who experience sexual violence also experiencing multiple incidents of sexual abuse.²² Most adolescent girls experience their first sexual abuse between 12-14 years in Malawi.²³ Malawi has one of the highest rates of child marriage in the world, with 1 in 2 girls married by the age of 18 years and 12% of girls married before the age of 15 years²⁴. Teenage pregnancies are also high with the current adolescent birth rate at 136/100,000 live births: the second highest in the SADC region. 59% girls and 53% boys have had sex before age 18; 14% of girls compared to 19% boys have had sex before age 15²⁵.

¹³ Malawi DHS, 2016

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ NSO, 2018, PHC.

¹⁶ IHS4

¹⁷ HIVOs 'Women Empowered for Leadership' available at <https://womeninleadership.hivos.org/country/malawi/> (2017)

¹⁸ Analysis of the cabinet list as of April 2020

¹⁹ Analysis of statement on April 2020 Circular on Government of Malawi Heads of MDAs and Heads of Independent and Constitutional Bodies

²⁰ Ibid

²¹ UN Women-Malawi (2015). Entry Points for Gender and Local Governance

²² NSO, 2016, Malawi Demographic Health Survey

²³ Ibid

²⁴ UNICEF, 2015, State of the World's Children. New York. NY UNICEF

²⁵ NSO, 2016, Malawi Demographic Health Survey

2.2. Prevailing Gender Norms Related to Agriculture activities²⁶

Key Findings.

- ❑ Women's social status and empowerment have a significant impact on agriculture activities including maize production.
- ❑ In Mzimba and Salima districts, there are several gendered cultural and social norms and beliefs that are greatly contributing to women's lower social status and disempowerment which have great impact on not only agriculture activities but also on women's participation in *icipe* and Total Land Care Malawi's program interventions.

2.2.1. Introduction

The behavior of women and men is critical to *icipe* and Total Land Care programming, as it intends to influence certain behaviors among program participants. These behaviors are influenced by social norms defined as the unspoken collective shared rules about typical (descriptive norms, or empirical expectations) or appropriate (injunctive norms, or normative expectations) behavior within a social group are typically.²⁷ Norms are beliefs about what others do (empirical expectations) and what others believe one should do (normative expectations). Social norms can act as a "brake" or "accelerator" in the process of behavior change within this interplay of factors. The rapid gender analysis explored some of the common gendered social norms in the two districts namely Salima and Mzimba to understand their impact on program interventions.

2.2.2. Gendered Social Norms

Respect for men is one of the gendered social norms which came out very clear in the discussions with both men and female respondents during the study. It was very clear that this is ingrained in both men and women. This therefore means that men would dominate over women. If a woman disagrees with her husband in any way, it is considered disrespect, and respect is a very important value for Malawian women, including those in Katungubiri in Mzimba as well as from Tembwe EPAs. This belief of men's dominance within families was acknowledged as positive during FGDs with women, and women respondents acknowledging how this influences agricultural production. This women's culturally mandated status as second-class citizens justify systematic violations of their human rights, including those of the girl child.

"Pabanja wamkulu ndi munthu wamwamuna ndipo iye ali ndi lamulo labanja limene ife amayi timatsatira; akanena kuti gona tigona, akati dzuka tidzuka. Kumeneku ndiye timati kutsatira lamulo labanja, lolemekeza mwamuna wako. Lamulo liposa mphamvu; ife monga azimayi tinazolowera kuti zinthu zimayenera kukhala choncho."

[A man is the head of the household and as the head he makes his rules that us women must follow; if he says sleep, we sleep and if he says wake up, we do; we do whatever he commands us to do. That's what we call abiding by rules. Rules are rules, everyone must follow them; as women we are used to see things happen that way.]

FGD Woman Respondent, Tembwe in Salima.

Gender norms are influenced by kinship systems at both the household and societal levels. Malawi has two kinship systems that govern how property rights are passed down. The matrilineal system, which determines that property rights are passed down through the female line, is prevalent in central and southern Malawi. The patrilineal system, in which property rights are passed down through the male line, is prevalent in the country's north. The matrilineal system is the most common in Chinguluwe EPA. On the other Mtonga EPA and Katelera East EPA have a mixed system

²⁶ It is important to note that social and gender norms are embedded throughout the following sections as well, as they influence gendered roles and responsibilities, use of time, access to resources, and decision-making power.

²⁷ Social Norms Atlas: Understanding Global Social Norms and Related Concepts. May 2021. The Social Norms Learning Collaborative. Washington, DC: Institute for Reproductive Health, Georgetown University)

of both the matrilineal and patrilineal systems. However, men are considered the "head of household" in both matrilineal and patrilineal systems and are ultimately responsible for all household decisions, including key decisions on agricultural activities, as discussed below. As a result, women's priorities, needs, and interests are frequently overlooked.

During focus group discussions, both men and women stated that the home is a woman's domain and that all domestic matters should be left to the woman. Because the home is regarded as a woman's domain, women participation in public events is constrained by the fact that most meetings take some time to complete. They must balance home management and participation in public including in trainings.

Men and young men congregate mostly at drinking establishments, on the verandas of stores where they play the game bawo, and in business establishments. Women and young women spend most of their time at home, at community meetings, and village banks, but they spend most of their time at home or nearby, only a stone throw away from their home.

Men dominate leadership roles because society dictates that men are leaders, are heads, and make decisions. Even if a woman is capable of leadership, the choices will be made by males. A woman cannot, under any circumstances, tell a man what to do, even if he is incorrect. Women lack the confidence to be leaders, and even when chosen, they decline, claiming they cannot manage.

If a woman attempts to deviate from gender norms, they are viewed as impolite and those who do not respect tradition and culture, which can cost them their marriages or result in severe punishments such as being beaten mercilessly. The sad part is that they are unable to leave because society views this as acceptable. This has also exacerbated incidences of gender-based violence, since those who perpetrate them conceal their actions under the guise of culture, while some individuals take advantage of this to torment women, knowing they cannot denounce them to anybody.

Men and young men get information in a variety of ways. Women and young women obtain information in a variety of ways and locations. Generally, information is accessed through various mediums, such as phones, friends, public address systems, and announcements made by the chief's right-hand man, occasionally during community meetings, churches, and occasionally in drinking joints and establishments where men play bawo, these two establishments are specifically for men.

Programming Implications and Recommendations

The gendered social norms have made males dominate over women and have implications on married women's participation in *icipe* and Total Land Care program interventions because their decisions on certain issues are heavily influenced by what their spouse tells them. Sitingagulitse chimanga patokha osauza amuna athu (we can't sell maize on our own without informing our husbands) was a common statement captured during a focus group discussion in Mzimba and Salima. This means that it is therefore critical that *icipe* and Total Land Care programming should address gendered social norms through a combination of interventions, including the use of gender transformative approaches such as Gender Action Learning Systems, Social Analysis and Action, and Adapted SASA to facilitate community dialogue on gendered social norms.

2.3. Gendered Roles, Responsibilities, And Time Use

Key Findings.

- Men are more likely to be involved in tasks that have monetary implications or result in more income for households.
- Women, on the other hand, are involved in day-to-day childcare tasks as well as household chores, which restricts their participation in other activities for example attending some meetings for agricultural activities for extension services.
- However, there are both men and women who are positive deviants in all the EPAs impact areas, BUT they face backlash from community members.

2.3.1. Introduction

Gender divisions of labour exist in all areas of work—on and off the farm, formal and informal—and can confer different sets of opportunities and constraints. Exploring the divisions of labor was critical to the *icipe* and Total Land Care gender analysis to avoid reinforcing gender inequalities and causing unintentional harm (e.g., women increase project engagement while remaining fully responsible for all household chores and childcare duties), as well as capitalizing on opportunities to loosen rigid gender norms about what an individual is "allowed to" or "capable of" doing based on his or her gender. Further the rapid gender analysis also investigated the impact of gendered division of labor on agricultural production.

2.3.2. Women are overburdened with household chores.

The gender analysis study revealed that in both districts women continue to be primarily responsible for household domestic chores. Lactating women in all the districts do most of the household chores and they are mostly overburdened with these chores to the extent that they fail to properly care for their infants, thus putting the children's nutrition status at risk. For example, lactating mothers said during harvesting time they wake up early without breastfeeding their children and prioritizes taking care of the men (making love).

In both districts, men do most of economically rewarding work like bicycle tax hires and winter crop or irrigation agriculture. It has been reported that men tend to engage in more economic chores at household level to provide for their families.

"Sometimes when the wife is sick or away from the home, I do cook and bath children. Nditha kumusamalira mwana ngat mayi ake sakupeza bwino mthupi or ngati atanganidwa ndi ntchito zina (I can take care of the baby if the mother is sick or is busy with other chores).

Male Respondent in Mtuzuzu FGD
Kapata section

In Mzimba, it was reported that women do most of the household tasks and farming activities while men in are well known for drinking beer. It was also reported that men in Salima waste their time and fewer resources on beer drinking and playing some local game called 'bawo' while the women are the ones responsive for providing for the household. Such women stated they are in marriage for the sake of the respect and dignity that comes with the social status of being labelled as such.

In Mzimba, it was also reported that expectant mothers are often labelled lazy when they are unable to manage some household chores and are sometimes threatened

with being sent back home. In Polygamous households of Mzimba, women do all household chores and farming activities. Wives are said to compete with one another to get support from the husband. Additionally, men avoid participating in farming activities for fear of being seen as favouring one wife. Even though this is the case, second wives are well supported in comparison to first wives.

Married men in Mzimba, indicated that they marry to be supported with household chores and reported that women's chores are simple and easy to do, and they usually do not value the unpaid work done by women. The women further highlighted that even though men conduct what is considered labour intensive activities, most of their work is seasonal/or done after an interval of some weeks/ months thus they have more time to rest than women. The observation about men's leisure time was echoed in all districts, that men have more leisure time than women as their main task is to look for food and making sure the household does not run out of food.

People with disabilities are supported with all household chores because such roles are akin to women, regardless of nature of disability. It was also observed that the partially blind (one eye blind or short sighted) do not consider themselves as being disabled in Mzimba.

Agricultural Related Tasks

The study used the pile sort to understand the kind of agricultural tasks done by males and females. The general picture though is that women are engaged in all the agricultural related tasks excerpt in going to the agricultural related markets. Even though women may be exposed to marketing knowledge and skills, they cannot perform any marketing related tasks as they are predominantly

perceived as male tasks. The table below shows a segregation of agricultural related tasks by sex from one of the FGDs:

Table 1: Agricultural related tasks

| Household Chores | Male Adult | Female Adult | Male Child | Female Child | Joint - Parents | Joint Children | Entire Family |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|---------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Land Preparation | | | | | | | • |
| Ploughing | • | | | | | | |
| Planting | | | | | | | • |
| Weeding | | | | | | | • |
| Fertiliser application | | | | | | | • |
| Chemical application for weeds, pests | • | | • | | | | |
| Harvesting | | | | | | | • |
| Shelling | | • | | • | | | |
| Winnowing | | • | | • | | | |
| Selling | • | | • | | | | |
| Cooking | | • | | • | | | |
| Washing dishes | | • | | • | | | |
| Firewood fetching | | • | | • | | | |
| Firewood Chopping | • | | • | | | | |

As can be seen from the table above, FGD participants indicated that most farming operations are done by the entire family except chemical application and selling which are dominated by men and male child since men are perceived to be good on calibration of chemicals and strong enough to transport agricultural produce to market. Some male FGD participants indicated that they cannot allow their spouses to handle chemicals because of the household chores they are supposed to perform;

"I cannot let my wife to handle or apply the chemicals to maize, this is because she is the one handling food and taking care of the children in the house so, letting her handle the chemicals can pose danger to the entire family" FGD Participant, Mzimba

With respect to livestock, men and boys are overwhelmingly responsible for constructing the housing for livestock (except cutting the grass), grazing, diagnosis and treatment of parasites and diseases, breeding, and milking. The only role women and girls have (more than men and boys) is in feeding chickens and pigs. The transport and sale of large livestock is by men and boys and women and girls sell chickens and ducks (GOM 2014).

The general observation though is that women are time poor. This is consistent with literature which have pointed to the fact that Malawian women are considered "time poor" relative to their male counterparts, carrying a "double burden" of domestic and productive work (Espnosa and Kamoto 2018, USAID 2012b; FAO 2011). As such, compared to Malawian men, time constraints impede Malawian women's ability to participate in income-generating activities, education, and community governance, all of which can enhance economic returns and wellbeing (FAO 2011). Thus, "any new activities, such as attending trainings or meetings, will add to their time burden" (USAID 2012b).

2.3.3. Changing Trends

However, there are positive deviants in the communities who help their spouse with household chores. In both Salima and Mzimba, the study learnt that there are reported changes in behaviour of men toward division of labour. It was reported in a FGD that in some families there are men who help their wives with household chores.

Such positive deviants face backlash from the communities. Positive deviants are considered as not being “masculine enough” and the common view among his fellow men is that he must have been given love charms “anawadyetsa khwakhwalanda” (he has eaten love portion) “anawadyetsa khuzumule”, (he has eaten a love portion), “kupupwa” (being passive). The study also learnt that some of the backlash is also perpetrated by other women. For instance, in Mzimba, mother in-laws put pressure on daughter in-laws if her son is seen helping with some household chores or supporting the household economically and use local sayings as (ukumuwonerala mwana wane pamutu). Bride price (lobola) is said to be contributing to such practices. Usually, mother in laws or the men’s relations say we paid cattle (bride price) for you (tilikupereka ng’ombe).

2.4. Household Decision-Making

In many societies, the household is at the heart of private life, and understanding what happens in the household is critical for effective programming because programming can have an impact on household relations, and household relations can have an impact on programming. *Icipe* and Total Land Care gender analysis for Salima and Mzimba districts sought to understand how household decisions, particularly financial and agricultural activities, are made. Understanding these decisions is critical, especially given that **“the extent to which men can make decisions and influence decision-making within the household influences how resources are channelled to agriculture.**

Using the pile sorting tool, men and women in focus groups discussed how decisions are made in the household, particularly those pertaining to agricultural activities and the challenges they face in agriculture. Men, according to women in FGDs, make most financial and food production decisions. Men said they make most decisions because “a man is the head of the household, and it is established law/policy that he should rule.” Women claimed to be able to influence some decisions, particularly those concerning household food production and consumption, but it was clear that no decision could be made by women alone without the full consent and advice of their husbands. Even when men’s decisions are proven to be incorrect, women simply accept it. The table below shows who makes household decisions according to men’s focus group discussions.

“A man is in control of everything; even if you discuss he must make the final decision. A woman should just follow.”

Woman in FGD in Mzimba

Table 2: Household Decisions according to Women’s FGD

| Key Household Decisions | Woman herself | Spouse | Joint decision | Woman consulted but no final say | Causes Conflict |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|--------|----------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Daily consumption of nutritious food | | | ✓ | | |
| Sale of land | | ✓ | | | |
| Renting land | | ✓ | | | |
| IGA/Business | | ✓ | | | ✓ |
| Financial related decisions | | ✓ | | | ✓ |
| How income from farming is used | | ✓ | | | ✓ |
| How income from other sources is used | | ✓ | | | ✓ |

Men typically make decisions regarding agricultural production, such as determining the location of farms and selecting crops to cultivate. On the other hand, women generally take on the responsibility of harvesting and processing field crops. Decisions regarding agricultural marketing, such as determining the timing and location of selling farm produce or livestock, are exclusively reserved for men, including transportation. Both male and female groups concurred that production can be a collaborative endeavour, whereas marketing is predominantly handled by men.

2.4.1. Women exercise of agency in household decision-making.

When women attempt to exercise greater agency on decision-making, it was found that this could lead to verbal, sexual, and physical violence. Some issues like finances trigger tension and conflict within the households. Respondents indicated that women can be beaten for disagreements over the use of money, whether it be differing views of how money should be spent or when women make purchases without their husbands' consent.

Men in FGDs indicated that they are the ones to make decisions. In one FGD in Mzimba, men indicated that "men are the ones making decisions on how much to sell and we the Tumbukas, according to our culture, we uphold that men should lead on decisions to do with the amount of the produce to be sold". They further said that once a woman makes decisions of selling maize, "apo nthengwa ingamala" meaning to say a marriage can be dissolved right away.

2.4.2. Joint Decisions.

While both men and women indicated that joint decisions bring harmony and peace to the household, the assessment discovered that households where women are seen to be contributing or making decisions face societal backlash. One female respondent in a women's FDG group stated that women who make decisions on their own without consulting their husbands are thought to have a hidden agenda, such as prostitution, for example, a decision to use a family planning method on her own. It was also discussed that men who make most of their decisions with their spouses jointly are viewed as weak and are thought to have been given a love potion that compels them to do so.

2.4.3. Women's Sole Decisions

Women can only fully make decisions if their spouse is very far away and there is an urgent matter to attend to, or if they are divorced or single. In one of the Male Focus Group, 6 out of 8 in Salima, respondents agreed and emphasized that the only time a woman can sell such livestock is when the man has gone to South Africa and the magnitude of the problem is extremely high, i.e. the child is critically ill and requires immediate medical attention. In most instances, the woman has to try to get hold of the man or else engage the paternal relations for decision-making.

Decisions regarding agricultural activities, sales strategies, fertilizer purchases, and asset management were identified as jointly determined by both spouses. Nevertheless, it was determined that most of them originated from households headed by females.

While men were perceived as having a dominant role in decision-making, older women, particularly mothers-in-law, exert additional influence over the decisions that daughters-in-law can make. For instance, in Mzimba district, daughters-in-law engaged in Income Generating Activities were perceived as disrespectful towards their husbands due to their material possessions. Mothers-in-law often express their disapproval by stating, "**ukumuonela pa mutu mwana wane**" (you are disrespectful to my son).

Women are more predominant than men in income-generating activities such as Village Savings and Loans groups. Primarily, this is because the VSLs were initially introduced as a feminist concept. In addition to the historical context of VSL groups, women are hesitant to involve men in their savings groups due to trust issues. In the 5 districts, there have been instances where men have misused group savings for alcohol consumption or to migrate to South Africa, as observed in the case of Mzimba district. Conversely, women engage in VSL groups as representatives of their households. In such cases, savings are determined either through mutual agreement between the husband and wife or solely by the husband. Instances of physical intimate partner violence, including divorce, were observed in situations where women chose to exclusively manage VSL savings.

Furthermore, there were gender-specific choices made regarding participation in village groups. Women are primarily responsible for making decisions regarding participation in Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs) due to the greater prevalence of financial challenges they experience compared to men. Certain women join VSLAs due to witnessing their friends achieve financial prosperity in their daily lives. Women have reported that they occasionally participate in VSLAs covertly when their husbands deny them permission to do so. Women have expressed difficulties in obtaining loans and other financial services from banks. Consequently, they turn to joining Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) to address challenges such as insufficient capital for business ventures, purchasing agricultural inputs, and paying for their children's school

fees. The women also noted a recent shift in certain families, where women seek their husbands' input prior to participating in VSLAs. Seeking advice from husbands has become essential because of issues that arise when women are unable to repay their debts to the Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs), leading to the sale of their household assets by the village banks.

2.5. Access to and control over agricultural resources, extension services and training.

Access to and control over agricultural resources, extension services and training has significant implications for agricultural productivity including maize production. At the household, market, and community levels, the gender analysis looked at women's timely access to and equitable control over agricultural related resources, extension services and training.

2.5.1. Access to and participation in agricultural trainings and capacity development.

Both women and men FGD participants indicated that while women have access to agricultural related capacity development initiatives like trainings, there were teething issues which made women to fully access to and participate in the training sessions. Some of the key challenges include:

- ❑ **Women are overburdened with household responsibilities or chores in addition to farming/agricultural related roles.** As discussed above, women are overburdened with household chores which makes them to be time-poor to participate in the capacity development initiatives.
- ❑ **Lack of decision-making power:** Participation in trainings require a series of decision-making at the household level. Women are voiceless, powerless and at the mercy of their spouses. As such their participation is heavily dependent on the relationship with spouses.
- ❑ **Cultural and Social Norms:** Traditional gender roles and cultural norms can discourage women from participating in training. They may face resistance from their families or communities if they seek education or employment outside the home.
- ❑ **Transportation and Mobility:** In rural areas, transportation can be a significant barrier to accessing training centres. Lack of safe and affordable transportation options can deter women from attending sessions, particularly in remote areas.
- ❑ **Lack of Female Instructors and Role Models:** The scarcity of female instructors and role models in agriculture can discourage women from pursuing training. Having female trainers can make a significant difference in women's participation. "We are lacking female extension workers in our community. This demotivates the female farmers as the absence of female instructors may force them to be interacting with male instructors which can have a negative impact in their social life. The lack of role models can also demotivate female farmers as this can make them feel that farming is not meant for females.
- ❑ **Protection Risks:** FGD women respondents indicated that some of the community level leaders and "super-volunteers" demand sex from women to be included in training opportunities. This in a way discourages women from showing interest to participate in trainings.

The study also investigated on how spouses, partners and males support women to participate in agricultural related trainings. Some of the key support mechanisms which FGD members mentioned were:

- ❑ **Male champions' advocacy for gender equality:** The study learnt that male champions or gender advocates advocate for gender equality in their communities, workplaces, and within their families. They raise awareness about the importance of women's participation in agriculture and the benefits it brings to the entire community.
- ❑ **Sharing Household Responsibilities:** Some men can take on a fair share of household chores and childcare responsibilities, allowing their women more time and flexibility to attend training sessions and engage in agricultural activities.
- ❑ **Financial Support:** Some men provide financial support for women's training and investment in agricultural activities. This includes helping with training fees, providing access to credit, and sharing income from agricultural enterprises.

2.5.2. Access to Extension Services

The study investigated the key factors influencing access to extension services for women. This is against a background that women have limited access to extension services as shown in a review of grey literature.²⁸ In terms of extension service provision, there are several wide ranges of approaches being used by extension agents and the main ones being extension worker, and lead farmer. Studies have shown that these two are male dominated. This being the case, women FGD respondents indicated that they have challenges in accessing extension services and chief ones being.

- ❑ **Limited Awareness:** Many women in rural area may not be aware of the existence or benefits of extension services. This could be attributed to the fact that there are very few government extension workers. The study learnt that most of them reside outside their locality in trading centres and semi-urban places.
- ❑ **Socio-cultural Norms:** Traditional gender roles and societal expectations may restrict women's mobility and participation in agricultural activities, making it difficult for them to access extension services that often require travel or attendance at meetings.
- ❑ **Illiteracy and Education:** Low levels of literacy and education among women can impede their ability to engage with extension materials and resources, which are often provided in written form. Most of the women have poor literacy as compared to the males.
- ❑ **Lack of Female Extension Workers:** The shortage of female extension workers may deter women from seeking help or advice from male extension workers. Many women prefer to interact with female extension workers due to cultural or religious reasons.
- ❑ **Limited Access to Technology:** Women may have limited access to mobile phones or the internet, which are increasingly used to deliver extension services and agricultural information.
- ❑ **Lack of Decision-Making Power:** Women often have limited decision-making power within households and communities, which can hinder their ability to implement new agricultural practices recommended by extension services.

2.5.3. Access to Agricultural Information

There are several channels through which farmers access information. They range from person to person to use of ICT. The study learnt that some agricultural-related programs use mobile phone specially in regions with limited internet access. SMS services, mobile apps, and voice-based information services are valuable channels. In other communities for instance, Salima, community radios have been used to disseminate agricultural-related information. Community radio stations often focus on local issues and can be a vital source of information for women in rural areas. They broadcast content in local languages, addressing the specific needs and interests of their communities. **However, women are information-poor due to a variety of reasons. Women's access to information is strongly affected by gendered norms and systematic gender inequality. Men as 'household heads'** and community leaders have control and better access to information. It is further compounded by a lack of access to ICT. On household access to ICT, 51.7% have a mobile phone, 33.6% own a radio, 11.8% have a television and 16.4 % have access to the Internet²⁹. Due to intra-household power dynamics, women's access to these household communication sources is limited. A higher proportion of male-headed households own a radio compared to female-headed households³⁰. While most of the agricultural information is relayed through the print and electronic media, it has great **bearing on women's access to information. Further considering that 65.9% of women are literate as compared to 71.6% of men**³¹,

²⁸ Assessment of Extension and Advisory Methods and Approaches to Reach Rural Women- Examples from Malawi- – MEAS Evaluation Series March 2014.

²⁹ NSO, 2018, PHC.

³⁰ IHS4

³¹ NSO, 2018, PHC

agricultural-related information dissemination will need to pay particular attention to this literacy gender gap if the messages must be comprehensible by women.

Women in FGDs indicated that most of the agricultural-related information is packaged in formats that they cannot comprehend. Some women FGD participants also indicated that some of the extension workers code-switch between English and local languages which makes it difficult for them to understand.

2.6. Women as Leaders in Agricultural and Local Governance Structures

There are several agricultural and local governance committees in both districts and the most prominent ones being village development committee at group village head level and area development committee at traditional authority level. Apart from these governance structures, there are also sectoral specific or intervention specific committees. The committee membership is drawn from community members. For village development committees, each village in a group village head has representation in the committee; while as for the ADC, membership is drawn from the group village heads and at times from the village development committees. Key informant interviews and focus group discussions with men and women representatives indicated that there is 50:50 representation of either sex.

In this study, Community members interviewed including the committee members and key informants at district level reported equal numbers of men and women typically participate in almost all the committees. The rise in the number of women representations in the committees can be attributed to among others government's efforts to achieve equal representation of men and women in VDCs, such as the 50:50 campaign.

Another key factor is that the Development Planning System for District Councils Handbook is very explicit about the inclusion of men and women in such committees. The system guidelines provide a special quota for women representation and positioning as stated below:

The VDC composition shall be as follows: Elected member from each village within the VDC, Ward Representative(s) as member(s), four women representatives nominated by people within the VDC and Elected extension worker representative. Members of the VDC should elect among themselves a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, and Treasurer. In the case of a male person being elected Chairperson of the committee, the Vice-Chairperson should be elected from among the women members and vice-versa (p7).

Although the guidance above is for the VDC, it has been replicated in all decentralized governance structures.

Albeit this being the case, the study observed that even though women numbers are present in committees; most decisions in the committee are done by men, as well leadership position are occupied by men. In terms of women's influence on these committees, both men and women respondents in the study reported that women have little influence in the committees.

Key informant interviews and FGD participants indicated that in most circumstances, women are elected as vice chairpersons in most of the committees. In terms of roles and responsibilities, the vice-chairperson position would chair meetings when the chair is not available. Further it was observed that the position of secretary is mostly occupied by females due to the stereotypes attached with the "secretary position". Interviews with women in leadership positions indicated that women face challenges around their participation, influence and leadership as discussed below.

2.6.1. Key Barriers to Women's Leadership and Influence

While women indicated to have challenges to exercise their leadership and influence in committees, most of the men respondents expressed ignorance of the challenges claiming that most of the committees have more women representation and they enjoy equal say and rights just like the men members.

One of the principal reasons for women's limited ability to engage in committee membership or take up leadership positions is the societal expectation that women's primary responsibility is taking care of their home and putting household work ahead of any external commitments. As women must perform more household chores than men, women have time constraints to participate in committee meetings.

In addition to meeting their household responsibilities, women must also travel long distances on poor roads to the committee meetings, which triggers fears—about women's mobility and security. Some husbands become jealous of their wives, believing that they are engaging in promiscuous behavior at the committee meetings especially if they travel long distances or come back late.

Sexual violence and coercion are tools used by men leadership to determine how and which women participate in the public sphere. To gain access to some benefits of group membership, or even to be chosen for a training, women may also be expected to perform sexual favors for men leaders.

Even when women can join committees or acquire leadership positions, their full, meaningful participation is compromised by cultural and social norms that push women to be deferent toward their men counterparts.

Due to low self-esteem or social pressure, women sometimes turn down leadership positions for which they are selected due to gender stereotypes perpetuated at times by fellow women.

*"When there is an election of office bearers, you rarely find women voting for a fellow woman. I feel they have negative perception of their fellow women" ...
Male Key Informant*

The negative stereotypes perpetuated against women leaders lead to some sabotage of the work of the women leaders. The study learnt that the community fail to support the women leaders.

2.6.2. Factors that Facilitate Women's Meaningful Influence and Leadership.

Men and women focus group participants on the study believe that the situation is changing and one of the most significant changes that have enabled women's meaningful participation in committees and to some extent leadership bodies is the government's 50:50 campaign, which aims to promote equal participation of men and women in public committees. The 50:50 campaign is also helping to overcome the challenge of women choosing to abdicate positions to which they are elected. The study learnt that the strategy being employed by the communities to ensure women representation in various committees is that whenever a men person has been elected to a position, the deputy position is reserved for a woman.

In addition to the seemingly effective 50:50 campaign, the success of women politicians and those in leadership positions have inspired other women especially young women to aspire for elected positions in various committees.

From the discussions, it was noted women leads in decision making in committees where they are the majority like in Village savings and loans groups, care groups, mother groups etc., but if the committee is composed of a lot of men, women are just their as spectators. There are also some incidences where in a committee which has the majority of women, if there are 10 women and 2 men in a group, those 2 men will be the ones to be making decisions even if the chairlady and vice chair are all women, Men still make decisions behind the scenes even if women are the ones in leadership positions. For example, most of the Female traditional leaders, their nduna or aide or right hand man is always a man and he is the one who makes most of the decisions for those female traditional leader. This gives a clear picture that even if the Customary Land Committee consists of an equal representation of women and men, it's the men who will still be dominating mostly in land related issues because they are considered land owners and women's rights to land ownership will still be a problem if not taken carefully.

The study also observed that for some of the leaders, their election into committees is a product of capacity development initiatives by several agencies. As a result of their exposure to trainings and engaging with people, slowly the community builds their trust in that person. A majority of those in agricultural leadership positions which the study interacted with indicated that they have travelled a long to earn a community trust. Key informant interviews indicated that some of the

women who have been trained several times or have attended several trainings have had their confidence grown and have dared in elected positions.

2.7. Violence Against Women in Agriculture sector

Violence against women in the agriculture sector in Malawi is a significant and pervasive issue that affects the physical, emotional, and economic well-being of women engaged in agricultural activities. This violence takes various forms and is deeply rooted in cultural norms, gender inequalities, and economic vulnerabilities. As discussed above, women indicated that when they exercise agency on decision-making or attend agricultural related trainings without informing or seeking consent from the spouse would lead some backlash. The most common backlash was physical and emotional forms of violence. The Victim Support Unit in both districts indicated that they record high cases of violence during the marketing season of farm produce.

Although this is the case, there are efforts undertaken by various stakeholders to combat violence against women, specifically in the agricultural sector in Malawi. The following are some of the efforts that the government and NGO sectors have undertaken so far to end violence against women in the agricultural sector:

- ❑ **Awareness Campaigns:** NGOs and government agencies work to raise awareness about gender-based violence, promote gender equality, and educate women about their rights.
- ❑ **Legal Reforms:** Advocacy groups push for legal reforms and better enforcement of existing laws to protect women's rights and punish perpetrators of violence.
- ❑ **Economic Empowerment:** Programs that focus on economic empowerment aim to provide women with skills, access to credit, and resources to reduce their vulnerability.
- ❑ **Community Engagement:** Engaging communities in discussions about gender equality and encouraging men to become allies in the fight against violence is crucial for changing deeply ingrained attitudes.
- ❑ **Support Services:** Expanding access to support services, including counseling and legal assistance, helps women who experience violence to seek help and justice.

Addressing violence against women in the agriculture sector in Malawi requires a multi-faceted approach that combines legal, economic, cultural, and educational efforts to empower women, challenge traditional norms, and create safer working environments.

3.0. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The gender assessment has revealed the complexities and nuances of gender and agricultural production in Salima and Mzimba. **Based on its findings, the gender assessment also makes a series of recommendations to ensure that the project efforts promote gender equality and women's rights in practice.**

3.1. Main Conclusions

3.1.1. Gendered Roles, Responsibilities and Time Use

In terms of agricultural production related roles and responsibilities, the study observed that men are involved in tasks that have monetary connotations or results in more income for households. On the other hand, women are involved in day-to-day household tasks, and this limits their participation in other activities. However, there are both men and women positive deviants in the traditional authority, although they continue to experience backlash from community members.

3.1.2. Household Decision-Making

In many societies, the household is the center of private life, and understanding what happens in the household is critical for effective programming. According to the study, men make most financial and agricultural production-related decisions. According to the study, when women are seen to be making their own decisions, they face violence from their spouses as well as societal backlash. The inability of married women to contribute to household decisions leaves them powerless and at the mercy of their spouses. This has an impact on maize production.

3.1.3. Access To and Control of Assets and Resources

While women have access to household resources, they often lack control over household assets and resources such as finance and land due to social norms, culture, and attitudes. Patriarchy and a limited social context continue to influence women's mobility and status in society. Strong patriarchal attitudes have been shown to be a significant impediment to women's control over key household assets and resources that affect agricultural productivity. While women have access to agricultural training and capacity development initiatives, they face several challenges. These include being overburdened with household responsibilities, lack of decision-making power, cultural and social norms, transportation and mobility barriers, and a lack of female instructors and role models. Support mechanisms for women in agricultural training include male champions advocating for gender equality, sharing household responsibilities, and providing financial support.

3.1.4. household decision-making

The household is the heart of private life in many societies and understanding what happens in the household is critical for effective programming. The study noted that most of the decisions relating to money and food production are made by men. The study also found that when women are seen to be making decisions, they face societal backlash. The lack of urgency in married women to contribute to agricultural production-related decisions leave the women powerless and at the mercy of their abusive husbands and in-laws. Women can't make decisions about selling the farm produce, but they can make decisions on what crops to grow.

3.1.5. Participation and influence in governance and agricultural related decision-making bodies.

While the study has observed that in most of the local level governance and other community level committees, there is 50:50 representation of men and women, a deeper analysis of the executive committee positions revealed that women are put in positions where they may not have influence. Most of the women in the executive positions occupy deputy positions or where they occupy the chairperson position, the men occupy the other key decision-making positions. Furthermore, women face structural barriers that limit their participation in meetings and exercising their leadership agency. There are positive female leaders' deviants, and these have graduated from several processes, especially capacity development initiatives.

3.2. Key Recommendations

3.2.1. Gendered Roles, Responsibilities, And Time Use

- For training to address the gendered roles and responsibilities, it is important to consider the following.
 - ✓ Training venues should be conveniently located and accessible to women, also considering transportation constraints and safety concerns.
 - ✓ Flexible training schedules that allow women to balance their farming responsibilities, household duties, and training commitments by tailoring training content to accommodate women's time poverty.
 - ✓ Establish women-focused agricultural support groups or networks where participants can share experiences, challenges, and solutions.
 - ✓ Establish safe spaces at training venues to allow lactating women to breastfeed children.
 - ✓ Arrange for child-friendly and baby-management services so that lactating women and those with under 5 children can fully concentrate on the trainings while the children are being looked after by a child minder.
- **Use Gender Transformative Conscious Practices:** To contribute to meaningful social change, the project should use gender transformative conscious practice tools and frameworks that challenge the negative gender social norms, for instance, gender dialogue sessions using participatory rural appraisal tools. The gender dialogue sessions can be embedded in on-going activities which the project will be implementing.
- **SBCC Campaigns** should promote household equitable division of labour and ensure creation of spaces/opportunities for positive deviants to share experiences (during community dialogues)

3.2.2. Household Decision-Making

- Key to addressing the household decision-making disparities is to ensure that males are engaged. Sonke Gender Justice Network (2012)³² contends that the male engagement in health framework has three strands namely.
 - ✓ Men as equal partners- this includes addressing gender inequality and unfair gender roles, openness on issues of sexuality and tackling negative features of masculinity. Example of "men as equal partners": A man shares childcare and housework with his partner; he is not afraid to talk about his fears and insecurities with his partner; and he openly discusses her SRH concerns with her and supports the decisions she makes for her own SRH, including around contraceptives and abortion.
 - ✓ Men as clients- this includes increasing men's utilisation of relevant SRH services.
 - ✓ Men as agents of change- A man is actively involved in community forums, community radio talks, and workshops around promoting gender equality and the delivery of SRH services.

Based on the male engagement model above, the project should ensure that males are engaged especially as supportive spouses and agents of change. As supportive spouses, the project should explore having couples in some of the trainings using household visioning process tools so that couples can be encouraged to discuss issues including on matters of training. As for males being agents of change, the project should capitalize on the presence of male champions or male gender advocates in mobilizing other men to support women's access to training and capacity development initiatives.

3.2.3. Access to and control over Agricultural Services, Assets, and information

- The project should proactively engage with female trainers and role models in agricultural training programs to inspire and mentor women participants.

³² Sonke Gender Justice Network, 2012. Building Male Involvement in SRHR: A Basic Model of Male Involvement in Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights. Cape Town. South Africa.

- ❑ Establish women-focused agricultural support groups or networks where participants can share experiences, challenges, and solutions.
- ❑ Modify existing agricultural training programs to be gender-responsive, considering the specific needs and constraints faced by women in agriculture.
- ❑ Training materials and instructors should be adopted to address women's low levels of literacy and to provide support accordingly.
- ❑ Key to building agricultural economic agency is also knowledge and skills increase men's and women's knowledge of existing laws, legal aid and legal services through legal awareness campaigns, non-formal and formal education programmes, legal literacy programmes. This should be enhanced by media programmes especially those that promote property ownership among women; some of whom can be from the local community.
- ❑ Ensure that gendered power relations are balanced—that is women have the capacity to bargain for their rights—as this is critical to women's access to agricultural services including training. In a patriarchal culture like Mzimba, this entails addressing the relationship aspect, and therefore addressing the social norms at the core of men's domination over women. The project should look at ways to assist programs, projects, groups, and people working to change anti-women traditions, practices, and institutions. For example, plan and execute programs (e.g., mass public awareness campaigns, legal literacy campaigns, etc.) aimed at improving women's socioeconomic standing and dispelling negative economic stereotypes about women and girls.

The programme should promote healthy relationships at the household level by encouraging couple sessions, facilitating household visioning processes, and promoting and rewarding couple role models. Through male involvement programs, the project should also engage men and boys. The key to this is encouraging fathers, husbands, and other male relatives to support women's capacity development. Obtaining support from respected and prominent individuals, such as Village Elders, religious leaders, Chiefs, and others, is also critical to male involvement in the battle to expand and safeguard women's access to capacity development initiatives.

3.2.4. Household decision-making

- **Promote couple-related initiatives**-Key to women's participation and influence in household decision-making processes is women's communication and negotiation skills. This can be achieved through among others promoting couple related interventions like the Household Visioning Process. The household visioning process provides an opportunity to women to contribute towards household decisions-a male dominated domain.

3.2.5. Women Participation and Influence in Local Governance and Agriculture Decision-Making Processes

- **Capacitate women leaders:** Although there is 50% representation of women in most of the governance and agricultural related committees and structures, unequal power between women and men means that women and girls often have little power and influence within decision-making processes in the household or the public arena. The project should develop the capacity of women leadership through mentorship and engagement of women leaders with other women leaders in the community to share experiences and lessons.
- **Create space and opportunities for women to exercise their leadership agency and skills:** The project staff and partners should ensure that there are facilitating spaces and opportunities for women to exercise their leadership agency. For instance, having women lead project activities, events and meetings.
- **Role modelling:** The project should ensure that teams responsible for project trainings and project events and meetings are gender-balanced and that women in project teams are provided with space and opportunities to lead activities, events and trainings.
- **Promote affirmative action:** The project should proactively engage women and girls as leaders in project initiatives and implementation structures. The study learnt of some women positive deviants who undertake what is considered masculine roles and responsibilities. If the project proactively identifies and engages such women; it will facilitate challenging gender specific roles that will help in changing traditional perceptions about women's status, skills and capabilities held by the community, the family and sometimes even by the women themselves.

The gender study has revealed the complexities and nuances of child development and gender equality in the Salima and Mzimba districts. Based on its findings, the gender assessment also makes a series of recommendations for *Icipe* and Total Land Care Program in Salima and Mzimba, and other areas to ensure that gender issues are addressed.

3.2.6. Gender Based Violence

- Addressing issues of gender-based violence requires an integrated approach that addresses the individual, relational, community and structural issues.
 - ✓ At the individual level, the project should empower the women, men, boys and girls with GBV and legal literacy knowledge and skills. For instance, by developing Communications and IEC materials including behavior change communications regarding GBV and female empowerment in the arena of agricultural production. Integrate visual tools such as videos and demonstrations to reach women who are less literate. Disseminate information and materials at locations convenient for women such as schools and health centers or at meetings where women are known to come.
 - ✓ At the relations level, the project should aim at build relationships that support and reinforce positive masculinities for males and supportive structures for women. This among others should include interventions that engage with close relationships which influence the gender-based violence behaviours and experiences, such as parents, intimate and other sexual partners, and peers.
 - ✓ At the community level, the project should target broader community members and institutions outside the family, for instance, schools and social gatherings, other service providers like the police and judiciary, and other people of high social standing in society.
 - ✓ At the structural level, initiatives should aim at addressing the formal and informal rules, policies and procedures that reinforce gender-based violence in the communities.
- Meaningful social changes, such as shifting patriarchal beliefs, norms and systems takes considerable time and require constant reinforcement and support. Starting from a young age girls and young women are taught to be passive, obedient and to defer to men. Men are taught that they must make the decisions and are naturally better placed to be leaders. Many people still do not put relevance to amplifying the voices of girls and young women in governance. The project should ***use gender transformative conscious practice tools and frameworks*** that challenge the negative gender social norms, for instance, gender dialogue sessions and participatory gender analysis tools like the Venn diagram.
- Support establishment of women and girls' safe places at community level, where they can meet and discuss issues that concern them, build their self-confidence and capacitate each other on gender-based violence related issues. Safe places will facilitate establishment of strong women's groups that can demand access to their rights and occupation of spaces that have a direct effect on their lives.

4.0 REFERENCES

- Ali, E.S and Dr. Mbilizi, M.A. 2011. White paper for Strengthening National Gender Machinery in Malawi.
- Assessment of Extension and Advisory Methods and Approaches to Reach Rural Women- Examples from Malawi- – MEAS Evaluation Series March 2014.
- HIVOs 'Women Empowered for Leadership' available at <https://womeninleadership.hivos.org/country/malawi/> (2017)
- <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/malawi/overview>
- Malawi Government, National Gender Policy
- Malawi Government, 2016, Demographic and Health Survey
- NSO, 2016, Integrated Household Survey 4
- NSO, 2016, Malawi Demographic Health Survey
- NSO, 2018, Population and Housing Survey
- Sonke Gender Justice Network, 2012. Building Male Involvement in SRHR: A Basic Model of Male Involvement in Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights. Cape Town. South Africa.
- UNDP Human Development Reports 2021. http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/MWI.pdf
- UNICEF, 2015, State of the World's Children. New York. NY UNICEF
- UN Women, 2018, The 2018/19 National Budget Analysis Focusing on the Social & Community Affairs and Local Authorities & Rural development Sectors.
- UN Women-Malawi (2015). Entry Points for Gender and Local Governance
- UN Women Malawi sheet <https://data.unwomen.org/country/malawi>

This report was produced through the Agro-ecological innovations for smallholder pest management (EcoPM) project in Malawi, Uganda and Zambia. The project was commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) under the Fund for the Promotion of Innovation in Agriculture (i4Ag).

For more details contact:

International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology

P.O. Box 30772-00100

Nairobi, Kenya

Tel: +254 (20) 8632000

Fax: +254 (20) 8632001/863200



Implemented by

