

C:AVA

Cassava: Adding Value for Africa



GENDER AND DIVERSITY ISSUES RELATING TO CASSAVA PRODUCTION AND PROCESSING IN MALAWI



Women farmers in Nkhata Bay

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Acronyms

Acronym	Definition
ADD	Agriculture Development Division
ADMARC	Agricultural Development and Marketing Cooperative
ADP	Agriculture Development Programme
ADRA	Adventist Development and Relief Agency
AGRESSO	Agricultural Gender Roles Extension Support Services Officer
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
C:AVA	Cassava: Adding Value for Africa
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CMRTE	Group of smallholder rural farmers' organization
DADO	District Agricultural Development Officer
DAO	Disabled and Aged Organisation (community organisation in Zomba)
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
EPA	Extension Planning Area
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
FITSE	Finance
GTZ	German society for technical cooperation
HIV	Human Immuno Virus
HQCF	High Quality Cassava Flour
IDEAA	Initiative for Development & Equity in African Agriculture
IITA	International Institute of Tropical Agriculture
IRLAD	Irrigation Rural Livelihoods and Development
JICA	Japanese International Corporation Agency
MBS	Malawi Bureau of Standards
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MEGS	Malawi Economic Growth Strategy
MK	Malawi Kwacha
MPRSP	Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
NBS	National Banking Services
NRI	Natural Resources Institute
NSO	National Statistical Office
NGO	Non governmental organisation
PVA	Poverty Vulnerability Assessment
SADC	Southern Africa Development Cooperation
SARRNET	Southern Africa Roots crops Research Network
SNDP	Sustainable Development Networking Programme
TLC	Total LandCare
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Fund for Women
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organisation

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1. Introduction

1.1. Gender and Diversity and the C:AVA project.

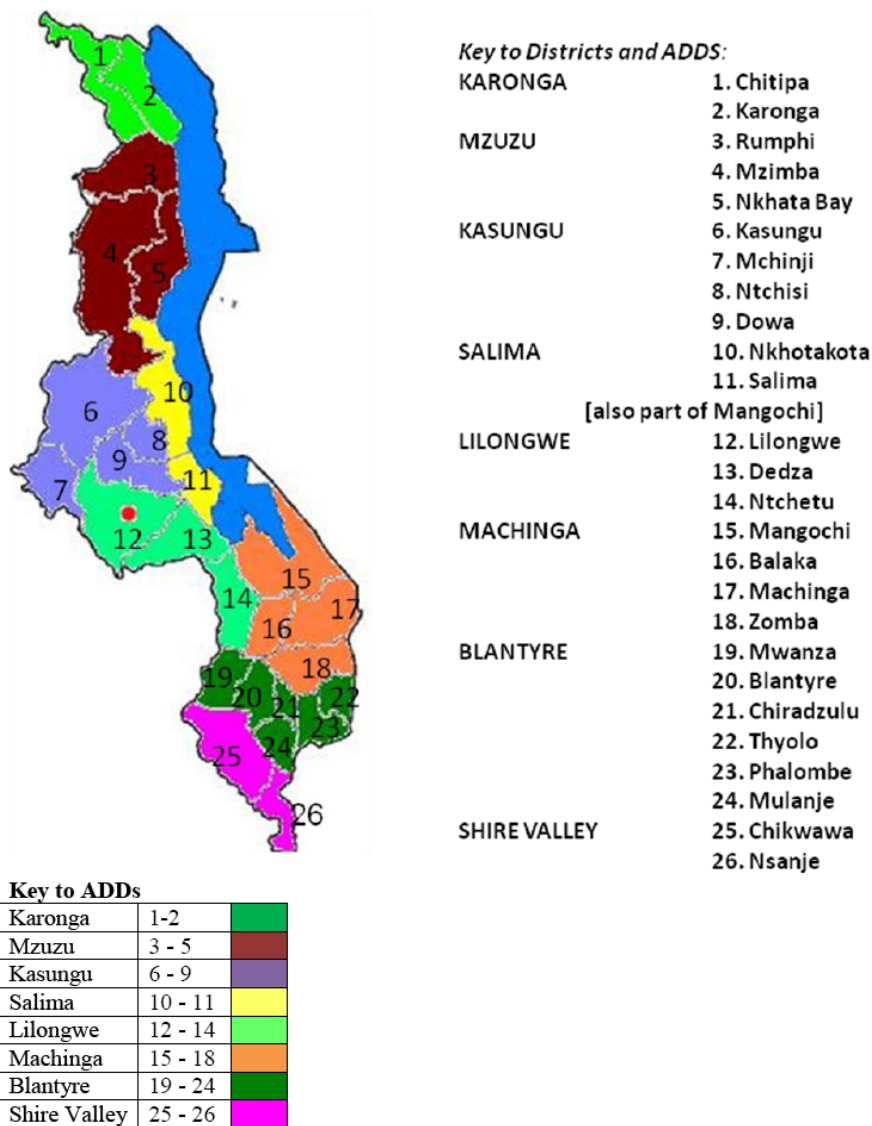
Cassava: adding Value to Africa (C:AVA) is a 4 year project funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, implemented by Natural Resources Institute together with partners in five countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, namely: Nigeria, Ghana, Tanzania, Uganda and Malawi. In Malawi, the project is implemented by NRI together with Chancellor College.

The project's purpose is to support sustainable and equitable high quality cassava flour (HQCF) value chains and thereby improve the livelihoods and incomes of smallholder households and stakeholders in micro, small and medium scale enterprises. The project is committed to mainstreaming gender issues and social inclusion throughout its activities, emphasizing the equitable distribution of benefits and the empowerment of women and disadvantaged groups. The foundation for gender awareness and gender targeted programs is a thorough gender and diversity situation analysis and gender audit¹. These studies are intended to contribute to the specification of target values for gender within the key project milestones and are a starting point for the broader research question on how staple crop development can bring benefits to women and men.

This report of the gender and diversity situation analysis examines gender and diversity issues as they relate to cassava production and processing at different levels; from village, household and individual level, through intermediary processors in the context of Central, Northern and Southern regions of Malawi. The analysis involves field studies in selected project areas among farming communities, farmers' groups, processing groups and enterprises in Mulanje, Mzimba, Nkhata Bay, Nkhotakota and Zomba.

¹ The gender audit will also be conducted with key partner organizations (technical and financial service providers, employers and market actors) once these are identified.

Figure 2.0.1 Map of Malawi showing Districts and ADDS



1.2. Methodology

The gender and diversity situation analysis included a literature review of relevant national policies, social, economic and cultural factors and demographic and social data. The gender and diversity consultant conducted the situational analysis field studies alongside the C:AVA scoping study team² comprising team members from C:AVA Malawi and the Natural Resources Institute. The study was carried out between 28th September and 10th October 2009.

The community selection was done prior to the gender and diversity situational analysis. The areas visited in the southern region were Mulanje and Zomba while Nkhotakota,

² The purpose of the scoping studies was to inform the development of area and national strategies to guide objective 1 activities.

Nkhata Bay and Mzimba were visited in the central and northern regions. A combination of farmers, processors (local, intermediary and estate level), and service providers (government and nongovernmental organisations) were consulted in these areas.

This study largely employed qualitative research techniques namely in-depth interviews with key informants and service providers, and focus groups with male, female and youth farmers and processor groups. Other participatory methods used were daily activity profiles, seasonal calendars, and access and control matrices. The Consultant occasionally undertook transect walks to check on cassava farms and processing units (whenever time allowed) in some of the communities visited.

1.3. Structure of the report.

The body of this report is divided into five main sections. Following this introduction, section two provides background information on Malawi in relation to gender, development and the agricultural policy environment in general and cassava production and processing in particular. The third section presents an analysis of the key findings according to ten themes, namely gender roles, responsibilities, and division of labour; situation of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups and households; access and control of assets and resources; cassava production processes, disease identification and management; power, decision making and gender relations within the household; cassava and livelihood strategies; cassava production groups; gender, diversity and communication; factors promoting / discouraging participation of women and the poor; changes that would create greater gender equality and wider access to opportunities and benefits from cassava production, processing and marketing. Gender sensitive strategies for C:AVA are suggested in the fourth section, before the conclusions in the final section.

2. Country Context

2.1. Demography

Malawi, a landlocked country in sub-Saharan Africa, gained political independence from British rule in 1964. The 2008 Census data showed that Malawi has an estimated population of 13.1 million of which 51.3% are females (UNDP/NSO: 2008), with the concentration of the population in central and southern regions. The area with the lowest density per sq km is in the north region (refer to **table 1**).

Table 1: Malawi population statistics 2008

Country	Number	% share	Population density (persons/ sq km)
Malawi	13,066,320	100	139
Female	6,700,459	51.3	N/A
Male	6,365,771	48.7	N/A
North	1,698,502	13.0	63
Central	5,491,034	42.0	154
South	5,876,785	45.0	185

Source: National Statistics Office, 2008

National statistics on the composition of households by sex of household head show that at least 25% of households in Malawi are headed by women, and female headed households are more common in rural areas (26%) than in urban areas (17%) as presented in **table 2**.

Table 2: Percent distribution of households by sex of head of household and by household size, according to residence, Malawi 2004.

Sex of head of household	Urban	Rural	Total
Male	83.5	73.7	75.3
Female	16.5	26.3	24.7
Total	100	100	100

Source: National Statistics Office 2008.

The average household size in Malawi is 4.4 people and the age structure of the population indicates a larger proportion of the population falls into the younger age groups for each sex in both rural and urban areas, as a result of relatively high fertility (National Statistics Office 2008).

2.2.Social, cultural and religious factors

Malawi is a predominantly Chichewa speaking country although English is the official language. The country has 11 major ethnic groups namely Chewa, Nyanja, Lomwe, Sena, Tumbuka, Tonga, Ngonde, Ngoni, Yao, Europeans and Asians (mainly Indians). Europeans and Indians are present mostly in urbanised parts of Malawi.

In terms of religion, 79.9% of Malawi's population are Christian, of which the majority are members of independent Christian or various Protestant denominations and the remaining are Roman Catholic. Muslims constitute about 12.8% of the population, while other religions account for 3% and those adhering to traditional beliefs make up 4.3% of the population (1998 Census).

Culturally, most of the southern region and some parts of the central region of Malawi are matrilineal while the northern region is predominately patrilineal and is dominated by Ngondes, Ngonis, Tongas, and Tumbukas. The Nyanja, Lomwe and Senas are mostly in the Southern region while the Chewas and Ngonis are in the Central region. The core trait of the matrilineal system is how kinship and inheritance is handled. Group kinship is viewed through the eyes of female relations i.e. people who have the same biological mother consider themselves related to each other and not to relatives from their fathers. In matrilineal society, women value their mothers, sisters, daughters while a man's valuable relationship is with his sister and her children. Among matrilineal communities, a woman's property is inherited by her female relatives (daughters, sisters etc), while the man's property is inherited by his sister's children. In patrilineal regions, kinship is defined in relation to or through male relatives and basically excludes the woman from having any control of the man's property. Inheritance of property in the patrilineal northern region is largely by male relatives such as sons, brothers and uncles.

2.3.The Agricultural Sector and Policy

Agriculture is the mainstay of Malawian livelihood. According to IITA/SARRNET (2009), roots and tuber crops such as cassava and coco yams are major staples next to

maize in most rural communities. According to the Malawi Poverty Vulnerability Assessment (PVA) report (2007), Malawi's agricultural sector is characterized by a dual structure consisting of smallholder farms and estates, as a result of the history of expropriation of customary lands in order to establish large farms (as leasehold estates, freehold or state land). The estate sub-sector became the driving force of the economy during the colonial era and up until the early 1990s. The assessment report asserts that the focus and source of economic growth during this period was commercial agriculture, led by medium-to-large scale estates, and centred on the production of tobacco, tea, and other crops for export. The estates were provided with preferential access to land, finance and labor. The conversion of customary land into private estates normally targeted prime land, leaving smallholders to work on the marginal unproductive land (PVA 2007).

The mining of gold in South African mines at the dawn of the 20th century also brought another dimension to Malawian agriculture. Men from the federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland which was comprised of Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe, left the rural areas to look for jobs in the gold mines. Women began to take an upper hand in farming henceforth and production of food crops has been the domain of women. Farming is typically done using handmade hoes and oxcart ploughs by small-scale farmers, while tractors are used at medium and large scale production levels. In the last decade or so, irrigated farming has been introduced mostly targeting male farmers. However, in the last five years, agricultural input subsidies of the present government of President Bingu wa Mutharika is targeting both men and women peasant farmers as beneficiaries to ensure food security through access to inputs such as fertilizer and hybrid seed.

Cassava (*Manihot esculenta* Crantz) is used as both a food and cash crop throughout Malawi. It is mostly for food in the northern patrilineal region of the country while it is significantly used as a cash crop and secondly as a food crop in communities in southern Malawi. According to Akoroda and Mwabumba (2000), cassava has become a major food staple of both rural and urban households in Malawi.

Malawi National Policy on agriculture, food security and nutrition, executed through Agricultural Development Programme (ADP), is based on the theme of household, community and national food and nutrition security enhancement. The objective of the ADP is to improve food security and generate agricultural income growth through increased productivity of food and cash crops, while ensuring sustainable use of natural resources. Further, the ADP aims to improve shock resilience for the smallholder farmer as well as for the agricultural environment in general. Hence, the project targets a resolution of the contradiction between the desperate need for agricultural productivity growth and the adoption of more environmentally sustainable practices (Malawi government 2003). The agricultural policy is interlinked with other policies and legislation.

2.4. Gender and diversity issues and national policies

Gender issues are area specific and are evident in virtually every aspect of life including the farming of cassava, and all processes of production and processing. From a broader perspective, gender issues specific to Malawi are early marriages, high illiteracy levels among women and girls, high maternal mortality and gender-based abuse. In Malawi women are also disadvantaged in terms of access to health, education, and agriculture services. According to the revised Country Gender Policy (2008:1) gender inequalities

persist in every sector of the country's economy with women and girls facing challenges in accessing education, training, information, legal rights, health, economic resources and positions of decision-making. For example, although the school enrolment ratio between boys and girls is almost 1:1, by the final year of primary school only 25% of students are girls due to the high drop-out rate among girls. The maternal mortality ratio which has reduced from 1,120 per 100,000 in 2000 to 984 per 100,000 in 2006 is still high by WHO standards, and every year, between 62,000 and 180,000 women and girls suffer from pregnancy and childbirth related disabilities. Out of a national literacy rate of 55.8%, only 28% of women are literate (SNDP 2009). Malawi has also seen an increase in violence against women and this has far reaching consequences and costs in so as far as poverty, reproductive health, education, HIV and AIDS and the development of the country is concerned (Malawi Gender Policy 2008). According to USAID (2008), the 2007 HIV sero-survey of antenatal clinics estimated a national prevalence of 12 percent, for a total of roughly 900,000 Malawians living with HIV.

The Malawi Gender Policy (2008) states that:

“In the agriculture sector, studies show that about 70% of full time farmers are women yet most women do not take full control over the use and ownership of agricultural land, access to credit is low, between 10% and 15% and the control over the use of the credit rests with the men within the households. Similarly, extension and training services favour men.

In natural resources and environment sector women are hardest hit by effects of environmental mismanagement because of the gender roles they play in resource utilization. For example, deforestation, desertification and decreasing water availability affect women most through compromising their economic productivity and nutritional status. Much of women's time is spent on fetching firewood and water”.

Malawi is committed to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) although much more progress is needed towards gender parity in a number of areas, such as secondary and tertiary education, decision-making, political representation and wage employment³ with reference to attainment of gender equality and empowering women.

This commitment is expressed in the execution of National Gender Policy formulated in 2000⁴ aimed at mainstreaming gender in the national development process to enhance participation of women and men, girls and boys for sustainable and equitable development for poverty eradication. The National Gender Policy revision in 2008 was guided by the national constitution which has gender equality related provisions, the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS), Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the various conferences and instruments that Malawi is a party to. Some of the instruments being the 1987 Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW); the 1993 Vienna Conference on Human Rights; the Southern African Development Cooperation (SADC) Declaration on Gender

³ UNECA/AU. 2008. Assessing progress in Africa towards the MDGs report 2008. <http://www.uneca.org/cfm/2008/docs/AssessingProgressinAfricaMDGs.pdf>

⁴ Malawi gender policy was formulated to run from 2000-2005 and thereafter evaluated and revised based on evaluation findings.

and Development, 1997, and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Malawi Gender Policy 2008).

The recent⁵ signing of the SADC Gender and Development Protocol⁶ by Malawian President Bingu wa Mutharika has paved a highway for C:AVA and other programmes/projects to effectively mainstream gender and promote gender equality. The Protocol is a legally binding agreement towards creating an environment where gender targets such as 50-50 representation in political and decision-making positions can be attained. The Protocol has specific time-bound goals and targets to ensure accountability in addressing inequalities in constitutional and legal rights, governance, education and training, productive resources and employment; gender-based violence; health and HIV and AIDS; peace building and conflict resolution, and in media information and communication. The signing of the protocol will ultimately result in more commitment towards achieving gender equality.

Addressing gender inequalities and gender mainstreaming are among strategic mandates of several donor agencies and non governmental organizations currently working in Malawi. Major donor agencies include CIDA, DFID, EU, FAO, GTZ, JICA, UNDP, UNFP, UNICEF, UNIFEM, USAID, WFP, WHO, World Bank. Action Aid, ADRA, AfriCare, Care International, Catholic Relief Services, Concern Universal/Worldwide, Oxfam, Plan, Save the Child and World Vision are among some non governmental organizations addressing gender inequalities in their programming. There are numerous other agencies, community and faith-based organizations and NGOs working towards the attainment of gender equality.

The government of Malawi is committed to national and international agreements (UN MDGs, World food summits, SADC's declaration on agriculture and food security etc) and policies bearing on agriculture and food security, disabilities, environment, gender, governance and human right, health, poverty reduction and social inclusion aimed at improved livelihoods of the nation. These policies are interlinked with other policies, legislation and instruments such as the Constitution of Malawi. For example, the National Policy on Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities is linked to the Constitution of Malawi which prohibits discrimination on the grounds of disability and promotes the inclusion of people with disabilities. The Vision 2020 and the Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (MPRSP) and the Malawi Economic Growth Strategy (MEGS) recognize the need to develop the capabilities and potential of persons with disabilities to increase their productive capacity, remove barriers which limit their participation in society and improve social, economic and environmental conditions that limit their access to decision-making processes.

There are further linkages with the Education Policy which contains provisions for all learners with special needs; the Handicapped Persons Act, 1971 which established the Malawi Council for the Handicapped with the responsibility to promote the welfare of disabled persons and to administer vocational and special training centres, as well as rehabilitation and welfare services for people with disabilities; the Employment Act that prohibits any discrimination on any grounds, including disability in such areas as

⁵ President Mutharika signed the Gender and Development Protocol on 19 October, 2009 at Sanjika Palace in Blantyre. The Daily Times Tuesday October 20, 2009.

⁶ Draft SADC Gender and Development Protocol 2008,
http://www.iss.co.za/dynamic/administration/file_manager/file_links/SADCGENDER15JUL08.PDF

training, recruitment, pay and advancement of people with disabilities; to Health, which provides for the establishment of medical rehabilitation services in government hospitals, and to provision of health services including mobility aids and appliances to people with disabilities and it is also linked to Gender and Youth policies (Malawi national policy on disability 2006). All sectoral district policies fit into the national policies to ensure consistency and uniformity nationwide.

3. Key Findings and Analysis

This section of the report presents a situational analysis of the gender and diversity research findings in relation to the production and processing of cassava in Malawi. The gender and diversity situational analysis is presented in view of the terms of reference (between NRI and the gender and diversity consultant) investigating 10 broad themes namely:

- Gender roles, responsibilities, division of labour
- Situation of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups and households
- Access and control of assets and resources
- Cassava production processes, disease identification and management
- Power, decision making and gender relations within the household
- Cassava and livelihood strategies
- Cassava production groups
- Gender, diversity and communication
- Factors promoting / discouraging participation of women and the poor
- Changes that would create greater gender equality and wider access to opportunities and benefits from cassava production, processing and marketing

3.1. Gender roles, responsibilities, division of labour

Common in all the regions visited, men were actively involved in productive and community engagement, whereas women were mostly involved in reproductive and productive activities, including agriculture, small business selling an assortment of farm produce (beans, maize, cassava, rice, vegetables and tomatoes), backyard gardening, group activities, ensuring food supply and children's education. The most important livelihood for women across the four districts visited was farming. Irrigation of an assortment of vegetables and crops like maize and beans was reported as an important livelihood activity for women and girls in Nkhotakota and Nkhata Bay. Across the three regions, women's reproductive activities include childcare, collecting fuel wood, food preparation, fetching water, laundry, house maintenance, providing clothing for family members and family health. Men were said to assist with family health when the wife was not in a position to execute this responsibility such as when she is sick or away from home.

Men's productive activities included agriculture, artisan work such as casual labour and brick laying, carpentry, ensuring food supply (mostly staple food cassava, maize and rice), small businesses, crop marketing and land acquisition across the three regions visited. Fishing was the primary livelihood for men along the shores of Lake Malawi (Nkhotakota and Nkhata Bay) followed by farming. However, in Zangazanga village in Nkhotakota, fishing was said to be decreasing and more men were going into farming due to unsustainable fishing practices. Farming was said to have recently intensified in the southern region because of reduced chances of work opportunities in South Africa for men. In the northern region, men farmers said they had increased their portion of

cassava fields due to new buyers on the scene. Whereas in the past they mostly only grew rice and beans for sale, men in Old Maula (Nkhata Bay) said they have increased cassava production due to available market. ADMARC, a Malawian national cooperative, which was buying their rice, maize and beans was said to be no longer buying but that the market for cassava is available.

The youth, when not in school, are involved in activities prescribed by their parents otherwise they ranked schooling as their primary activity. The pattern often is that boys will work with the men while girls habitually work with their mothers on productive and reproductive activities. This could explain how roles and responsibilities are passed on to posterity. These activities are depicted in **table 3** which summarises gender responsibilities of men, women, boys and girls as well as shared responsibilities between men and women (also see appendices 1, 2, 3 for livelihood activities per region). Men's roles tended to lean towards entrepreneurial and income generating, whereas women's were more domestic in nature, relegating them more to the household than would the men. A pivotal role for both men and women was the meeting of their children's basic needs.

Table 3: Summary of men, women, boys, girls and shared gender responsibilities

Men's responsibilities	Boys responsibilities	Shared responsibilities	Women's responsibilities	Girls responsibilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animal rearing (e.g. goats) • Building houses and shacks • Carpentry • Casual labour • Constructing chicken kraals • Farming • Grocery trade • Irrigation • Land acquisition • Pit latrine construction • Processing • Providing for their families • Rearing children • Trading fish • Traditional dances – watching and performing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Casual labour (e.g. pit latrine construction) • Collection of fuel wood • Farming • Fishing • Helping parents cook • Participation in small businesses (e.g. selling sweet potatoes) • Sawing timber • Schooling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buying clothes • Children's education • Family health (although mainly the women's responsibility) • Food supply • Getting land (can be both) • Attending community meetings and groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Backyard gardening • Bearing children • Beer brewing • Childcare • Collecting fire wood • Cooking • Drawing water • Farming • Fetching fuel wood • Food preparation • Food supply • Going to the maize mill • Homecare • Irrigation • Other domestic chores • Pounding cassava and maize flour • Processing of makaka • Small businesses selling tomatoes, cassava chips, pigeon peas, sweet potatoes, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Backyard gardening • Beer brewing • Casual labour • Childcare • Collecting fire wood • Cooking • Drawing water • Farming • Fetching fuel wood • Food preparation • Food supply • Going to the maize mill • Homecare • Irrigation • Other domestic chores • Participating in small family businesses • Pounding cassava flour • Processing of makaka • Small businesses selling tomatoes, cassava chips, pigeon peas,

			bananas, fruits, even fresh cassava <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smearing the house (decorating) • Trading fish • Washing clothes • Washing the dishes 	sweet potatoes, bananas, fruits, even fresh cassava <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smearing the house (decorating) • Trading fish • Washing clothes • Washing the dishes
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With regard to cassava production, both men and women work in cassava fields on family plots or on group plots often established by different stakeholders (government extension, non governmental, community and faith-based organizations) including themselves. This livelihood has been passed from one generation to another through practical means. Often men pass on skills to the women as well as to their male folk whilst older women often passed life-skills to the female folk. Men and women occasionally had separate plots for cash crops such as rice, sweet potatoes, maize and cotton.

The youth⁷ (both girls and boys) usually work on the family farms. Some older boys occasionally had individual plots or a small portion of the family plot for growing crops, mainly cash crops. The girls habitually worked alongside their mothers on individual and family plots.

Women, in spite of not owning any meaningful productive resources, usually work alongside the men and work longer hours because they combine farm work with reproductive responsibilities as depicted in **tables 4 and 5**.

Table 4: Activity profile of women and men in Nkhata Bay

Women's daily activities	Time	Men's daily activities
Waking up and go to draw water, look for fuel wood	05:00	Wake up and set off to garden. Some men wait for the women to come back
Going to the garden	06:00am	Go to field together
Going to the market to sell crops on market days if not going to the field Child care	07:00am	Working in the field
Back home from field –sweeping of the yard, washing clothes and food preparation	9:30-10:00am	Back home to rest
Lunch preparation, washing dishes, sweeping the yard, water drawing and bathing children	10:00	Waiting for lunch/ some men go drinking
	12:00	Having lunch
Child care	1:00-2:00pm	Resting/ leisure time
Back to garden Washing, laundry, fuel wood, grass for thatching Youth girls play sports at this time	2:00-3:00pm	Back to field sometimes if not visiting friends, chatting, meetings
Back from field	3:00-4:00pm	Back home from field

⁷ Youth or “achinyamata” was described as referring to boys and girls from 15 to 29 years in Mulanje (Tiyamike group)

Dish washing, food preparation	5:00-6:00pm	Leisure time
Bathing and dinner time	6:00-7:00pm	Bathing and waiting for dinner, dinner time
Leisure time, story telling, bible reading, praying, singing and playing	7:00-9:00pm	Leisure and chatting with family Sleeping
Praying, sleeping and love making	9:00pm-5:00am	
	11:00 -12:00	Love-making

Seasonal calendars for women, men, girls and boys, further reveal that women and girls spent considerably longer hours on both productive and reproductive activities. Across the regions visited, women barely had two hours of leisure to themselves while men had considerable more leisure time ranging from 4 to 6 hours in a day as can be seen in **table 6**. For the women ‘chores’ do not stop even when they are in bed since women said “*no matter how tired, the man will wake/prompt the woman for sex,*” (DAO women farmers’ group in Zomba).

Table 5: Activity profile of men and women in Mulanje (Tiyamike group)

Women’s daily activities	Time	Men’s daily activities
Waking up	05:00	Wake up and set off to garden (sometimes wakes up but waits for the wife to come back from drawing water then go together)
Drawing water	05:00	Waiting for wife
Going to the garden	06:00am	Going to the field
Going to the market to sell crops on market days(Tuesday, Thursday &Saturday)	07:00am	Going to the market to sell crops on market days (Tuesday, Thursday &Saturday)
Working in the field	9:30-10:00am	Back home to rest
Back home from field –sweeping of the yard, washing clothes and food preparation	10:00	Waiting for lunch
Water for bathing, bathing, lunch time	12:00	Having lunch
	1:00-2:00pm	Look for animal feed/grass
Back to garden Washing, laundry & food preparation Youth girls play sports at this time	1:30-4pm	
	3:00-5:00pm	Back to garden and processing of pigeon peas for storage
Dish washing	5:00pm	Crop irrigation
Dinner preparation	6:00pm	Crop irrigation
Bathing and dinner time	6:00-7:00pm	Bathing and waiting for dinner, dinner time
Leisure time, story telling, praying, singing and playing	7:00-9:00pm	Leisure and chatting with family
Sleeping	9:00pm-5:00am	Sleeping
Love making	10:00-12:00pm	
	12:00-1:00am	Sharing love between husband and wife

Table 6: Activity profile of DAO women in Zomba

Women's daily activities	Time
Wake up and go to the garden, during the season when its lighter earlier. Some whose fields are near the river also carry their clothes for washing	04:00am
Working in the field	04:00-10:00
Back from the field	10:00
Start cleaning the house, Washing the plates, Draw water, Start looking for food, Food preparation	10:00-12:00
Lunch	12:00-13:00
Washing plates and bathing	13:00-15:00
Have a bit of leisure time	15:00-17:00
Dinner preparation	18:00-19:00
Dinner	19:00-20:00
Go to bed to sleep	20:00- 21:00
Love making (no matter how tired the man will wake/prompt the woman for sex)	21:00-

Both male and female farmers have noted some evolution in gender roles and responsibilities in the last decade or so. Women were said to be increasingly involved in contributing to family income from proceeds from farming and small businesses than was the case in the past. Women at that time waited for men to bring income home and hardly ever contributed income to the family. Their role was to ensure food was available from the farm. In the southern region, women were reported to be more involved in trading than they were in the past because of the need for income. This was reported by farmers in James village and Malosa EPA. In the northern region, farmers in Zidyana in Nkhotakota also reported more trading activities in comparison to farming due to poor market prices for their produce (prices were said to be low). Men are increasingly assisting women in cassava production because of its profitability on the market especially in the southern region where cassava is sold as makaka (unfermented dried cassava chunks). In the past, men were involved in the production of other crops and cassava was left to women and children. Children are now able to go to school undisturbed and school attendance has improved (reported by Head woman of Damba Chiole in Nkhata Bay).

At household level, a noticeable change is the involvement of men and boys in food preparation and occasionally in family health. Cooking was said to be exclusively for women in the past. However, now the male folk, especially boys, cook if their mothers or sisters are sick as can be seen in the following narration by a woman from Tiyamike farmer's group in Mulanje.

"I went and visited in town and saw that their boys and girls could cook and so when I got back I felt confident to send my boys to do the same."

Zidyana women farmers in Nkhotakota recounted several changes which have taken place, not only in gender roles and responsibilities, but in their community in general as narrated in the following;

"Yes, there have been changes; men are able to cook now and to draw water. Women can now wear trousers. These changes have come because of democracy. Before men used to beat women, but now they don't beat them as much due to government policy."

Men now know that a woman has a right to a free life. Family size has decreased now because of good extension from health personnel who have taught them about family planning and they have good access to family planning. Anyone who says they don't have access to family planning is lying."

There were also changes in perceptions due to increasing awareness of gender issues as a result of their interaction with extension workers, radio programmes and deliberate government policy to sensitise communities on gender issues.

3.2. Situation of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups and households

A household is a fairly commonly understood form of social organisation in Malawi and was generally described as a husband, a wife and their children. In the northern region, however, most of the male farmers have 2 to 3 wives, so whilst they see the nuclear family as a household, it would mean that man could belong to several households. It is imperative to appreciate the definition of a household in the Malawian context for according to Harris (1981), the household represents the primary site for the structuring of gender relations and women's specific experience.

Across the regions visited, farmers and communities described the vulnerable and disadvantaged households as female headed households (widowed, divorced or single women), and bachelors. Female-headed households were said to be vulnerable because they have no one to assist them with productive (tillage of big fields) and reproductive activities (looking after children and sick family members), lack access to essential resources and have limited authority in the community. Bachelors on the other hand were vulnerable because they had no spouse to assist them with household chores. The aged, disabled, HIV and AIDS patients, infants, widows, foreigners without money, landless households and orphaned children regardless of sex were also considered vulnerable because they needed someone to assist them meet their basic needs. Traditional leaders in Nkhata Bay (Damba Chirole and Gamuti) reported that infants and youth were the most vulnerable because of malaria and HIV and AIDS respectively.

In matrilineal communities in the southern region, there is some noted degree of vulnerability on the part of men and boys since women are 'in charge'. Women interviewed said they have power to ask a sick husband to go back to their relatives to be nursed back to good health instead of taking up this responsibility themselves.

Although there was no uniform definition given across the regions, vulnerability was described in terms of a lack of basic necessities such as food, clothes, shelter and income pointing to the multi dimensional phenomenon of poverty defined by Burkey (1993:1) as *the inability of an individual, a community or nation to satisfactorily meet its basic needs.*

The wealthy were perceived as those having adequate food, clothing, good shelter, income and able to educate their children. *"Wealth is when one doesn't lack anything, they can afford tea with milk, they do not do hard labour as they can afford to hire, they can access anything they need,"* DAO women's group In Zomba.

Cassava plays an important role in the lives of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups and households because it is considered to be an easy crop which can be grown and

processed, especially for food, without much difficulty. Cassava was considered important for all because it is the staple food.

The study team met and chatted with two disabled men in Nkhata Bay (Old Maula farmers' group) who are actively involved in cassava production and processing. Whereas other crops require management over extended periods of time, cassava is fairly easy to grow and manage. Cassava cuttings are quite easily sourced by the vulnerable and disadvantaged groups and households and since no inorganic fertilizers and pesticides are required, these categories of people are also involved in cassava production and processing.

3.3. Access and control of assets and resources

The late President of Tanzania, Mwalimu Nyerere cited by Kabutha (1999) once said *“women of Africa toil all their lives on land they do not own, to produce what they do not control and at the end of their marriage through divorce or death, they can be sent away empty handed.”* It is sad that findings in Malawi affirm rather than dispute this statement.

With respect to agriculture, Malawi is endowed with a wealth of resources including arable land, basic agricultural equipment such as animal draught power and handmade hoes, extension services, labour, marketing and agricultural training opportunities.

However, different patterns of men's and women's access to major resources such as land, equipment, training, and finance, hired labour, marketing opportunities and decision-making power were revealed across the regions visited. Accessibility to these resources depended on several factors including gender, age, cultural orientation and family relations.

Land, the most treasured resource across the regions, is communally owned and apportioned by traditional authorities except ancestral land which is passed from one generation to the next. There were plots that were both separate for men and women and joint plots across the regions. Some families only had the one main shared plot while in other cases women had their own plots to grow 'women's crops' e.g. groundnuts and monkey beans. Joint plots are for both staple food and cash crops. Generally, men and women are able to access land for cassava farming, but women's access and those of foreigners without income is restricted especially in the patrilineal northern regions. In spite of restrictions, foreigners and other categories of vulnerable groups can generally still access land for a negotiated rental fee depending on the size and quality of land, without much difficulty in the regions visited. There was no prescribed price for renting across the regions; prices ranged from MK2, 500 to MK4, 500 per acre.

Women in the matrilineal communities of the southern region of Mulanje and Zomba were found to have no problems in accessing land (albeit they had very little land). They had considerable control over land since it is passed to females from generation to generation. Men equally had access to land in these communities if they had good relations with the family they have married into. Both girls and boys could access land through their parents. In the southern parts, girls inherited their parents' land while both boys and girls inherited land from their fathers' in the northern region. Male youth in the southern region are encouraged to find land from their wives.

In terms of control, women farmers were found to have no control over the land they toiled on especially in the patrilineal societies visited in the northern regions. In patrilineal societies, land is conferred to males upon death of the male landowner. Women can only inherit land if they had positive relations with their husbands' relatives and if they had children.



Figure 1: Some of the women during a focus group discussions in Mulanje

The control of other resources in northern region was found to be in the hands of men. Although both men and women were found to have access to land, hired labour, equipment, planting materials, agricultural training, income, basic necessities (such as food, shelter and clothes), political power and prestige, control of these resources was found to be in the hands of men with the exception of hired labour as depicted in **table 7**. Hired labour was said to be in the control of some women on joint plots who hire casual labourers to assist them carry their cassava from the field to the homestead if they are transporting large amounts. Under normal circumstances, labour was provided by men, women and children.

Table 7: Access and control matrix from Old Maula women in Nkhata Bay

From Women's perspectives	Access		Control	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Land	X	X		X
Hired labour (assisting them transport cassava)	X	X	X	
Equipment	X	X		X
Planting materials	X			X
Agriculture training		X		X
Outside income (e.g. coming from relatives or not generated within the family, such as loans)	X	X		X
Asset ownership				X
Basic needs (food, clothes)	X	X		X
Political power/ prestige	X	X		X

Control of other resources apart from land in the southern region was also in the hands of men as depicted in **table 7 and 8** including equipment, agricultural training and income, which important for sustaining rural livelihoods. This clearly leaves women in a disadvantaged position and perpetuates the feminisation of poverty, a term first coined by Sociologist Diana Pearce (1978) to draw attention to the growing number of women among the long-term poor.

Table 8: Access and control matrix by Tiyamike women farmers in Mulanje

From Women's perspectives	Access		Control	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Land	X	X	X	
Labour	X	X		X
Equipment	X	X		X
Cash	X	X		X
Education/training		X		X
Outside income	X	X		X
Asset ownership	X	X		X
Basic needs (food, clothes)	X	X		X
Education				
Political power/ prestige	X	X		X

Responses on who controls the income from joint and separate plots varied in each area. However, generally, both men and women have joint control over income on joint plots, and have separate ownership of income on corresponding separate plots.

If farmers are to increase cassava production and subsequent processing, there is need for them to have access to finance. The men and women farmers with whom the study team interacted had limited or no access to credit facilities and often the farming of cassava was financed from meagre personal savings. Farmers are denied access to credit for various reasons including high interest rates, unfavourable repayment period and sheer ignorance of the presence of lending facilities on the part of the farmers.

Cognizant of various gender issues which impeded women's development, Malawi national gender policy (2008 edition) addresses women's access and control of productive resources. The national goal on women's access to and control over

productive resources is “to promote women’s access to and control over productive resources and economic opportunities” using six strategies namely:

1. Promote capacity building of women and the youth in the areas of business, credit management, economic empowerment, literacy, skills development, production, processing and marketing;
2. Promote marketing possibilities for products produced by women at both local and international levels;
3. Lobby for the creation of a special fund by government to financially support women’s businesses;
4. Advocate for the setting up of sustainable social security schemes and soft loans for persons with disability, the elderly and other vulnerable groups;
5. Improve women’s access to technology for production and marketing of products
6. Lobby for women’s ownership of land and property (Malawi Gender Policy 2008:1, 15-16) to attain women’s access and control of productive resources.

3.4. Cassava production processes, disease identification and management

In Malawi, cassava production is increasing because of its promotion by government and non governmental organizations, its commercialisation, its ability to resist drought, diseases and pests, its ‘easiness’ to cultivate and its varied uses as a food crop (fresh roots, fresh and dried leaves as vegetables and bi-carbonate of soda, assorted dried whole/grated chips, flour, and peels for manure and animal feed).

The production and processing of cassava, including disease identification and management, reveals different gender roles and responsibilities largely left in the hands of women despite their having limited control over productive resources, decision-making power and being laden with reproductive activities and community engagement responsibilities. Considerable gender differences were noted in relation to type and time spent by men, women and youth on cassava production processes (summarized in **table 9**).

Cultivation of cassava, often commencing with land clearance around October and November (refer to seasonal calendar depicted in **table 10**), was largely the work of every household member across the regions except in Nkhata Bay where it was reported to be the responsibility of men because of the difficult terrain .

The seasonal calendar is applicable to cultivation of rain-fed cassava otherwise irrigated cassava is cultivated from (April to November/December depending on the start of the rain). The youth, especially older boys, work alongside their fathers and/or assist their mothers (especially in the case of female-headed households). Zidyana female farmers in Nkhotakota affirmed that men were involved with cultivation in the following quotation:

“Men help in land preparation and ridging, then its women who do most of the cassava labour until the selling, when men get involved again. This is because men are mainly interested in getting money and not in weeding etc.”

Decisions on planting and cultivation were the responsibility of the man across the regions visited.

Table 9: Cassava production activities by sex per region/district

Region	Southern				Central		Northern	
District	Mulanje		Zomba		Nkhotakota		Nkhata Bay	
EPA	Msikawanjala [M1]	Msikawanjala [M2]	Malosa [Z1]	Malosa [Z2]	Mphonde [KK1]	Zidyana [KK3]	Chintenche [N1]	Chintenche [N2]
Name of group	James cassava seed multiplication club	Tiyamike	DAO		Kachiya cassava club	FAO/TLC farmer group	Old Maula farmers	
Sex of respondents	Male/Female	Female	Female	Male	Male /Female	Female	Female	Male
Who does the cassava production processes?⁸								
Land clearance & tillage	HH	HH	HH	HH	HH	HH	HH	M
Sourcing	HH	H & W	W	HH	HH	H&W	HH	H&W
Planting	HH	H & W	HH	HH	HH	W	H&W	H&W
Intercropping	HH	H & W	HH	HH	W	N	W	N
Weeding	HH	H & W	HH	HH	HH	W	HH	HH
Harvesting	HH	HH	W	HH	HH	W	W	W
Who decides the cassava production processes?								
Land clearance & tillage	M	H & W	M	M	M	M	M	M
Sourcing	M	H & W	W	M	M	W	H&W	M
Planting	M	H & W	W	W	W	H&W	W	M
Intercropping	M	H & W	N	HH	W	N	W	N
Weeding	W	H & W	H & W	W	W	W	H&W	M
Harvesting	W	W	W	HH	W	W	W	W

Key: H = Household, H&W = Husband & Wife, W = Women, M = Men N=Not reported

Table 10: Seasonal Calendar of women and men of Tiyamike in Mulanje

Women's productivity activity cassava	Month	Men's productivity activity cassava
Weeding of cassava fields	January	Weeding of cassava field
Monitoring of cassava fields	February	Monitoring of cassava fields
Monitoring of the field continues	March	Monitoring of cassava fields
Checking to see if the crop is ready, if ready then we begin to eat a bit	April	Monitoring of cassava fields
Sales of cassava begin slowly	May	Monitoring of cassava fields
Portion harvesting	June	Weeding of cassava field if there are weeds
Portion harvesting for food	July	Sale of fresh cassava
Start of serious harvesting	August	Harvest from field to home (women who actual makaka processing)
Processing of makaka	September	Finish makaka processing and start selling makaka
Land preparation and planting of cassava	October	Marketing and sales continue
Planting continued with first rains	November	Land preparation begins as marketing and sales continue
Weeding of cassava field	December	Planting and weeding

⁸ These findings are generally the same for joint household plots and women's plots.

Tillage, like land clearance, is seen as the family's responsibility because of the hard labour involved, requiring the family to share tasks. Tillage involves both new and old fields. Married women are involved in tillage especially in fields used in previous farming seasons as these are considered fairly easy to cultivate in comparison to virgin land. Female-headed (single, divorced or widowed) households till their own plots often with their children and grandchildren. The decision to till is largely the responsibility of men (only Tiyamike farmers said it was shared between man and wife) whereas female-headed households decide for themselves.

Men and women share the responsibility of sourcing of planting materials across the regions. In most cases respondents said the man and wife sourced planting materials. It was only in Zomba [DAO women farmers] that women were reported to be responsible for sourcing the planting materials, because it was a women farmers' group so they sourced it for themselves.

Planting of cassava cuttings is shared almost between men, women and youth depending on the size of the plot. This was true for all districts visited except for FAO/TLC group which reported that women were responsible for this activity. In incidences where the family kept cassava cuttings from previous farming seasons, women and children were responsible for their management. Women in this way have control of cassava seed and are able to share among themselves. As far as seed acquisition is concerned, men are mostly involved especially when cuttings are from agricultural extension services and/or NGOs. The decision to source planting materials is shared between men and women across the regions.

Intercropping (fairly widespread across the regions) is mostly done by the family in the southern region but done by women in Mphonde and Old Maula in central and northern regions respectively. There was no consensus on who decides to intercrop across the regions; whereas women decide in central and northern regions reported, the men decide according to James group, women decide in Zomba and man and wife decide according to Tiyamike group.

In terms of cassava variety preferences, women preferred the high yielding varieties which gives good white flour (*kondowole*) and makes tasty nsima (referred to as a dumpling-like porridge by Chiwona-Kurltun et al (2000).

Some varieties (as depicted in the **table 11**) were not preferred by women because of the dark colour of flour and type of nsima produced. These preferences are applicable to women rather than men.

“Men only speak if you have not cooked well, then they decide not to eat,”
(DAO women farmers in Zomba.)

Table 11: Ranking of cassava varieties by Old Maula farmers in Nkhata Bay

Variety	Description - sweet, bitter; 'improved'/'local'	Source of planting material	Rank in terms of area (e.g. 1 is largest)
Depweti	Early maturing, bitter, improved high breed, came from research, high yielding and disease resistant, it rots if not harvested in less than a year	agricultural research	1
Masoanzungu	Came from agricultural research, early maturing, sweet, good yielding, 6-7 months, produces good white flour	L agricultural research	2
Mpuma	High yield, within one year, thereafter crop is watery, its bitter, good flour if harvested in time otherwise dark flour if over-age	agricultural research	3
Gomani	Limited yield, fibrous, diseased leaves, local variety, bitter, one year maturing	Passed on from ancestors	4
Nywenyani	Bitter, traditional, high yielding, not fibrous, lots of good flour, disease free	Passed on from ancestors	5
Sauti	Improved variety, bitter/sweet depending on soil, planted in dambo and upland, good yield, disease free, white flour [nice nsima]	agricultural research	6
Nyahalawa	Good yield, lots of good flour, diseased leaves, bitter, not fibrous, one year maturing	Local variety passed on from parents	7
Mbundumale	Sweet, good yield, white good flour, much flour, early maturing 6 month	agricultural research	8
Kachamba	Sweet, good yield, 6-7 months, good white flour, mostly for fresh roots	agricultural research	9
Mulanje	High breed, sweet, lots of flour, high yield, disease prone both leaves and roots, 6-7 months	agricultural research	10
Beatrice	Bitter, improved variety, good yield, disease free, white flour	agricultural research	
Nyankwanzi	Bitter, traditional, high yielding, one year, lots of good flour, disease free	Passed on	
Chitara	Bitter, traditional, high yielding, lots of good flour, disease free	Agricultural research	
Silila	Bitter, high breed, traditional, high yielding, dark flour, watery nsima, after 6 months it gets spongy, disease free	Agricultural research	
Mkondezi	Bitter, high yielding, watery, 6 months, dark nsima, watery nsima, lots of good flour, disease free	Agricultural research	

Management of the planted cassava is the responsibility of women and youth who work alongside their mothers. In Mulanje where cassava is planted as a demarcation separating fields (**see figure 2**), this activity is done by women. Men generally played a supervisory role at this stage occasionally passing through the field to ensure that a proper job was done and would at this stage uproot remaining weeds if present. The decision to weed was largely the responsibility of women in most of the regions visited with the exception of Tiyamike, DAO and Maula women who reported that this responsibility was shared between husband and wife. Identification of disease was done

by both men and women. Knowledge in this regard was passed on from generation to generation and/or gained through extension services.



Figure 2: *Cassava plant in Mulanje where most of the crop is planted as a hedge to demarcate one crop from the other*

Harvesting cassava is often done in small quantities (unless vendors agree to buy a whole field) and is largely done by women. Harvesting takes place throughout the year in the northern region and between July and December for the southern region. There are varied periods for harvesting rain-fed and irrigated cassava across the regions, which is illustrated in **table 10** and **12**. Women prefer to harvest enough fresh roots for consumption at a time instead of harvesting the whole field at once. Men assist in harvesting especially when there is some means of transportation (bicycle, oxcart) otherwise women and girls carry the harvest in baskets on the heads either to the market for sale or to the homestead for consumption and subsequent processing. Women across the regions visited decide when to harvest the cassava.

Women's responsibility in processing is time-consuming, extremely labour intensive and is seldom mechanized. Traditionally, women process cassava using household utensils such as knives and 'chipalo'⁹ for peeling, raised racks made from grass and

⁹ Chipalo, a locally made cassava chipping equipment used by women in southern Malawi, peels faster than knives and could be promoted in other districts to lessen women's time spent on cassava peeling.

sticks for drying and use pestle and mortar to pound cassava into flour both for consumption and sale. Women and girls are engaged in pounding almost on a daily basis especially in the north where cassava is the number one staple. Hand pounded *kondowole* (cassava flour) is preferred to hammer-milled *kondowole*. Across the regions, women and girls' involvement in cassava production processes demand significantly more of their time and effort than those of men and boys.

Table 12: Seasonality of cassava production provided by Maula women farmers in Nkhata Bay

Month	Productivity activity cassava
January	Planting/ weeding of cassava fields
February	Weeding and monitoring of cassava fields
March	Planting, weeding and monitoring of the field continues
April	Planting, weeding and monitoring of the fields
May	Planting, weeding and monitoring of the fields
June	Weeding, planting of cassava is continuous especially for those who grow cassava in dambos apart from rain fed cassava
July	Weeding, planting of cassava is continuous especially for those who grow cassava in dambos apart from rain fed cassava
August	Planting and harvesting in the dambos, Beans is planted at this stage
September	Weeding, planting of cassava is continuous especially for those who grow in the dambos as well
October	Land preparation and planting of cassava (rain fed)
November	Land tillage and planting continued with first rains
December	Land tillage, planting and weeding of cassava field

Transportation of cassava has two aspects. Firstly, there is the transportation of cassava from the field to the homestead and secondly, transportation from the homestead to the market if it is for sale. The means of transporting cassava from the field depends on how much cassava is being harvested. If the harvest is large the farmers used 50kg sacks and/or 10-20kg locally made grass woven baskets to transport the cassava back home. Men and women often carry the sacks and baskets respectively. Boys and girls assisted their parents in transportation. Men, who commonly own the means of transportation such as ox-carts and/or bicycles, will use these to transport the cassava. The girls carried the baskets on their heads as did the women folk while boys sometimes used the ox-cart and/or the bicycles with the male folk.

Marketing of cassava products especially fresh roots and *makaka* (unfermented dried cassava chunks) is done by both men and women but men are more frequently engaged because women are involved in more reproductive activities such as family health and childcare. Older boys are sometimes involved in marketing. In terms of actual transporting cassava to the market for sale, DAO women farmers in Zomba, for example, said they carried the cassava in baskets on their heads from home to the road to board a minibus to the nearby trading centre. This was also true for women across the areas visited by the scooping team. A very small number of women said they used their husband's bicycle for transportation. In Nkhata Bay, most of the women farmers interviewed said they were afraid to ride a bicycle.

Whereas men preferred to sell fresh roots and *makaka*, women mostly sold fermented dried products. Men were involved in sales when large quantities of dried cassava e.g. *makaka*, was involved, particularly in the southern region.

Men generally determine how income from joint sales is used, relegating women to a disadvantaged position and limiting their opportunities to improve their status unless gender issues are addressed in this project. Crops grown on women's fields are usually food for the household and when sold, proceeds are to meet a pressing family need. Women headed households decide how to use their income.

Processing was the most laborious of all cassava related activities in which women are involved as it is not mechanized and it is monotonous.



Figure 3: During a focus group discussion with women in Nkhata Bay (Old Maula farmers)

“We prefer to pound for a day’s meal because freshly pounded kondowole is tastier than previously pounded flour. Cassava processed at the mill (when there was one functional mill in Nkhata Bay we used to sometimes pound there) was not as tasty as the flour we hand pounded”, said one woman.

Men's involvement in processing was noted in mechanized processing such as the graters found at Old Maula and CRMTE, affirming research findings of Martin, Forsythe and Butterworth (2008).

There are some cultural beliefs tying women and girls to cassava processing such as the one recounted by Maula women farmers in Nkhata Bay below.

“Women and girls are the ones who do the processing work. This has been passed from generation to generation. Men can help with other chores but there is a belief that men's hands and legs will swell if they went to process cassava at the shallow wells. Men's hands and legs swell if they are involved in some of the processes of fermenting cassava and consequently drying the fermented cassava chips. Men find the processing (especially fermenting in shallow wells) of cassava ‘yucky’ and therefore this is considered purely a woman's work and a proper man should never consider doing it.”

The men who are fully involved in the pre- and post harvesting of cassava were said to be those who were without wives. Apart from this cultural belief, there were no other cultural or religious beliefs restricting the participation of men and women in cassava processes noted across other regions.

3.5. Power, decision making and gender relations within the household

Power and decision-making was found to be vested in the hands of men in terms of control over resources such as land, equipment and income. Whereas the women said they had not much of a say on the use of money realised from cassava sales, a few men farmers said they shared power with their women in the northern region.

As already established under section 3, men were found to be in charge mostly of productive activities and made decisions regarding these.

Some men however noted that women have become more vocal in recent times and men and women have been seen to be working together unlike was the case in the past when men had absolute power and were the sole decision-makers. The majority of women in the south said decisions were now made together with the man. Decisions on how to utilize income are usually made jointly or individually in the southern matrilineal communities of Mulanje and Zomba; while men more frequently decide in the northern region.

Perceptions of women and men on the use of income varied significantly across farmer groups in both regions. Men's groups across the regions said use of income was for the household and children's education and did not indicate that any of the income was used on themselves, contrary to what women said. In Zomba, for example, women said the men would use some of the income from a good harvest to get a younger wife; however, the men did not state they used their income in this way but that it was used for household needs.

The study noted diverse spending patterns of men, women and youth across the regions visited. From a man's perspective, family income is spent mainly on household needs such as food, clothing, medical, farm inputs and children's school fees. Women however, said, apart from men using their income on household use and children's school fees, men also used their income for beer and acquiring a new wife or on other

women generally. Women's income, on the other hand, was used mostly for meeting household needs such as food, clothes, kitchen utensils and children's school fees, as a shared responsibility with husbands and rarely ever used on personal needs. Male youth said they spent their income on purchasing clothes, on school fees, watching videos, drinking beer, gifts to lure girlfriends, gave some to their parents, for transportation to town and on entertainment. Female youth spent their income on beautification of body and hair, buying school requirements and on entertainment. **Table 13** summarizes men, women and youth's perceptions of their use of income in the household, which are fairly uniform across the three regions visited.

Although this was not mentioned by men themselves, it can be deduced from findings on gender and diversity and communication that men and boys spent their income on mobile phones and radios or even TV since they owned these. There were considerably smaller numbers of women and girls with mobile phones and radios (refer to gender and diversity and communication section).

Table 13 Men, women and youth's perceptions of their use of income in the household

Women use income for	Men use income for	Male youths use income for	Female youths use income for
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clothes • Farm inputs (seed, fertiliser, hoes) • Food • Kitchen utensils, plates etc • Condolences • Weddings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beer • Clothing • Education • Farm inputs (seed, fertiliser, hoes) • Food • For proposing to ladies • Maize meal • Marrying new wife • Medical treatment • School fees • Shelter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assisting parents • Beer • Gooks, pencils, pens • Clothes • Proposing to girls • Smoking • Video shows • Transport to town • Mobile phone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Braiding hair • Books/ pencils/ pens • Clothes • Cosmetics • Helping parents • Video shows • Weddings

Important decisions on cassava production at family level in matrilineal communities were made by women e.g. farm sizes and type of cassava to be grown. Women's control over their own farm incomes was present where they had their own separate plots. Both men and women have control over the benefits and income from their group processing work.

There was notably more decision-making power in the hands of women in the southern region to the extent that if a man is not cooperating with the woman, the women have the right to send the man back to his own people. The practice of polygamy which allows a man to marry more than one wife predominant in the northern region is not practiced in the matrilineal south where the women said, "*we do not tolerate a man who wants to marry two women, we just ask him to leave and go back to his own people. The children belong to us and so the man basically goes away empty handed,*" Mulanje women said during a focus group.

Men were more autocratic in the past but they are more democratic these days in decision making. In the past men went to South Africa in search of jobs in the gold mines leaving women to head households. Power dynamics began to change when the men left but they are now back at home and power is being somehow shared.

3.6. Cassava and livelihood strategies

The northern and southern regions visited have not been immune to food shortages as revealed by both farmers and service providers. Respondents recalled the following agricultural seasons as periods when farmers had food shortages due to either disease outbreak (brown streak, mealy bug and mosaic), dry spell and/or floods 1984, 1986/1987, 1991/1992, 1995, 2000, 2001/2002 and 2008/2009, across the regions visited. It is therefore extremely important that disaster preparedness be addressed right from grassroots to national level to ensure household food security at all times.

During food shortages, the main coping strategies that households use include engaging in piece-work commonly referred to as ‘ganyu’¹⁰ (payable in cash or in kind) such as farm labourer, brick making, bricklaying, reducing the number of meals and amount of food consumed per day (especially in the case of adult members), diet diversification (eating wild fruits, grain husks, roots and leaves of assorted crops including cassava), charcoal and firewood trading, depending on support from relatives especially those in urban areas (in terms of food or cash), selling crops and livestock (domesticated animals such as chicken, goats and guinea fowls) and borrowing cash from money-lenders. Another coping strategy was to depend on food aid from government, NGOs and FBOs although farmers said the food aid often came later than when it was needed. Red Cross, Alinafe, Oxfam, Concern and the Government were named among those who provided relief aid.

Cassava has in the past been used as the number one staple crop when maize was scarce in drought seasons. However, even in good crop production years, it forms the basic element in the food security of chronically food short households, an estimated one third of Malawi’s rural population (Benson: 2002).

In Zomba, women said that they cooked cassava for a long time in order for the cassava to expand and they served it as porridge to their families in crisis seasons. During lean periods, some families ate maize husks they had remaining and even had to travel around 70km to the nearby town of Blantyre to purchase them as narrated in the following account:

“In 2001/02, as a result of hunger we even had premature babies. The situation was so bad many families did not have food. We ate maize husks, which we went all the way to Blantyre to buy. Most people lost a lot of weight, both men and women were affected, and of the two men suffered more some being too weak to even go and look for labour,” said women from DAO in Zomba.

The hunger of 2001/02 was also recalled by farmers in Zidyana farmers of Nkhotakota in the following, *“there was serious hunger here as a result of drought, we ate the husk of maize grains, roots of banana plants and cassava leaves.”*

In the northern region where cassava is the most important staple, the community ate yams, beans, wild fruits, rice and bananas as a coping strategy when, for example in 1986/87, 1991/1992, 2001 and 2008/2009 seasons, they lost their cassava crop to

¹⁰Piecework, ‘ganyu,’ is somewhat a permanent livelihood strategy for many poor households, with at least one adult frequently absent searching or engaging in piecework for food and income to support the household especially around the tea estates in the southern region. Not only does this disrupt household cohesion, but it also reduces the ability of the household to engage in productive farming.

floods. Ironically, farmers in the southern region experienced dry spells in 2001 and 2008 seasons.

“We survived the hard times by changing what to eat (diet diversification). For example, we ate beans and yams which we normally do not eat as staple foods. We also sold more fish to earn income in order to purchase staple food,” farmers in Old Maula said.

Men and women were affected by food shortages in different ways. Women and children were said to have been more affected in the northern region whereas in the southern region, farmers said men, women and children were affected equally.

Gender roles and responsibilities were somewhat challenged during times of food scarcity. The trying times caused families to work together in order to sustain the family. While women were involved in child care and finding the little food they could, men hired themselves as casual labour so as to bring some income for their families.

The women in Mulanje said the men were so weak sometimes they failed to walk and so women also had to come in. Sometimes, the men had to travel to nearby countries (such as Mozambique which is about 30km from Mulanje) to hire themselves out as casual labourers. They would then return with cash and food for their families. During the absence of the men, women had to play both their own roles and those of their husbands.

Although men, women and youth were affected, the extent of the suffering differed in each situation. Women, especially expectant and lactating mothers and children were said to be significantly more affected during difficult periods. In Zomba, the women said they gave birth to very weak babies. One woman said, *“my baby was so thin because there was no food when I was pregnant and even to date this child is still small compared to my other children”*, one woman said. Children under five were said to have been more susceptible to childhood illnesses during periods of food shortage as a result of poor nutrition. Older youth were in a much better situation as they could work for food and go and look for wild fruit and roots to keep them going. Their school attendance was adversely affected during these periods.

The severity of food shortage seems to have been more felt in the southern region than the northern region. In fact, some farmers in Zidyana EPA in Nkhotakota said lack of food was not adverse since they have always grown drought resistant crops such as cassava. The farmers said they are more likely to increase cassava production since cassava has a good market and survives in difficult seasons when other crops fail.

In terms of ranking, cassava was ranked as the primary staple food and cash crop by women farmers in the northern region. It was ranked as primary staple food and second as a cash crop by men farmers on the upper lands of the northern region while it fared poorly against fish, rice and maize among male farmers along the lakeshore area in the same region. Men and youth along Lake Malawi are mostly engaged in fishing than farming.

In the southern region both men and women ranked maize as their primary staple food while cassava was ranked second and third as a cash crop by men and women

respectively. Cassava was generally a crop cherished by rural communities either as food and/or cash crop.

Farmers had divergent views on cassava production trends. Whereas women reported that they have recently intensified cassava production in the southern region, farmers' views were different in the northern region as narrated in the following excerpt from Zidyana farmers in Nkhotakota;

“There has been a decreasing trend in cassava production in the past 5 years because farmers grow more crops now than in the past. The cultivation of rice, maize and other high value crops has been promoted recently by government agencies as a strategy to diversify food production and enhance income to households”.

Other farmers in the same region said the trend was increasing because cassava production is now considered as a business since there is market for cassava products such as makaka (especially true for the southern region). Maula and Zangazanga male farmers of Nkhata Bay and Nkhotakota respectively said they are likely to produce more due to the increasing demand for cassava by various stakeholders as captured in the following:

“In the past cassava was grown almost entirely for food consumed by the household. Cassava growing has increased greatly due to market demand for makaka and project activity such as SARRNET. A good crop because it is low input and buyers come to them e.g. Chibuku Mzuzu,” Maula male farmers said.

“Growing of cassava has increased as a result of the closure of ADMARC where farmers sold maize and rice,” Zangazanga male farmers said.

3.7. Cassava processing groups

Community level processing groups, intermediary processors and estates were identified as the main categories of cassava processing groups across the regions visited. However, Gender and diversity issues identified in this section pertain largely to community level and intermediary processing groups. C:AVA should carry out a gender and diversity audit with the larger intermediary and estate producer groups to cover this in detail as the findings of this study are not comprehensive in this regard.

Small-scale community level processing groups, unlike intermediary and large-scale processors, lacked mechanized equipment needed for production of HQCF as most were found to have traditional processing equipment. Whereas women in the central and northern regions used household knives for peeling cassava, women in the southern region used a ‘*chipalo*’ which was a faster tool to use than knives. Women said the *chipalo* greatly reduces the time they spend peeling cassava. C:AVA should consider introducing this tool to women in other districts in a bid to reduce peeling time spent. Freeing up some time for women might assist them engage in other productive activities.

Although the community level processor groups have mixed membership of men and women, women provided the required labour for processing cassava by virtue of being group members otherwise other women are hired for approximately a dollar a day (MK150). Women were in a sense excluded from joining some processing groups due

to unfavourable (sometimes unrealistic) membership requirements, for example, in Nkhotakota club, members must be able to read and write amongst other requirements. Women were found to have opportunities to become group leaders provided that the group had favourable membership conditions e.g. individual was a well behaved cassava grower.

At intermediary processor level, local women were hired for labour (K150 per day) in cassava processing activities (peeling, cleaning, drying, pounding, packaging) at the processing plants. This gave women an opportunity to earn income, however, as a consequence they were taken away from their productive and reproductive activities and in some cases even from community engagement such as attending social functions (community meetings, funerals, wedding etc). High illiteracy levels among women in rural farming communities have limited women's active participation in mechanized processing of cassava. The processor groups visited reveal that more men are involved in mechanized processing. Firstly, men are preferred for training because they are literate and possess technical knowledge on the operation of machinery that women lack. Secondly, the recruitment criteria by some processor groups require one to be able to read and write hence intimidating and/or disqualifying potential women processors. Other criterion such as leadership experience equally disadvantage women and youth from becoming members. Most of the processing groups visited are managed by men and the machinery operated by men. The processors visited had a majority of female casual employees whereas men were employed in permanent managerial positions. Likewise, in mixed sex processing groups, more males tended to be in leadership positions even if the majority of members were women. Women work long contractual hours without leave of absence (maternity inclusive). The workers spoken to did not have written contracts, which is an issue that needs to be addressed with management. A gender and diversity audit of intermediary processors is imperative to further establish more specific issues of workers.

Apart from toilets, there were no other health precautions and safety facilities at the small-scale processing plants for men and women, an issue requiring urgent addition if HQCF is to be produced. MBS regulations should, at least to some extent, apply to community processors to ensure cassava flour is of high quality and that activities are not contributing to environmental degradation. Intermediary processors visited seemed to have acceptable health and safety precautions such as designated processing areas and running water in place.

The strength of community processors (especially local level) lies in their numbers and ingenuity championed by an inherent drive to improve their livelihoods amidst numerous challenges such as high poverty levels and HIV and AIDS. A majority of the men and women processor groups were self initiated as community's response to HIV and AIDS in their communities prior to government and non-governmental organisation involvement *to improve food security*. For these reasons, despite the lack of proper processing equipment, organized transportation, climate change, poor yields, proper markets, competitive prices, and availability of hydro-power significantly hamper these processors' operations, these groups are more likely to be sustained beyond the life of C: AVA and other programme/projects.

C:AVA will need to address gender and diversity issues if it is to have a positive impact on the lives of men and women and meet its objectives. C:AVA will also need to ensure

equitable accessibility to improved production and processing technologies to reduce women's labour burden; disseminate success stories (translate into local language as much as possible); support field visits to learn and exchange experiences (encourage women to travel since they have restricted mobility); develop gender sensitive monitoring and evaluation tools, develop and/or strengthen key stakeholders knowledge and skills (in gender audits, gender mainstreaming, gender analysis, gender planning and budgeting); increase knowledge on intra-household gender relations and generate detailed gender sensitive data for planning among other strategies if the project is to positively impact the lives of men and women and meet its objectives.

Table 13: Summary of producers' strengths, weaknesses and needs

Strengths	Weaknesses	External Constraints	Needs identified (e.g. information, training, technology)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Abundance of land and members already have fields especially in the northern region ➤ Access to processing equipment e.g. hammer mills are available in the areas ➤ Availability of cassava for processing ➤ Availability of planting materials (varieties of planting materials is available from research and local seed suppliers) ➤ Commitment of group meeting ➤ Good will to continue with group work ➤ Group strength (able to attract new members, hold regular meeting) ➤ Hardworking and dedication of farmers and workers ➤ Readily available market ➤ Technical knowledge of cassava production 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Diseases ➤ Failure to process all year round ➤ Health and safety precautions not in place e.g. bathrooms, protective wear, uniforms, ear plugs ➤ High costs of renting land (MK15,000 and MK30,000 per 1 ha of land) ➤ High poverty levels of members ➤ Inadequate income for field cultivation (hiring labour to help utilise larger areas) ➤ Individual expectations ➤ Lack of group commitment ➤ Limited capital for investment ➤ Location of group oven was not good idea for some members (it was at one group member's house) ➤ Low access to lands ➤ Low cassava prices ➤ Low cassava yields ➤ Poor access to market ➤ Poor packaging ➤ Scarcity of water in some communities is a challenge to processing HQCF ➤ Shortage of roots for processing at intermediary and estate level ➤ Some groups have old 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cassava pests – e.g. mealy bug • Cassava seen as an inferior crop • Climate changes affecting cassava production • Natural disasters e.g. drought, famine, floods • Lack of capital • Lack of clean planting materials • Lack of market for cassava products • Lack of processing machines e.g. drying facilities • Limited land holding in the southern region • Lack of marketing knowledge and information • Thefts (especially fresh roots still in the fields) • Untrained (demotivated) extension staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to credit • Access to group land • Awareness raising on cassava processors • Cement to improve soaking pits for cassava fermentation • Exchange visits to provide them exposure to what others are doing • Expand storage space • Find market for cassava residues e.g. waste product (no one buys it at the moment, although they have sent samples to some areas for livestock feed but have no feedback yet on it). • Group taught how to develop a constitution • Information – new information on latest technology • Introducing a new HQCF market, which some of them might benefit from • Linkage creation e.g. producing groups in the regions • Provision of water e.g. borehole • Provisions of high yielding improved varieties • Technology – increase access to new processing technologies • Training in business management, extraction methods, machine operation, factory

	<p>members so some activities are difficult to implement e.g. some member selling of buns</p> <p>➤ Transport challenges e.g. don't have a big truck for deliveries</p>		<p>operations, packing methods, bakery operations, business skills, group dynamics, production and processing (all aspects of value addition), marketing, how to make starch production, how to bake bread</p>
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3.8. Gender, diversity and communication

Knowledge and information is passed from generation to generation mostly through formal and informal channels. Information is accessed through family members, friends and extension workers (government and non-governmental staff); however there are different sources of information for men and women across the regions visited.

The main technology used to access information among the rural communities visited is radio and mobile phones. However, this is more prominent among men as the numbers of women with access to radio and phones is considerably lower than that of men and access across the regions varies quite significantly.

The communities visited in the southern region (Mulanje and Zomba) estimated that between five and ten percent of households had a mobile phone, in comparison to between 20 and 50 percent and 40 to 50 percent of households in the northern region of Nkhotakota and Nkhata Bay respectively. Women had access to less than a third of the number of mobile phones that men and youth owned. In the southern region, namely Zomba, six men were said to have mobile phones as opposed to one woman who was reported to have a mobile phone (the mobile was not even functional at the time of the interview). In Nkhata Bay, seven men (in a group of ten) had mobile phones, whereas only five women had phones in a group of 13. Women said they could however buy airtime and use someone's phone if they urgently needed to.

Radio ownership also appeared to be lower in the southern communities, ranging from 6 households to around 50 percent of households in Mliwasa village; compared to between 25 and 85 percent in Nkhotakota and somewhere around 60 to 80 percent in Gamuti village in Nkhata Bay district. Due to the overload of roles and responsibilities on women, very few of them ever seriously listen to radio. In Gamuti village in Nkhata Bay, for example, 3 out of 10 women interviewed listened to radio, whereas 6 men in the same community had listened to radio in the last week. In comparison to men and boys, women and girls have less access to market and technical information largely due to less access to radio, TV, mobile phones and less mobility outside the village. High illiteracy levels among women in rural farming communities also disadvantages women from accessing information. Men accessed information mainly from radio, meetings, mobile phone while women acquired information from government extension, non-governmental organizations, friends and relations. Generally men and youth were reported to have more control over mobile phones and radios than women. Women in Zidyana EPA in Nkhotakota said, *"All the radios belong to the husbands."*

Televisions are a scarce commodity in the rural communities visited. Farmers interviewed in Mulanje for example, said there was only one man with a TV and access was restricted to his family. Farmers in Zomba said there was a male youth with a TV in

the community who would charge people to watch action movies at MK10 per show. Male farmers in Nkhata Bay (Gamuti) said 5 percent of the village had TVs and there was one used for entertainment and whoever went to watch paid MK40 per visit.

There was virtually no internet connection among farmers visited across the regions and this was unfortunately also true for most of the government extension officers visited. Of the agricultural offices visited, only the DADO in Mulanje had access to internet. The DADO in Nkhata Bay said he has internet at his residence. It is however envisaged that there will be changes in the area of information, communication and technology (ICT) in that Malawi now has a draft ICT policy in place. The purpose of the ICT Policy is to provide a framework for deployment, exploitation and development of ICT to support the process of accelerated socio-economic development in Malawi (Government of Malawi official website).

3.9. Factors promoting/ discouraging participation of women and the poor

Factors promoting and discouraging participation of women and the poor in cassava production and processing are highlighted in **table 14**.

Table 14: Factors promoting/ discouraging participation of women and the poor

Factors promoting participation of women and the poor	Factors discouraging participation of women and the poor
<p>Not a lot of work: cassava is an easy crop which does not demand too much labour (especially after planting); it doesn't require frequent weeding and often survives without pesticides and/or fertilizers. Women and the poor can therefore easily farm cassava and have food in drought periods.</p>	<p>Land clearance and tillage sometimes discourages women and the poor from producing cassava in large quantities especially for sale.</p>
<p>Cassava is an available food crop which women and the poor can consume as raw fresh roots, cooked fresh roots, fermented and unfermented flours, roasted cassava granules, cooked cassava grates and leaves as vegetable either boiled without/or in oil and/or groundnut butter. Due to its ability to withstand prolonged dry spells, cassava is available even during shocks so the poor and vulnerable women have food for their families.</p>	<p>Outbreaks of diseases and pest infestation in some seasons have discouraged women farmers and the poor from participating in cassava production due to inaccessible pesticides and knowledge of disease management. The vulnerable lack the income to purchase the pesticides across the three regions visited.</p>
<p>Women have simple man-made technology for cultivation (hand hoe) and processing cassava such as chippers 'chipalo' and household knives. Although labour-intensive, women farmers and the poor are able to process enough for consumption.</p>	<p>Women and the poor spend a long time on processing and this prevents them from participating in other productive activities.</p>
<p>Cassava is both a major food and cash crop in Malawi. Findings show that cassava is the primary staple in the northern region while it is rated as the second staple food in the southern region.</p> <p>Cassava is a 'hunger' crop that helps farmers when maize is in short cassava.</p>	<p>Lack of storage facilities (women said they kept their dried cassava, for example, in the bedroom).</p>

Soils are good in the northern regions and lake shore lands are moist most of the year making it possible for farmers there to produce cassava throughout the year,	Floods discouraged farmers from growing more cassava along the shores of Lake Malawi
Large areas for cassava cultivation in the northern parts e.g. Nkata Bay and Mzimba. Average land holding is hectare and families are able to produce enough food for consumption and sale.	Limited land for cultivation in the southern parts. Average land holding is 0.4-0.5 hectare in this region is a constraint to crop production, especially for both food and sale. Some categories of women and the poor such as divorced, widowed women and men and single men had limited access to land especially in patrilineal north.
Available market of end users. Whether fresh or dry, whole or processed, cassava has a ready market in the community and in surrounding towns. A vendor from Mulanje said he sent 4 tonne trucks into nearby Blantyre weekly.	Lack of corporate marketing of cassava deprives farmers the power to bargain for good prices. Women lack the ability to make reasonable profit on their produce as a result. Low prices ultimately discourage the poor from producing for sale.
Presence of extension services in the district albeit its inability to cater for all farmer's needs. Expertise is available in pre-harvest management including access to superior varieties, post-harvest management e.g. technologies, group formation, development of business skills, gender and diversity assessment and response.	Lack of clean and improved hybrid planting material. The poor tended to have more of the low yielding traditional varieties. Often times these varieties are bitter.
Cassava is an easy crop to store , some varieties can be stored in the ground until when needed	Stealing of cassava crop is common in some areas. This discourages farmers from growing more
Women are generally hard-working and have the family welfare above their own. This motives them to be hardworking	Women were prevented from participating in group activities by their husbands . Women also have less mobility outside their community so they often lack exposure to new technologies and information which could empower them.
Women are good at working in groups and so they can be able to repay back loans. Some of the groups have women in key leadership positions which could further be enhanced.	Lack of access to credit facilities is a discouraging factor. The poor can not produce more due to limited capital for investment.

3.10. Changes that would create greater gender equality and wider access to opportunities and benefits from cassava production, processing and marketing.

Respondents across the regions gave some suggestions of changes that would create greater gender equality and wider access to opportunities and benefits from cassava production, processing and marketing in Malawi. Key changes suggested hinge on community gender awareness and sensitization, challenging cultural norms and practices.

In the northern region, Respondents in Old Maula (Gamuti village in Nkhata Bay) suggested the following activities:

- *Sensitisation on gender and development through radio, knowledge sharing and training*
- *Exchange visits to other areas so that we see how they live*
- *Open dialogue between men and women at household and village levels*
- *Gender training – this training shouldn't just target women but both men and women (joint meetings).*

In the same region, respondents from Zidyana EPA in Nkhotakota had other positive suggestions for gender equality. They said there was need for the following to happen if greater gender equality was to be achieved:

- *Being transparent (referring to men and women being able to dialogue)*
- *Combinations of men and women in clubs*
- *Disregarding political and religious differences*
- *Women should have the power to progress to higher positions (there very few women in chairperson positions)*

In the southern region, respondents equally gave indications of how gender equality could be achieved. Women farmers of Tiyamike group in Mulanje said there was an urgent need for civic education because gender issues are better known in the urban areas. One woman said: *“what we know is that gender is when women put on trouser but we don't understand any more than that”*.

Tiyamike farmers also suggested that combination of men and women in a mixed group was a good idea in promoting gender equality so that men and women learn to work together as was also suggested by farmers in Zidyana EPA. There was a general feeling that same sex groups were not fostering gender equality but perpetuating inequality since men and women were not intermingling allowing for knowledge sharing.

DAO women farmers in Zomba thought gender equality could be achieved through gender awareness and sensitisation as can be deduced from the following excerpt:

“Sensitisation by government through radio programmes or different stakeholders, a number of men are quite lazy so perhaps it would help if they hear it from an outside source perhaps from other men, then they might be ashamed that they are leaving everything to the women. If they had access to credit facilities that might help them get people to help them with farm work, then women could have more time at home for their other activities.

If several organisations could come and help the women with credit, that would lessen their field work tasks as they could hire help, which would enable them to have more time to concentrate on marketing and then it wouldn't only men who went to the market. Women too would also like to spend more time away from the home and the field”.

There was an appeal by Zomba women farmers for several stakeholders (not limiting it to government) to be involved creation of credit facilities for communities. The presence of micro loan-institutions targeting women not only as a homogenous group but also as individuals in districts across the regions visited is a good development which C:AVA might wish to explore.

The fact that women are contributing to family income is providing children with an opportunity to attend school. In fact there is no issue with universal primary enrolment in Malawi as described in the country background information. More children (both boys and girls) are in school than was the case in the past because women's income also goes into children's education to make it possible for children to be in school when fathers are unable to afford school requirements.

4. Proposed Gender and Diversity Sensitive Strategies for C:AVA

Equity

1. C:AVA and the selected key stakeholders must ensure that an equitable proportion of the 10,000 beneficiaries are women and youth specifically targeted to participate in pre- and post production of cassava.

Labour saving technology

2. Women should not be relegated to cassava planting, harvesting and processing which is non-mechanized. The notion that illiterate women are unable to understand must be challenged and time taken to properly teach women how to use machinery instead of getting it only to men who ultimately will control it and deny women profit for their hard earn work. The project should deliberately ensure equitable access to improved production and processing technologies to reduce women's labour burden;
3. C:AVA should consider introducing this tool to women in other districts in a bid to reduce peeling time spent. Freeing up some time for women might assist them engage in other productive activities.

Awareness raising

4. C:AVA with AGRESSO and non governmental organizations strong in gender focus should embark on community gender awareness and sensitization (to counter communities' misconception of gender).

Gender planning, monitoring and learning

5. C:AVA should develop gender sensitive monitoring and evaluation tools, develop and/or strengthen key stakeholders knowledge and skills (in gender audit, gender mainstreaming, gender analysis, gender planning and budgeting);
6. The project needs to collect sex disaggregated baseline data in order to evaluate the project impact and effectiveness for men, women and youth;
7. Increase knowledge on intra-household gender relations and generate detailed gender sensitive data for planning among other strategies.

Building local capacity

8. C:AVA should consider working with existing farmers and processor groups since they are committed and hardworking. Given the three-year project lifeline, setting up new groups might jeopardise the implementation of project objectives. The groups need to be equipped with new processing, marketing and management skills

aimed at sustaining profitable businesses measured through increased incomes and yields;

9. Training for farmers and processors should be needs-driven and target men, women and youth. Refer to table 13 for the comprehensive list of needs identified by farmers. The training must be gender inclusive at all costs;
10. Support field visits to learn and exchange experiences (encourage women and youth to travel since they have restricted mobility). The project should provide some incentives e.g. processing equipment or a per diem to encourage women to travel.
11. Information can be passed using the principle used in Training of Trainers programmes. Because most rural women have limited education, it is essential for information to be verbal and not written. Therefore ‘telling one’s story’ verbally to women could work effectively in information dissemination. After training women who receive the information must then commit to telling another person, who will tell another and so on. C:AVA should consider using this technique to pass information to empower women in cassava processing.
12. C:AVA should support exchange visits by trainer of trainers for key stakeholders (farmers, processors and service providers) to learn from the Nigerian (and others) experience for possible replication in Malawi.
13. With the presence of the national gender policy (district gender strategies feed into the national policy), the district AGRESSO are strategically placed to work with women farmers and challenge stereotypes in cassava processes. It is important for C:AVA to work with these officers notwithstanding their need for additional gender training.

Access to credit

14. The project should aim at assisting or creating linkages between farmer and processor groups to credit loaning facilities such as Blue, FITSE, Pride Malawi, Micro loan foundation, Malawi Rural Finance Company, NBS and others.

Communication

15. C:AVA must endeavour to disseminate success stories on cassava processes (translate into local language as much as possible);
16. Work on an effective media of communication which will target men, women and youth e.g. how best will C:AVA ensure information can get to these categories of people efficiently? Whereas it is not hard to get men, women are hard to reach and deliberate effort therefore needs to be taken to reach them where they can be easily found. Women, for example, spend several hours at water points, at health facilities, at the garden and at religious gatherings. C:AVA should consider opportunities to reach them at such foras.
17. C:AVA should consider collaborating with other stakeholders who have used technology like mobile phones for information dissemination. The project could work with IDEAA which seems to have done a considerably amount of work in the northern region. The challenge would be to motivate women to have access to mobile phones (perhaps with an incentive, women might be motivated to acquire mobiles). Mobile service providers like ZAIN can be approached to promote a particular ‘easy’ handset targeting women so that they also benefit from the project;

18. Radio programs need to target women –C:AVA needs to improve access to radio for women. There are perhaps opportunities in partnering with a free radio association, forming radio listening clubs. It is important that radio programs are aired at convenient times for women, such as when they are at home catching up with some rest and/or when they are washing plates. This would be between 3pm and 5pm. There is need for women to be taught the value of radios for when asked what they thought of being allowed to take the radio to the field to listen to while they worked, Tiyamike women thought the idea simply hilarious;
19. The information, education and communication component of C:AVA must, in collaboration with the Ministry of Gender and Development and Child Development, develop gender sensitive messages encouraging men, women and youth to participate in cassava processes e.g. through radio advertisements on popular and local radio stations, embarking on branding of *chitenge*¹¹ material, pencils, pens, soccer balls etc with C:AVA messages. This might also necessitate branding HQCF products on the local market.

5. Conclusion

This report has raised pertinent gender and diversity issues arising from the study undertaken in Malawi. These gender diversity issues are contextual and it is therefore important to address them in the context in which they are raised in order to bring meaning change to the communities affected. C:AVA needs to deliberately ensure equitable access to improved production and processing technologies to reduce women's labour burden; disseminate success stories (translate into local language as much as possible); support field visits to learn and exchange experiences (encourage women to travel since they have restricted mobility); develop gender sensitive monitoring and evaluation tools, develop and/or strengthen key stakeholders knowledge and skills (in gender audit, gender mainstreaming, gender analysis, gender planning and budgeting); increase knowledge on intra-household gender relations and generate detailed gender sensitive data for planning among other strategies.

It is envisaged that addressing the issues raised in this report will contribute towards creating an equitable and positive impact on the livelihoods of the men, women and youth whom C:AVA will be targeting.

¹¹ Chitenge or 'wrapper' is a cotton fabric (material) commonly worn by women in Malawi and in other sub-Saharan countries. It is an important part of a woman's daily attire (especially among poor communities). It is usually wrapped around the waist or used to carry a baby/crops/grass and a variety of other stuff on the back. Chitenge is sometimes also used as a head gear.

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APPENDICES

1. Southern region/Mulanje & Zomba districts livelihood activities

EPA	Msikawanjala [M1]	Msikawanjala [2a]	Msikawanjala [2b]	Malosa [Z1]
Name of group	James Cassava Seed Multiplication	Tiyamike	Tiyamike	DAO
Sex	Mixed	Mixed	Female	Female
Name of community	James village	Matiya village	Matiya village	Mliwasa village
Men's livelihood activities	1. Farming 2. Trading 3. Artisans	1. Farming 2. Rearing chicken and goats 3. small businesses Trade 4. Teachers	1. Farming 2. House building 3. Casual labour	1. Farming 2. Piece work e.g. guarding shops at business centre 3. Charcoal making 4. Building homes 5. Brick making 6. Pit latrine construction
Women's livelihood activities.	1. Farming 2. Trading	1. Farming 2. Childcare 3. Homecare 4. Drawing water	1. Farming 2. Childcare 3. Homecare 4. Drawing water	1. Farming 2. Businesses (e.g. selling cassava, bananas, sugar cane, groundnuts, rice, sweet potatoes) 3. Cooking fritters & scones 4. beer brewing
Male youth livelihood activities	Not reported	Same as men's activities	1. Farming 2. Small businesses (e.g. selling sweet potatoes) 3. Casual labour (e.g. pit latrine construction) 4. Collection of fuel wood 5. Helping parents cook	1. Piece work/ casual labour 2. Going to get stones from quarry 3. Farming 4. Helping mother with small businesses
Female youth livelihood activities				

2. Central region/ Nkhotakota district livelihood activities

Name of EPA	Mphonda [KK1]	Zidyana [KK2]	Zidyana [KK3]	Mkunga [KK4a]
Name of group	Kachiya Cassava Club	FAO farmer groups	FAO farmer groups	AEDO and Village headman
Sex	Mixed	Male	Female	Male
Name of community	Tambala village	Alime, Mapala Chibotera	Alime, Mapala Chibotera	Zangazanga village
Men's livelihood activities	1.Farming 2.Trading	1..Farming 2. Trading 3.Artisans 4.Fishing	1.Farming 2.Casual labour 3.Business e.g. selling fish 4. Fishing 5. Moulding bricks 6. Selling firewood	1.Farming 2.Casual labour on sugar estates 3.Fishing 4.Traditional dances –watching and performing
Women's livelihood activities	1.farming 2.Trading		1.Farming 2.Casual labour 3.Irrigation of vegetable and maize gardens 4.Chicken keeping 5.Small businesses (e.g. selling veggies, firewood, tomatoes, groundnuts, sweet cassava and fish)	1.Farming 2.Selling tomatoes and vegetables 3.Buying and selling fish
Male youth livelihood activities	Not reported	Not reported	1.Farming 2.Casual labour 3.Fishing) 4. Small business (e.g. selling fish, small packs of biscuits, tobacco etc)	Not reported
Female youth activities	Not reported	Not reported	1.Small business (e.g. selling tomatoes, firewood etc) 2.Casual labour working on peoples' fields 3.Farming	Not reported

3. Northern region/ Nkhata Bay district main livelihood activities

Name of EPA	Chintenche [N1]	Chintenche [N2]	Chintenche [N5a]	Chintenche [N5a]
Name of group	Old Maula farmers	Old Maula farmers	Village headman	Village head woman
Sex	Female	Male	Male	Female
Name of community	Gamuti village	Gamuti village	Gamuti village	Damba Chirole
Men's livelihood activities	1.Farming 2.Small businesses e.g. selling fish, cassava and maize 3.Casual labour 4.Artisan e.g. carpentry	1.Farming 2.Trading 3.Labouring 4.Bricklaying	1.Farming 2.Irrigation 3.Goat keeping 4. Grocery trade	1.Cassava growing and processing 2.Irrigation 3.Fish trade
Women's livelihood activities	1.Farming 2.Small businesses e.g. selling cassava, beans, maize, rice, fritters, and tomatoes 3.Fishing		Farming and processing Trading fish	1.Cassava growing and processing 2.Irrigation 3.fish trade
Male youth livelihood activities	Boys usually assist their fathers and are generally told what to do by their parents Sometimes older boys engage in their own small businesses to raise income		Sawing timber	Trading fish
Female youth activities	Girls assist their mothers and fathers with their chores. Girls like boys are usually told what to do by their parents			

4. Malawi statistics

Population	13.1 million
Population annual growth rate	2.1%
Urban population	18%
Major ethnic and linguistic groups	Chewa, Nyanja, Tumbuka, Yao, Lomwe, Sena, Tonga, Ngoni, Ngonde, Asian, European
Languages	Chichewa 57.2% (official), Chinyanja 12.8%, Chiyao 10.1%, Chitumbuka 9.5%, Chisena 2.7%, Chilomwe 2.4%, Chitonga 1.7%, other 3.6%
Religion	Christian 79.9%, Muslim 12.8%, other 3%, none 4.3%
Life expectancy (at birth)	47 years
Infant mortality (under one)	76 per 1,000 live births
Under five mortality	120 per 1,000 live births
Maternal mortality rate	980 per 100,000 live births
Adult HIV prevalence rate (ages 15-49)	14.1%
Percentage population with access to safe drinking water	73%
Adult literacy rate	64%
Gross Domestic Product (US\$ billions)	2.2
Gross National Income (GNI) per capita (US\$)	170
Proportion of population living on below \$1 a day	21%

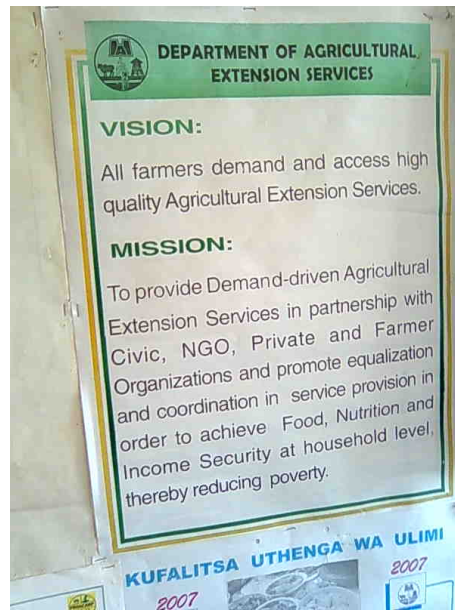
Source: World Bank, CIA World Fact book and UNICEF's State of the World's Children 2008

5. Total Population by Sex, Region and District, 2008

Region and District	Total	Male	Female
Malawi	13,066,320	6,365,771	6,700,549
Northern Region	1,698,502	824,057	874,445
Chitipa	179,072	86,152	92,920
Karonga	272,789	131,882	140,907
Nkhata BAY	2 13,779	104,541	109,238
Rumphi	169,112	83,051	86,061
Mzimba	724,873	349,150	375,723
Mzuzu city	128,432	64,341	64,091
Likoma	10,445	4,940	5,505
Central region	5,491,034	2,695,950	2,795,084
Kasungu	6 16,085	306,768	309,317
Nkhota kota	3 01,868	149,721	152,147
Ntchisi	224,098	109,349	114,749
Dowa	556,678	272,732	283,946
Salima	340,327	166,779	173,548
Lilongwe Rural	1,228,146	599,955	628,191
Lilongwe City	669,021	339,030	329,991
Mchinji 456,558	Mchinji 456,558	227,373	229,185
Dedza	623,789	297,676	326,113
Ntcheu	474,464	226,567	247,897
Southern Region	5,876,784	2,845,764	3,031,020
Mangochi 803,602	Mangochi 803,602	387,072	416,530
Machinga	488,996	234,747	254,249
Zomba Rural	583,167	279,489	303,678
Zomba City	8 7,366	44,670	42,696
Chiradzulu	290,946	137,194	153,752
Blantyre Rural	338,047	164,546	173,501
Blantyre City	661,444	337,655	323,789
Mwanza 9 4,476	Mwanza 9 4,476	45,672	48,804
Thyolo 587,455	587,455	279,979	307,476
Mulanje	525,429	247,391	278,038
Mwanza	9 4,476	45,672	48,804
Thyolo	587,455	279,979	307,476
Phalombe	313,227	149,471	163,756
Chikwawa	438,895	217,981	220,914
Nsanje	238,089	115,371	122,718
Balaka 316,748	Balaka 316,748	151,637	165,111
Neno 108,897	Neno 108,897	52,889	56,008

Source: National Statistics office 2008

6. Selected Pictures



Vision of department of agricultural extension services



Sticker-Mzimba DADO offices



Head woman in Mulanje

4.



Tiyamike farmers in Mulanje



Activity profile of Old Maula