



## **RAPID GENDER ANALYSIS OF DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT IN MALAWI**



**APRIL 2022**

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## FOREWORD

Agriculture is an important sector of the economy of Malawi. It contributes significantly to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), employment and national export earnings. Agriculture in Malawi is highly dependent on rainfall. However, rainfall pattern is erratic and largely unpredictable, especially in recent times. This combination of high dependence on rainfed agriculture with increasingly erratic rainfall leaves household livelihoods and the national economy highly vulnerable to weather shocks. These shocks in turn, play a significant role in increasing poverty of rural and urban households and with major climate-related disasters having a substantial impact on the national economy.

About 84% of Malawi's population live in rural areas and are dependent on subsistence farming, largely done by women. Despite that no sector of society is unaffected; women bear the most brunt of climate change. Unpredictable weather events, erratic rains and sometimes floods result into bad or total failure of crop yields, leading to food insecurity affecting men, women and their children. However, being a social responsibility for women to provide food for their household, they end up bearing the biggest weight at the scenes of their starving children.

I wish to underscore that women's empowerment and improvements in gender relations have proven impacts on productivity, income generation, diversification, and improved decision making on the use of income and resources to meet household consumption and nutrition, a factor that boosts resilience to climate change.

In order to improve its resilience to natural disasters, the Government of Malawi has made strides towards building long-term resilience against food insecurity and addressing chronic risks. It has enacted policies and strategies to support reduction of disaster risk and effectively manage the impact of disasters when they occur. However, the framework of gender in disaster risk management was lacking to properly contextualize the extent of gender mainstreaming.

Therefore, the support from the African Risk Capacity (ARC) for the in-depth gender analysis will help to better understand the specific challenges of women, men, boys and girls in Disaster Risk Management. The gender analysis will also help understand the barriers to women's empowerment and participation in DRM and the opportunities for policy articulation to strengthen the integration of gender equality into Disaster Risk Management planning and implementation processes through the advancement of recommendations to gender transformative approaches to ensure gender equality for vulnerable men and women.

Finally, I urge all of us to implement the recommendations from this gender analysis to ensure that gender mainstreaming in disaster risk management is achieved.

Sandram C.Y. Maweru  
**Secretary for Agriculture**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Africa Risk Capacity (ARC) conducted this Rapid Gender Assessment (RGA) to identify constraints that hinder the involvement of women and girls and other vulnerable groups in Disaster Risk Management (DRM) preparedness and response in Malawi. The RGA was carried out in March 2022. The study selected communities that are frequently affected by natural disasters in Balaka and Chikwawa districts in southern Malawi. Primary data was collected through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs). The FGDs targeted community members of all statuses including married men, married women, female and male headed households, the youth, persons with disabilities, and the elderly among others. The KIIs targeted key stakeholders in DRM in the country that included the Department of Disaster Management Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Gender, Economic Planning and Development Department, Balaka and Chikwawa District Councils, Civil Society, and Area Development Committees (ADCs), and development partners such as United Nations Development Program (UNDP), UN Women, and World Food Program (WFP),

Secondary data was collected through reviews of documents on disaster management and gender in Malawi that were identified in consultation with the ARC Gender team, the ARC Government Coordinator for Malawi, and the reference group for this assignment. Some of the key documents which were reviewed include policy documents on disaster and gender respectively, ARC Gender Strategy, ARC TWG progress reports, and survey reports.

This RGA has found that there are existing structural and systematic barriers that impede the participation of women, the youth, and persons with disabilities in disaster risk management in Malawi. The structural and systematic barriers are rooted in the patriarchal social norms that discriminate against women and other vulnerable populations in terms of participation, division of labour and control of assets and decisions. Overall, this affects the capacity of women and men to participate in DRM processes including responding, coping, and recovering from disasters. In addition, the assessment has found out that the prevailing DRM policy and institutional practices in Malawi are largely gender blind leading to solutions being overly technocratic with very little consideration for gender issues. Generally, commitment to gender issues is implicit and is hardly applied. As a result, there are no protocols to guide mainstreaming of gender through appropriate gender analysis, gender budgeting, and checklists to support implementation structures on gender integration across all stages of disaster risk management. Further, the RGA has established that funding for gender mainstreaming in DRM is adhoc, inconsistent, and very limited.

To address the identified gaps, the following are some of the key recommendations made

- DoDMA in collaboration with the Ministry of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare should build innovative partnerships with community-based women's groups/organizations to help raise awareness for gender equality and advocate for the inclusion of women in ACPC and VCPC leadership structures.

- Develop and institutionalize gender mainstreaming guidelines and assessment tools to help carry out gender sensitive vulnerability, risk, and capacity assessments, collect gender specific data and statistics on the impact of disasters, and develop gender sensitive indicators to monitor and measure progress.
- Carry out periodic trainings targeting DoDMA staff and DRM structures at all levels to build institutional and individual capacity for mainstreaming gender in DRM. All trainings should use Gender Transformative Conscious Practice Tools and Frameworks.
- Strengthen the leadership role of the Department of Gender in the Ministry responsible for Gender in mainstreaming gender in Disaster Risk Management across all DRM structures. This should also include training of Department of Gender staff in DRM to help strengthen their understanding of disaster prevention, response, and recovery for effective mainstreaming of gender in the DRM cycle.
- Institutionalise the collection and use of disability, age, and sex disaggregated data to inform planning in all stages of the DRM cycle.
- Lobby and advocate for a 5 percent allocation of the proposed disaster fund to support the institutionalization and mainstreaming of gender in DRM at all levels.
- Critically analyze women’s and men’s preferences in the use of available channels for early warning information and ensure variability and flexibility in the identified channels to be as inclusive as possible.
- Expedite the enactment of the Disaster Risk Management bill. In addition, review and align existing DRM policies and strategies to the National Gender Policy and other international Frameworks that promote gender inclusion in DRM
- Integrate Rapid Gender Analysis in recovery assessment. The recovery assessments should be inclusive, participatory, and rights based so that identified recovery needs and priorities reflect contextual gendered realities.
- Fastrack the establishment of a Fund to support gender responsive DRM

## **ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

ACPC	Area Civil Protection Committee
ADC	Area Development Committee
ARC	African Risk Capacity
CBO	Community Based Organization
CSO	Civil Society Organization
COVID -19	Coronavirus
DCPC	District Civil Protection Committee
DGO	District Gender Officer
DRF	Disaster Risk Financing
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
DPD	Director of Planning and Development
DODMA	Department of Disaster Management Affairs
FDG	Focus Group Discussion
GA	Gender Analysis
GBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
KII	Key Informant Interview
MGDS	Malawi Growth and Development Strategy
NCCRS	National Climate Change Response Strategy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TA	Traditional Authority
TWG	Technical Working Group
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	The United Nations International Children's Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
VCPC	Village Civil Protection Committee
VDC	Village Development Committee
VSL	Village Savings and Loans



WFP World Food Programme  
WRO Women Rights Organisation

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE RAPID GENDER ANALYSIS

Malawi is highly vulnerable to the impacts of extreme weather events. Over the past 5 decades, Malawi has experienced more than 19 major floods and 7 droughts<sup>1</sup>. The impact, frequency, and spread of the natural disasters in the country have intensified in the recent past and are likely to worsen with climate change, compounded by other factors, such as population growth and environmental degradation<sup>2</sup>. These disaster events have had a significant impact on people's lives, livelihoods, and socioeconomic infrastructure in the affected areas, pushing many people into poverty and food insecurity.

Malawi was the first country to sign a Pre-Participation MoU with the African Risk Capacity (ARC) Agency in August 2012 to carry out technical work followed by participation in the ARC drought insurance risk pool. The Ministry of Agriculture is the ARC Programme coordinating institution within government, under the Agricultural Risk Management Framework. The ARC in-Country Technical Working Group (TWG) is composed of experts from various government ministries and departments as well as partner organizations involved in food security, disaster risk management, and financing. The government departments lead the various vital components (including gender) of the ARC workstreams under the coordination of the Ministry of Agriculture.

In 2015, the Government of Malawi signed a Drought Insurance Policy from ARC to cover its 2015/16 agricultural season. At the end of the season, the Insurance Policy triggered a pay out of USD 8.1 million, which was paid to the Government in January 2017, to complement a response program that the Government and its partners were implementing. Malawi's return to the ARC drought risk pool from the 2020/21 agricultural season, with premium support from both KfW/BMZ and IFAD Programme for Rural Irrigation Development (PRIDE) is in line with the country's 2019-2024 Disaster Risk Financing (DRF) Strategy, which aims to consider other key financial instruments to complement government efforts, towards reducing impacts of climate and weather variability on the vulnerable population.

The occurrence of disasters, especially those that are climate-induced, is increasing worldwide, making it more challenging to achieve sustainable development agenda. Due to the frequency and severity of those disasters, there is an increase in resource scarcity, undermining livelihoods and increasing food insecurity, pressures for migration, forced displacement, and the cost of building resilience at the country level. The occurrence of disasters points to potential future deterioration, which is likely to induce adverse effects on agricultural production, access to energy, clean air, water, and sanitation.

Climate change, economic uncertainties, new pandemics, and food shortages are coming together in a way that evokes considerable concern. Women, men, girls, and boys are

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<sup>1</sup> Malawi 2019 Floods Post Disaster Needs Assessment Report

<sup>2</sup> National Disaster Recovery Framework (2017)

being affected differently due to gender inequalities. There are gender-based vulnerabilities to disasters which do not emanate from a single factor but reflect historical and culturally specific patterns of social institutions, culture and personal lives<sup>3</sup>. Gender equity plays a pivotal role in building resilience and adaptation pathways in disaster risk management.

The Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS) III recognise disaster risk management and disaster risk reduction as key focus areas for achieving sustainable economic growth<sup>4</sup>. The Government of Malawi has established the Department of Disaster Management Affairs (DoDMA) to coordinate the implementation of disaster risk management programmes in the country as a way of improving and safeguarding the quality of life of Malawians especially those vulnerable to disasters<sup>5</sup>. In addition, The Malawi Government established the Ministry of Gender, Community Development, and Social Welfare to promote social economic empowerment and protection of women and children. Gender equality is included as one of the fundamental principles of national policies in the Constitution of the Republic of Malawi<sup>6</sup>. Among other key policies on addressing gender inequalities across the sectors including disaster risk management, the Malawi Government developed a National Gender Policy to raise awareness of gender matters and help mainstream gender in the national development process. In 2013, the Gender Equality Act was passed to promote gender equality, equal integration, influence, empowerment, dignity, and opportunities, for men and women in all functions of society<sup>7</sup>.

To enable a full understanding of how best gender has been mainstreamed in disaster risk management and identify existing gaps and opportunities, a Rapid Gender Analysis (RGA) was commissioned in January 2022. The findings of the RGA will inform the development of Gender Action Plan, Policy Brief on gender and DRM, and a training manual to guide the strengthening of gender mainstreaming in Disaster Risk Management in the country.

## **1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE RGA**

The main objective of the assignment was to identify constraints and challenges that hinder the involvement of vulnerable population especially women and girls in DRM preparedness and response in Malawi.

In addition, the RGA was carried out to identify viable solutions to address the constraints and challenges as well as a mechanism for the sustainable transformation of the DRM approaches towards gender equality and women empowerment.

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<sup>3</sup> African Risk Capacity Gender Strategy and Action Plan (2019).

<sup>4</sup> Malawi Government. The Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS) III: Building a Productive, Competitive and Resilient Nation. Malawi Government; 2017.

<sup>5</sup> Capacity Assessment Study of the Malawi Department of Disaster Management Affairs. Malawi Government (2019).

<sup>6</sup> Republic of Malawi. Constitution of the Republic of Malawi. Lilongwe: The Republic of Malawi; 1994. p. 2–3

<sup>7</sup> Gender Equality Act



*Photo credit: James Chavula*

## **2. DATA COLLECTION METHODS**

The Rapid Gender Analysis used three primary data collection methods: 1) a desk review of secondary sources containing qualitative and quantitative data, 2) stakeholder consultations, and 3) Focus Group Discussions.

### **2.1 DESK REVIEW**

An extensive desk review was conducted to collect secondary data for the Rapid Gender Analysis. In consultation with the ARC Gender team, the ARC Government Coordinator for Malawi, and the reference group for this assignment, the consultant identified key documents on gender and DRM in Malawi and across the region. Some of the reviewed documents include the Malawi Vision 2063, Malawi Growth and Development Strategy III (2017), Disaster Preparedness and Relief Act (199), National Disaster Risk Management Policy (2015), National Resilience Strategy (2018), National Disaster Risk Communication Strategy (2019), National Gender Policy (2015), ARC Gender Strategy, Beijing Platform of Action (1995), Maputo Protocol, Hyogo Framework for Action (2011-2015) and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Management (2015–2030). The desk review helped the consultant to have a deeper understanding of the relevant policy environment context and implementation ethos with particular focus on gender and DRM in the country. See Annex A: Bibliography for a full list of documents reviewed for this analysis.

### **2.2 STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS**

Primary data was collected through in-person stakeholder consultations. Stakeholders were purposively identified based on their knowledge of gender in DRM issues and ARC's work in Malawi respectively. In total, 22 key informant interviews with stakeholders were conducted in March 2022. The interviews were held at both national and district level. At national level, stakeholders included DoDMA, Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Gender, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), CARE International, UN Women, World Food Programme, Christian Aid, and NGO Gender Coordination Network (NGOGCN) among others. All the national level consultations were done virtually. At district level, key stakeholders included the Directorate of Planning and Development, District Social Welfare Office, District Gender Office, District Rehabilitation and Relief Office, Women Rights Organisations, and Area Development Committees (ADCs). See Annex C for a full list of KII Respondents

As part of the consultative process, a reference group chaired by the Department of Gender in the Ministry of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare was

established to provide a platform for key stakeholders to engage in, facilitate and contribute to the RGA process. See Annex D: Reference Group Members

### **2.3 FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS**

Six (6) Focus Group Discussions were conducted in Balaka and Chikwawa districts to collect additional primary data. Participants included representatives ACPCs, representatives of VCPCs, traditional leaders, representatives of WROs, representatives of youth CBOs, people living with disabilities, men, women, and the youth. In each district, three (3) FGDs (one (1) mixed, one (1) women and girls only, and one (1) men and boys only) were conducted with a maximum of 13 participants per group. In total, 78 individuals (44 females and 34 males) participated in the FGDs. A FGD guide was used to facilitate the collection of information. See Annex B for the guide.

### **2.4 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND COVID-19 PREVENTIVE MEASURES**

Oral informed consent was sought from each key informant and FGD participant prior to the interviews. An information sheet was read aloud to the respondents in their respective local languages. All data was anonymized to ensure confidentiality in this report.

COVID-19 infection prevention measures were strictly implemented throughout data collection: social distancing between researchers and respondents was observed; masks were worn; and the team had hand sanitizers during the FGD and KII sessions.

### **2.5 LIMITATIONS**

This RGA conducted FGDs in only two districts when there are more districts in Malawi that are frequently affected by disasters. In addition, only three Traditional Authorities (TAs) across the two districts were involved in the RGA. The sample size is small as such there might be fears that the findings might not be as representative as possible of the views of all disaster affected people in the country. To mitigate this, the RGA complimented the data sources through an extensive literature review and stakeholder consultations. In addition, the RGA triangulated information where possible between data sources to ensure that the RGA findings provide usable insights into the key constraints and challenges that militates against the involvement of vulnerable population especially women and girls in DRM preparedness and response in Malawi.

## 2 DISASTER PROFILE IN MALAWI

Malawi has a population of 17.5 million with a relatively high rural population<sup>8</sup>. Agriculture contributes over 35 percent to the country's GDP<sup>9</sup>. Due to weather conditions associated with climate change and variability, the country is exposed to several natural and human induced hazards. The 2012 Climate Change Vulnerability Index ranks Malawi 9th out of 10 countries as 'extremely at risk' to climate change impacts in the world<sup>10</sup>. In the last 2 decades, the hazards are becoming more frequent and less predictable, with expected rise in intensity<sup>11</sup>. According to DoDMA, the most disaster-prone districts are Karonga, Salima, Nkhota-kota, Rumphu, Nkhata-bay, Mangochi, Dedza, Ntcheu, Balaka, Zomba, Phalombe, Machinga, Blantyre, Chikhwawa and Nsanje<sup>12</sup>.

Between 1979 and 2008, cumulatively 21.7 million people were affected by natural disasters with 2,596 deaths recorded<sup>13</sup>. The recent Tropical Storm Ana that was experienced between 24th and 25th January 2022 affected 994,967 people and displaced 190,429 individuals<sup>14</sup>. Direct losses related to disasters in Malawi have included physical damage to assets comprising buildings, infra structure, industrial plants, standing crops, grain stores, livestock and social infrastructure, and loss of human life and injury<sup>15</sup>. Secondary losses related to disasters have included an impact on GDP, fiscal performance, increased poverty levels and HIV infection<sup>16</sup>.

Weather-related disasters are the most common form of disasters in Malawi<sup>17</sup>. According to JICA, the country has experienced more floods than any other natural disasters<sup>18</sup>. The most flood prone areas are around lakes and rivers, especially the Shire River in the south and around Lake Chiuta and Chilwa in the southeast<sup>19</sup>. While floods previously used to occur every four years in the Lower Shire Valley, recently they have been occurring almost every year. In 2022, the lower shire and other parts of southern Malawi were also

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<sup>8</sup> National Statistical Office, 2018 Malawi Population and Housing Census

<sup>9</sup> World Bank 2018

<sup>10</sup> The CCVI features subnational maps and analysis of climate change vulnerability and the adaptive capacity to combat climate change in 193 countries. Among others, the CCVI takes into consideration exposure to climate change, population concentration, development, natural resources, agriculture dependency and conflict

<sup>11</sup> National Disaster Risk Management Communication Strategy

<sup>12</sup> Malawi National Disaster Profile for 2010

<sup>13</sup> World Bank, 2011

<sup>14</sup> Tropical Storm Ana Situation Report – 2 (As of 15 February 2022)

<sup>15</sup> UNECA, 2015 Assessment report on mainstreaming and implementing disaster risk reduction measures in Malawi.

<sup>16</sup> UNECA, 2015 Assessment report on mainstreaming and implementing disaster risk reduction measures in Malawi

<sup>17</sup> Malawi Red Cross Society, A study on legal preparedness for regulatory issues in international disaster response

<sup>18</sup> JICA Sectoral Position Paper, Disaster Risk Management 2021

<sup>19</sup> Global Risk Data Platform (2010). Maps. Malawi.

<http://preview.grid.unep.ch/index.php?preview=map&lang=eng> viewed on 06.4.2022).

hardly hit by cyclones Ana and Gombe that caused heavy flooding due to a lot of heavy rainfall and strong winds. Approximately 71,716 hectares (ha) of cropped area belonging to 91,016 households were severely affected<sup>20</sup>. The damage also includes damaged roads, loss of livestock and houses, and damaged public and private infrastructure including schools, health facilities and churches.

Apart from floods, earthquakes are also common especially in Karonga, Chitipa, and Salima districts. According to the World Bank, over 1,350 earthquake events were recorded in Malawi between 1964 and 2005<sup>21</sup>. In 2009, the areas were also hit by a sequence of stronger earthquakes ranging between 5.4 to 6.0 on the scale of Richter<sup>22</sup>.

UNDP notes that drought is the second most common natural disaster in Malawi, and heavily impacts food security in many districts. Nearly 70 percent of Malawi's drought-affected population lives in southern Malawi, with Machinga and the lower shire being the worst affected<sup>23</sup>. While drought does not happen every year, its impact on livelihood and the economy is huge<sup>24</sup>. Not only are rural livelihoods affected, but urban households are also vulnerable to food shortages and rising prices<sup>25</sup>. In the last 36 years, Malawi has experienced eight major droughts affecting over 24 million people.

Some regions in Malawi are more at risk for landslides and mudslides after heavy rainfall, particularly the Shire region of the south and the central-western coastal area of Lake Malawi<sup>26</sup>.

Apart from the weather-related disasters, Malawi also suffers from epidemics. Corona Virus and HIV are some of the deadliest of the epidemics that the country has faced this far. In addition, almost every rain season, cholera outbreaks are common with the southern region being the most affected<sup>27</sup>. These epidemics cause devastating loss of lives and disrupt economic stability as they impact so hard on the national budget.

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<sup>20</sup> Malawi Tropical Ana Response. Flash Update No 3. United Nations Malawi

<sup>21</sup> 2010 World Bank Disaster Risk Management Country Note,

<sup>22</sup> UNRC Situation Report 1. Karonga earthquake, Malawi. December 2009

<sup>23</sup> JICA Sectoral Position Paper, Disaster Risk Management

<sup>24</sup> JICA Sectoral Position Paper, Disaster Risk Management

<sup>25</sup> IFPRI Malawi Strategy Support Program (MaSSP) Brief No2

<sup>26</sup> Global Risk Data Platform (2010). Maps. Malawi.

<http://preview.grid.unep.ch/index.php?preview=map&lang=eng> viewed on 06.03.2022)

<sup>27</sup> Evelien Thieme Groen & Carolien Jacobs, 2012 Malawi Risk Mapping



## 4. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS AND FINDINGS

### 4.1 POLICIES, STRUCTURE, AND INSTITUTIONAL PRACTICES

#### 4.1.1 POLICY AND LEGAL FRAMEWORKS

There is no alignment of existing DRM policies with global and regional frameworks that aim to mainstream gender in DRM. Malawi is party to the Hyogo Framework for Action (2011-2015), the Beijing Platform of Action (1995), and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Management (2015–2030) among others. The Sendai Framework, among other things, promotes empowering women to publicly lead and promote gender equitable and universally accessible response, recovery, rehabilitation, and reconstruction. The Hyogo Framework of Action states that “a gender perspective should be integrated into all disaster risk management policies, plans and decision-making processes, including those related to risk assessment, early warning, information management, and education and training.” The Beijing Platform for Action (1995) ensures that women are involved in environmental decision making at all levels, their concerns are integrated in policies and programmes, and establishing ways to assess the impact of development and environmental policies on women. This study has found out that the Disaster Preparedness and Relief Act (1991) is gender blind and is not aligned to these regional and international frameworks. The RGA has further observed that in 2015, the Act was reviewed resulting in a new Disaster Preparedness and Relief bill that is yet to be enacted. One key informant indicated that

*“The consultation process for the new bill was very wide and inclusive. Women Rights Organisations were consulted and from what I know, the bill has addressed most emerging issues in DRM including gender inclusion and disaster risk insurance”*

Overall, there is no framework to protect gender equality in disaster risk management. However, Sections 20 and 41 of the Constitution of Malawi uphold the principle of equal rights for men and women and prohibit any discrimination based on gender or marital status. In 1987, Malawi ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). In addition, it ratified the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa in 2005. As part of domestication of these instruments, Malawi developed a gender policy to strengthen gender mainstreaming and women empowerment at all levels to facilitate attainment of gender equality and equity in Malawi<sup>28</sup>.

The National Gender Policy is silent on the specific involvement of women in disaster risk management issues. The policy states that gender should be mainstreamed in natural resources and the environment however key focus is on recruitment, promotion, and training of staff<sup>29</sup>.

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<sup>28</sup> Malawi National Gender Policy

<sup>29</sup> Malawi National Gender Policy

The National Disaster Risk Management Policy (2015 – 2020) is gender blind. The policy was developed to enhance the mainstreaming of DRM in development planning and programming to integrate DRM into sustainable development<sup>30</sup>. Among other things, the policy seeks to enhance coordination in implementation of DRM programmes and ensure adequate budgetary support for DRM activities in the country. The study has noted that the policy is due for review, and this presents an opportunity for mainstreaming gender and addressing the identified gaps.

The National Resilience Strategy (2018 – 2030) lack clear approaches of how gender equity and inclusion will be achieved, monitored, and reported. The NRS has equity and inclusiveness as one of its guiding principles. It cites that to be effective, resilience interventions will address age and gender specific needs, vulnerabilities and deprivations, and socio-economic inequities of affected people, and be reflected in their design, implementation, monitoring and reporting<sup>31</sup>. The policy was developed to provide guidelines for breaking the cycle of food insecurity in Malawi. The NRS promotes linkages between disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation to improve national resilience to climate change.

The National Disaster Risk Management Communication Strategy (NDRMCS) adopted gender sensitive language and has attempted to identify a wide range of communication channels to help address gendered barriers that women and the youth face in accessing information. However, the lack of sex disaggregation of the targets in the M&E framework renders the NDRMCS weak in terms of tracking, reporting, and addressing gender gaps. In addition, the role of the Ministry of Gender and other Women Rights Organisations (WROs) in the implementation of the NDRMCS is not very clear. The policy was developed to ensure that those exposed to disasters are informed about the risks and are aware of the measures to prevent, mitigate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from these hazards. In addition, the strategy was developed to improve the coordination of stakeholders involved in DRM information and dissemination.

The Disaster Risk Financing Strategy and Implementation Plan (2019) is gender blind. It does not consider structural and socio – cultural dynamics that affect access to and benefit from disaster financing. The strategy is aimed at ensuring that disasters are better anticipated, better prepared for and as well as building better in the aftermath of disasters. With the delays in the enactment of the DRM bill, this strategy is key as it addresses disaster risk financing which is a gap in the other existing disaster policies in the country.

Malawi vision 2063 is progressive and has considered gender issues in the creation of pathways for transforming the nation. The vision 2063 recognises that women and men experience compounded and recurring shocks such as natural [hazard-related] disasters, economic crises, and pandemics hence gender transformative approaches will be

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<sup>30</sup> National Disaster Risk Management Policy (2015 – 2020). Malawi Government

<sup>31</sup> National Resilience Strategy guiding principles – page 19

promoted to reduce gender power imbalances which hinder the economic empowerment of women and men<sup>32</sup>.

The Malawi Growth and Development Strategy III (2017-2022) recognises gender equality and inclusion as key for social and economic development. The strategy recognises that MGDS I and II failed to achieve all goals on gender hence emphasises that in the implementation of MGDS III, different sectors need to work together to mainstream issues of gender and inclusiveness and ensure that these goals are attained<sup>33</sup>.

The National Climate Change Management Policy has included gender as a cross cutting issue. It states that gender considerations should be incorporated in all climate change interventions including adaptation, mitigation, capacity building and technology development and transfer. Its implementation and monitoring strategy outlines priority areas for promoting cross-cutting issues around gender and disadvantaged groups<sup>34</sup>.

### **Summary of Findings/Gaps and Recommendations in Policies and Institutional Arrangement**

	<b>Finding/Gap</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
1	DRM policies and laws are gender blind and not aligned global and international frameworks that promote gender equality in DRM	All policies and laws that are being reviewed and/or are due for review should be aligned to international and national frameworks that promote gender equality
2	The National Gender Policy is silent on the specific involvement of women in disaster risk management issues	At the time of review, the Gender Policy should include provisions on the involvement of women in disaster risk management issues

#### **4.1.2 INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK AND COORDINATION OF DRM**

DoDMA is a Malawi Government agency for improving and safeguarding the quality of lives of Malawians especially those that are vulnerable to and affected by disasters. All DRM activities in the country are coordinated by DoDMA but implemented by other Government MDAs, Development Partners, NGOs, Faith Based Institutions, and the Private Sector. DoDMA has two key technical functions namely Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) which is responsible for mitigation activities to reduce the impact of disasters, and Disaster Response and Recovery which is responsible for all activities related to disaster response and the restoration and revitalisation of communities affected by disasters<sup>35</sup>.

<sup>32</sup> NPC – National Planning Commission. Malawi’s Vision 2063: An Inclusively Wealthy and Self-Reliant Nation. Lilongwe, Malawi: Government of Malawi; 2020

<sup>33</sup> Malawi Government. The Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS) III: Building a Productive, Competitive and Resilient Nation. Malawi Government; 2017.

<sup>34</sup> Government of Malawi. Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy for National Climate Change Management Policy. Lilongwe: Environmental Affairs Department, Ministry of Natural Resources, Energy and Mining Environmental Affairs Department; 2016b

<sup>35</sup> Information accessed on DoDMA website ([www.dodma.gov.mw](http://www.dodma.gov.mw)). Accessed on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2022

The department was established in 1992 by the Disaster Preparedness and Relief (DPR) Act of 1991.

The National Disaster Risk Management Committee (NDRMC) provides policy directions to the Department of Disaster Management Affairs on the implementation of DRM interventions<sup>36</sup>. The National Disaster Risk Management Technical Committee (NDRM TC) is a multistakeholder technical committee that coordinates the mainstreaming disaster risk management into sustainable development policies, planning and programs. This committee has established sub committees/clusters for proper coordination namely Agriculture and Food Security, Health and Nutrition, Education, Early Warning, Search and Rescue, Coordination and Assessments, Media and Publicity, Protection, Water and Sanitation, Transport and Logistics, and Shelter/Camp Management.

At district council level, the key structures are the *District Civil Protection Committee* (DCPC) which mirrors the national disaster technical committee in terms of composition and structure. Below the DCPC, is an *Area Civil Protection Committee* (ACPC) that operates at Traditional Authority level and the committee members comprise of traditional leaders, Area Development Committee (ADC) representatives, and Government extension workers (largely Community Development Assistants, Health Surveillance Assistants and Child Protection Workers). At the bottom is the *Village Civil Protection Committee* (VCPC) that operates at Group Village Head (GVH) level and its membership comprise of community members who are elected through a process that is facilitated by the ACPC and some DCPC members. The VCPCs and ACPCs are at the forefront of disaster response and recovery at community level as they serve as a mediator between the community at large and the external stakeholders involved in disaster risk management (i.e., NGOs and the government).

#### ***4.1.2.1 Key Gender Issues in Institutional Framework and Coordination***

Most of the DRM structures and cluster members are not trained in gender. According to UN Women, only cluster leads, and co-leads were trained but there is need for more capacity building of the structures in gender mainstreaming. This has resulted in poor understanding of gender mainstreaming at the policy and implementation level hence limiting gender mainstreaming to collection of sex disaggregated data without addressing the root factors that perpetuate inequalities and imbalances in DRM. It is strongly recommended that DoDMA staff and at least 5 members of each cluster should be trained in gender to help strengthen their capacity. The training topics should include gender transformative actions, disaster, and gender (theories, vulnerability, response, and recovery), and protection and GBV among others.

There is no dedicated budget for disaster management in the national budget. The funds that are used for disaster management are sourced from the unforeseen budget line which is about 2 percent of the national budget. This budget line covers other unforeseen

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<sup>36</sup> The committee comprises principal secretaries of line ministries/departments, the Inspector General of Police, the Commander of Malawi Defence Force, and civil society representatives. The committee is chaired by the Chief Secretary.

occurrences apart from disasters. The other challenge with the unforeseen budget line is that DoDMA does not have full control over this budget line as such it is very difficult to strategically plan its disaster management activities. The new DRM bill presents an opportunity to address this gap as it has proposed the setting up of a special fund for disaster management in the country.

There are gaps in terms of synergy between the national and district structures as ideally district contingency plans are supposed to feed into the national contingency plan. However, the current practice is generally top down which leads to limited ownership of the contingency plans by the districts. A member of the DCPC in Balaka highlighted that

*“a top-down approach in disaster contingency planning is unrealistic. At times we end up providing support that does not address the real needs of the people affected or we end up providing the support too late”*

There are pronounced gaps in terms of financing of DCPCs’ activities as the district council offices responsible for disasters have very little funding usually as Other Recurrent Transactions (ORT). This largely covers administrative costs and typically not adequate to cover costs for DCPC activities. All the district stakeholders interviewed indicated this gap as a big challenge. While the stakeholders appreciated the resources that are provided by development partners and NGOs, they however noted that these resources are usually not controlled by the DCPCs hence the gap.

DoDMA and the Ministry of Gender does not have a specific budget line for mainstreaming gender in DRM. The DCPCs, specifically the protection clusters, are hardly funded to implement their planned gender activities and the little progress that they have made is largely due to resources that are made available by Non-Governmental Organisations such as UN Women, Christian Aid, and CARE among others. A key informant working for a WRO in Chikwawa said

*“Overall, there has not been much substantial progress made in mobilising resources for mainstreaming gender perspectives in DRM in the country. There is need for the identification of a special and proactive mechanism for pulling of resources together dedicated for mainstreaming of gender in disaster planning, response, and recovery”*

Other stakeholders noted that some individual NGOs already have specific budgets for gender activities in DRM and the Government must be lobbied to allocate a percentage of the DRM budget towards this cause so that a fund dedicated to gender mainstreaming in DRM can be set up. However other stakeholders consulted indicated that the new Disaster Preparedness and Relief Bill has proposed the creation of a national disaster fund as such there is no need for any parallel fund. They suggested that the Government should be lobbied to allocate a percentage of the disaster fund towards gender mainstreaming activities.

The Department of Gender in the Ministry responsible for Gender is barely coordinating mainstreaming of gender in disaster risk management structures and interventions. 80 percent of the stakeholders observed that the Department of Child Affairs is more proactive and visible as a result, the focus of the Protection Cluster is mainly on GBV, and

child protection as opposed to gender mainstreaming of the DRM architecture. This has resulted in DRM personnel and structures that lack guidance and knowledge required to address gender issues. A key informant working for one of the international NGOs noted.

*“The Department of Child Affairs co-chairs the national level Protection Sub Committee with UNICEF while the protection clusters at district council level are chaired by District Social Welfare Officers. It is not surprising that child protection and GBV issues often override gender mainstreaming issues in the protection cluster”.*

However, other stakeholders observed that the problem might be that the Department of Gender does not have adequate capacity and knowledge in DRM as such there are limitations to how far they can go in mainstreaming gender equality in the sector. The stakeholder noted

*“If the Gender Department and all of us (WROs) are not capacitated in DRM, there are high chances of operational challenges in how best we can help in mainstreaming gender in the sector. We are experts in gender and not DRM as such we need to be oriented in disaster planning, response, and recovery so that we can add value by being strategic in our designing of the gender mainstreaming activities”*

This was collaborated by DoDMA which indicated that designing of gender mainstreaming activities in the sector should be custom made as such requires strengthened capacities of all stakeholders in disaster planning, response, and recovery. The Department indicated that sometimes periodic trainings targeting stakeholders are organised however it depends on availability of resources.

### **Summary of Findings/Gaps and Recommendations in Policies and Institutional Arrangement**

	<b>Finding/Gap</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
1	There are no guidelines and tools for gender mainstreaming in DRM	Develop specific guidelines and tools for gender mainstreaming in the DRM cycle.
2	DRM structures and members not trained in Gender	Periodic trainings should be organised targeting all DoDMA staff and at least 5 members of each DRM structure.
3	There is no dedicated funding for disaster management	Expedite the setting up of a disaster fund as proposed in the DRM bill
4	There is no funding for Gender Mainstreaming activities in DRM	Lobby the Government to allocate a percentage of the disaster fund proposed in the new DRM bill to gender mainstreaming activities. Alternatively create a special fund for resources aimed at financing implementation of gender mainstreaming activities in DRM
5	The Department of Gender barely coordinating mainstreaming of gender	Develop the capacity of the Department in disaster planning, response, and recovery so that they can

	in disaster risk management structures and interventions.	strategically contribute to addressing gender inequalities in DRM. In addition, include the Ministry of Gender in the ARC Technical Working Group in the country
6	Gaps in terms of synergy between the national and district structures	Timely planning of contingency plans and ensuring that the process is bottom up

## 4.2 DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND MITIGATION

### 4.2.1 COORDINATION, PARTICIPATION AND REPRESENTATION IN DRM STRUCTURES

Representation in the National Disaster Risk Management Committee, National Disaster Risk Technical Committee and its clusters, DCPCs, and ACPCs is not based on sex or gender but rather technical position/expertise as such there are limitations in terms of ensuring gender balance in the membership. According to one key informant

*“The women and men that are members of these structures are not there because of their sex or any deliberate affirmative action but it is because of the positions that they hold in their respective departments or ADCs (in case of the ACPCs)”*

The study found out that, except for the ACPCs, participation in these committees is balanced much as representation is male dominated. A key informant in Chikwawa noted that

*“These committees are comprised of technical people with exposure, education, and experience. Most of them are leaders in their respective offices and departments as such socially influenced power imbalances are minimal”*

There are no clear gender mainstreaming guidelines at both national and council level to guide the committees in gender transformative decision making. Therefore, while participation of women and men in these committees is balanced, influencing of gender considerations in decision making is weak. According to 70 percent of the key informants, with the absence of clear gender mainstreaming guidelines, it is incumbent on the proactiveness of the protection cluster to ensure that gender is being prioritised. Specific to DCPCs, both the chairpersons for Balaka and Chikwawa protection clusters cited that the lack of clear gender mainstreaming guidelines and gender training targeting all DCPC members partly contributes to their weak influencing of the DCPC decision making process. One protection cluster chair said

*“Most of the DCPC members consider gender as a crosscutting issue and not integral to disaster response and management. Secondly, due to their lack of gender training, some of the DCPC members are stereotypic and feel that any gender considerations seek to advantage women over men”*

There is need to develop specific gender mainstreaming guidelines for national and council structures that are involved in DRM. In addition, periodic gender trainings should be organised targeting all DRM structures at both district and sub district levels. The gender trainings should employ gender transformative tools and approaches to challenge negative social stereotypes and prejudices among all council staff involved in DRM work.

Leadership of ACPCs is male dominated. The ACPC operates at Traditional Authority level and the committee members comprise of traditional leaders, Area Development Committee (ADC) representatives, and Government extension workers (largely Community Development Assistants, Health Surveillance Assistants and Child Protection Workers). Just like the DCPC, representation in the ACPC is based on one’s position in the local governance and extension services system. Generally, because of this, there are few women that are members of the ACPC and leadership of ACPC is dominated by men. In addition, the study found out that all the ACPCs across the 2 districts have not received any gender training. Key informants indicated that lack of resources largely contributes to this gap. A stakeholder in Chikwawa noted that

*“For a key structure like the ACPC that is involved in beneficiary identification, vulnerability and risk assessments, and distribution of relief items, it is critical that the committee members receive targeted trainings on gender, safeguarding, and GBV”.*

Representation in VCPCs is gender balanced however leadership of the committees is predominantly male. The VCPC operates at Group Village Head (GVH) level and comprise of community members who are elected through a process that is facilitated by the ACPC and some DCPC members. Unlike the ACPC and DCPC, election of VCPC members follows election guidelines for local government/decentralisation structures. These guidelines are clear on the 60:40 quotas (as enshrined in the Gender Equality Act, 2013) as such there is a fair representation of women and men in the VCPCs. Disparities, however, exist in the decision-making positions of the VCPCs as all key positions are dominated by men. In both Chikwawa and Balaka, there is no ACPC that is chaired by a woman. There is need to ensure that election of committee members into VCPC’s decision making positions also follow the 60:40/40:60 of either sex, a gender quota stipulated in the Malawi’s Gender Equality Act of 2013. In addition, all VCPC members should be trained periodically in gender to help build their capacity in gender responsive DRM and address their underlying gender stereotypes.

### **Summary of Findings/Gaps and Recommendations in Participation and Representation**

	<b>Finding/Gap</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
1	Representation in the National Disaster Risk Management Committee, National Disaster Risk Technical Committee and its clusters, DCPCs, and ACPCs is not based on sex or gender but rather technical position	Develop specific guidelines and tools for gender mainstreaming in the DRM cycle.  Conduct gender transformative tools and approaches to challenge negative social stereotypes and prejudices



2	Leadership of ACPCs is male dominated	Establish strategic partnerships with community-based organisations and women groups to support grassroots led advocacy for women inclusion in decision making.
3	ACPCs and VCPCs not oriented on Gender	Work with community based WROs to orient ACPCs and VCPCs on gender and women participation in decision making.
4	Representation in VCPCs is gender balanced however leadership of the committees is predominantly male.	Advocate for VCPC leadership election policy change so that the election of executive committee members should also be aligned to Gender Equality Act  Build the capacity of all female members of VCPCs to challenge and motivate them to take up leadership positions  Raise awareness on and lobby support for women participation in decision making
5	Council level structures not well funded	Improve resource mobilisation and contingency planning so that council receive timely funding. In addition, protection clusters should improve coordination of non-state actors so that budgets are aligned to council contingency plans

#### 4.2.2 HAZARD AND VULNERABILITY MAPPING

All councils conduct hazard and vulnerability mapping however there is little or no use of gender analytical tools. Stakeholders indicated that all district councils have information on disaster-prone areas and the type of disasters that are common in specific areas of the districts. Key informants indicated that this information provides a foundation upon which all their emergency planning efforts are built. One key informant in Balaka indicated that

*“This process allows us to set priorities and goals for resource allocation and response, recovery, and mitigation before any disaster happens. Therefore, we claim that contingency planning should be bottom up and not the other way round. What is currently happening is wrong, regardless of the reasons”*

The vulnerability assessment template being used by councils collects sex disaggregated data but do not further disaggregate based on marital status, age, and disability. Across all the districts, respondents cited this as a gap considering that vulnerability is gendered

as such this information can help stakeholders best respond to the needs. The District Gender Officer for Balaka noted

*“Gendered roles and responsibilities including religious and cultural norms influence vulnerability. Gender analysis should inform vulnerability assessments however there is limited capacity within the DCPCs to effectively collect and analyse data from a gender perspective”*

All stakeholders collaborated that for effective vulnerability assessment, there is need to critically look at power sharing, gender division of labour, and time use to understand capacities of women and men in responding to and recovering from disasters. They indicated that there is also need to understand the complementarity of the roles of men and women in the home to stratify inequalities among people of the same sex. One respondent said

*“Women who are married are not as vulnerable as widows, unmarried women, and/or women living with disabilities. Their vulnerability is different hence the need for application of a gender lens in vulnerability assessments”*

Utilisation of available data collection tools at ACPC and VCPC level is low. Respondents indicated that the ACPCs and VCPCs do not correct all the information as required because they do not ask all the questions in the tool. It was noted that the VCPCs and ACPCs focus much on sex and location while giving little attention to other critical areas such as age, disability, and the like.

Lack of resources and skills is a key factor in the vulnerability of both men and women. Respondents noted that men are generally less vulnerable to hazards because traditionally they have more access to skills and resources compared to women. Access to resources and skills also entails capacity to withstand disaster shocks and build back better hence a need for a gender transformative approach to vulnerability assessments.

Time use has an implication on the vulnerability of both women and men. In the FGDs, participants noted that women, compared to men, have very limited time to socialise and engage in disaster risk planning activities including vulnerability assessments. Understanding time use for women, men, boys, and girls has serious implications on how DRM activities should be structured to ensure maximum participation of the different sexes but also to avoid creating increased time burdens especially on women and girls. To address this gap, there is need to institutionalise periodic gender analysis in DRM, build capacity of local DRM structures in gender, and strengthen collaboration with local and grassroots Women Rights Organisations.

### **Summary of Findings/Gaps and Recommendations in Hazard and Vulnerability Mapping**

	<b>Finding/Gap</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
1	Limited use of gender lens/perspectives in vulnerability assessments	Develop capacity in collection and interpretation of sex disaggregated data targeting DoDMA and all council officials.

2	Vulnerability is gendered and socially influenced	Institutionalise Gender Analysis in disaster planning including vulnerability assessments to address root causes of inequalities and social exclusion.
3	Vulnerability Assessment form not disaggregated by marital status, age, disability, and other gender criteria	Review vulnerability assessment form to widen the gender criteria in data collection.
4	No consideration for time use in hazard and vulnerability assessments	Raise awareness on the participation of women in disaster planning  Institutionalise Gender Analysis in disaster planning including vulnerability assessments

#### 4.2.3 EARLY WARNING INFORMATION AND MANAGEMENT

Both women and men have access to information including early warning and relief information. However, the RGA found out gendered patterns in the choice of channels that are used for information dissemination. For instance, in both FGDs and KIIs, respondents collaborated that women, compared to men, participate more in the community awareness meetings. In addition, women compared to men, depend on their school going children who often get early warning information from school. However, owing to interhousehold power dynamics, Men mostly rely on formal channels for communication such as radios, televisions, community committees such as VDCs and ACPCs. This is due to the women’s limited participation in community decision making structures, and limited access to technologies such as radios and televisions. As noted by one FGD participant

*“wailesi ndi ya abambo. Amayenda nayo m’khosi ndipo timamvera akakhalapo (radios are for men. They take them wherever they go, and we listen to the radios only when they are back”*

This implies that men, compared to women, are more likely to access credible early warning information and timely. It is recommended that locally available means for communication like announcements during funerals, religious gatherings, and weddings should be prioritised in early warning information dissemination.

Language in disaster related IEC communications is a barrier that needs serious attention if gender inequalities are to be addressed in early warning information management. The study noted that available IEC materials are produced in Chichewa and English languages only. In addition, most of the IEC materials rarely have illustrations as such the illiterate and semi-illiterate have challenges in using the materials. Apart from printing IEC materials in braille or using sign language during community. Considering that most rural Malawians especially women are illiterate, it is recommended that IEC materials should have as much illustrations as possible to ensure that even the illiterate utilize the materials.

In addition, disaster related IEC materials should be produced in local languages (for instance Sena and Yao) spoken in the disaster affected areas.

Cell phones are an innovative channel that is helping in breaking barriers to access to early warning information. Respondents noted that there is a shift in access to early warning information through formal channels as women that have cell phones can access information as women who have cell phones access radios through their phones and social media such as WhatsApp. This is an opportunity as it has helped to improve women’s access to formal early warning communications. However very few women in rural areas own cell phones and the cost for airtime is not cheap.

People living with disabilities, specifically the deaf and the blind, have challenges in accessing early warning information through some of the formal channels. Respondents noted that IEC materials are not printed in braille and there is hardly any use of sign language in community awareness meetings. This is discriminatory and stakeholders involved in early warning information should ensure that their identified channels are as inclusive as possible.

Indigenous knowledge is rich with local early warning indicators. In the FGDs, participants shared how they rely on local early warning indicators in the environment to predict drought and/or floods. This knowledge is passed informally from generations to generations, and it has proved to be reliable and useful. In Chikwawa, some of the FGD participants cited observation of specific fish species in the shire river to predict the likelihood of disaster. In both Balaka and Chikwawa, FGD participants cited observation of changes in the environment such as increased number of ants to foretell drought. There is need for stakeholders to assess the reliability of the indigenous indicators and innovatively integrate with scientific early warning information (where possible).

In terms of management and usage of the early warning information, the study has found out that most of the community use capitalise on the available information to engage in risk reduction strategies and early action. FGD participants identified the building of temporary hives, construction of shelters in the uplands, storage of extra food, and construction of raised platforms for livestock as some of the risk reduction strategies.

**Summary of Findings/Gaps and Recommendations in Early Warning Information and Management**

	<b>Finding/Gap</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
1	Indigenous knowledge is rich with local early warning indicators	Assess the reliability of the indigenous indicators and innovatively integrate with scientific early warning information (where possible).
2	Gendered patterns in the choice of channels that are used for information dissemination.	Critically analyse women’s and men’s preference in the use of available channels for early warning information. Ensure variability and flexibility in the channels used to be as inclusive as possible

3	People living with disabilities, specifically the deaf and the blind, have challenges in accessing early warning information through some of the formal channels.	Print some IEC materials in Braille and ensure the use of sign language in community awareness meetings
4	Cell phones including social media are an innovative channel that is helping in breaking barriers to access to early warning information	Embrace social media as channel for dissemination of early warning information and ensure the use of creative communications  Work with community radios to produce and air contextualised messages

#### 4.2.4 CAPACITY BUILDING AND AWARENESS RAISING

Both women and men participate in awareness raising meetings however men are targeted more in formal capacity building interventions. This is because of several factors including that decision making structures of ACPCs and VCPCs are predominantly occupied by men, most women are illiterate, and deep-seated cultural traditions that favour men as natural leaders. A member of the DCPC in Chikwawa noted that

“Even where the training invitation is very clear that women should also be included, it is noted that only few attends and, in most instances, the few that attend are very passive and rarely participate in the discussions”

Another key informant suggested that there is need to motivate young women to join ACPCs and VCPCs as these are fairly educated and can make meaningful contributions in the committees and community.

The study has observed limited knowledge, among community members and subdistrict level DRM structures, on gender policies and laws including how these can help in addressing some of the identified inequalities in disaster planning, response, and recovery. While the FGD participants were aware of what gender is, they had difficulties in citing the existing policies including where they can seek guidance and support. There is need to enhance awareness creation on the nexus of gender and disaster preparedness, response, and recovery. This can help challenge and transform norms around participation, decision making, and access to resources for equitable disaster preparedness, response, and recovery.

## Summary of Findings/Gaps and Recommendations in Capacity Building and Awareness Raising

	<b>Finding/Gap</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
1	limited knowledge, among community members and subdistrict level DRM structures, on gender policies and laws	Work with grass roots-based youth and women organisations to strengthen awareness creation at community level
2	men are targeted more in formal capacity building interventions.	Adopt affirmative actions in the selection of training participants and motivate young women to take active role in ACPCs and VCPCs

### 4.3 DISASTER RESPONSE

The Government of Malawi recognizes that natural disasters can have negative effects on its efforts to ensure sustainable economic growth and the development of the country. As such it has put in place policies, systems, and structures to quickly respond to disasters as soon as they strike. Every year, according to the Ministry of Finance, the Government sets aside 2 percentage of the national budget to cater for disaster risk management and other unforeseen circumstances. However key informants were not clear on whether these resources are easily accessible in the event of a disaster. They noted that the national response is highly dependent on external financial support but is coordinated by DoDMA. A key informant working for an international NGO wondered

*“Why then is DoDMA always under resourced when yet a percentage of the national budget is annually allocated for disaster related activities”.*

The study found out however that disasters such as floods and droughts often result in financing needs which are larger than the allocated 2 percent. In such circumstances, the Government postpones other MDA’s activities and reallocate the resources to disaster related activities. While appreciating this commitment by the Government, stakeholders indicated that this approach is generally reactive and unstrategic. Respondents suggested that the creation of a disaster fund, as proposed in the DRM bill, is the best alternative to ensuring proactiveness and preparedness. It is recommended that the enactment of the DRM bill should be expedited.

Development partners and NGOs play a significant role in supporting the Government to mitigate, respond to, and recover from disasters. The development partners and NGOs mobilise resources locally and internationally to help largely in humanitarian relief support. Some of the NGOs are also involved in the direct provision of humanitarian support to affected communities working hand in hand with respective district councils and structures. However, this support is unpredictable and, in some cases, arrives late.

In the aftermath of disasters, Government provides a standard food basket to affected households to support their livelihoods. In addition, since 2015/16, the Government has

purchased the ARC sovereign drought insurance to mitigate the impact of such shocks. Further Government, Non-Governmental Organizations and humanitarian organizations collaboratively assist affected farmers with agricultural inputs.

### 4.3.1 RELIEF INFORMATION, REGISTRATION, AND SUPPORT

ACPCs and VCPCs are the key structures that identify and register beneficiaries for disaster relief and support. Information collected by these structures is verified and consolidated by the DCPCs. As noted earlier, these the ACPCs and VCPCs are male dominated. This creates safeguarding risks especially when grievance reporting mechanisms are weak. In the FGDs, respondents indicated that some members of the ACPCs and VCPCs request for sexual favours from women and girls to be included on the list of beneficiaries. Widows and the divorced are the most vulnerable to these sexual advances.

Registration of beneficiaries is generally based on household heads, and these are commonly men except for families of divorced and widowed females. For married women, this arrangement is not helpful as some husbands do not take the items home. In the FGDs, female participants observed that some men sell the relief items without the knowledge of their spouses. Commonly such men resort to violence when they are confronted by their wives. Key Informants suggested that households should receive the relief items jointly to ensure that the support is used for the intended purposes.

The registration of beneficiaries does not consider the collection of disability and age disaggregated data as the templates being used for this purpose are generic. One key informant noted.

*“It is not clear how many youths, persons with disabilities or the elderly have benefitted from this support because of gaps in the data collection tools. This also applies to the other areas of support as the tools for data collection are not comprehensive in disaggregation of the information collected”*

During disasters, access to key information becomes a problem to both women and men as the reliable information channels are disrupted. The RGA noted that even in shelter camps, access to key information is limited as the information is often relayed informally through social networks and relations. Innovations in the use of ICT and other social media channels to disseminate disaster related information should be prioritised.

#### **Summary of Findings/Gaps and Recommendations in Relief Information, Registration, and Support**

	<b>Finding/Gap</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
1	Safeguarding Gaps and Concerns in relief registration and distribution	Lobby for affirmative action on the inclusion of women in ACPC and VCPC leadership structures

		Work with grassroots youth and women organisations to raise awareness on safeguarding issues in humanitarian support Strengthen grievance reporting and response mechanisms
2	Registration of beneficiaries does not consider the collection of disability and age disaggregated data	Review and update the template for registration of beneficiaries to include disability and age disaggregated data
3	Relief registration and distribution targeting household heads only	Ensure gender sensitivity in distribution of relief items and decide on joint access to relief items

### 4.3.2 CAMPS AND SHELTER

The impact of floods and heavy rains cause significant damage to houses forcing women and men to seek safety in camps and shelters. The camps and shelters are supposed to be safe spaces however in both Chikwawa and Balaka, FGD participants noted that security is low especially for women and girls. The rooms in which the women and girls were accommodated in did not have doors and window glasses. In addition, there were no adequate toilets and bathrooms at the camps, and this forced women and girls to use the bush as an alternative thereby increasing their vulnerability to GBV. This greatly affected the dignity and privacy of the women and girls.

In Balaka, women complained that they were sleeping in separate rooms with their spouses giving room for promiscuity. On the other hand, men in the FGDs indicated that the separation from their wives is a human rights issue as they are being deprived of their conjugal rights.

Hygiene and sanitation is poor in camps and shelters exposing women and men to health hazards. For instance, at Kapasule Camp, the latrines were filled with the flood water hence were not accessible to the affected populations especially the elderly and people living with disabilities.

#### Summary of Findings/Gaps and Recommendations in Camps and Shelter

	<b>Finding/Gap</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
1	Hygiene and sanitation are poor in the camps	Make sure that hygiene facilities are available and conducive for use

### 4.3.3 GENDER BASED VIOLENCE (GBV)

Due to displacement, women and girls are sometimes accommodated in unsafe places that increase their risk and vulnerability to sexual abuse and exploitation. In both Balaka



and Chikwawa, the rooms in which the women and girls were accommodated in did not have doors and window glasses. In addition, there were no adequate toilets and bathrooms at the camps which forced women and girls to use the bush as an alternative thereby increasing their vulnerability to GBV. In the FGDs, participants noted that this affected their dignity and privacy.

Community GBV services become scarce, and structures become non-performing. Even in camps, respondents cited security and protection as a critical issue. Girls, and other marginalised groups become vulnerable. It was noted that women and girls generally bath at night due to unavailability of bathrooms thereby exposing themselves to abuse and exploitation.

Some specific forms of GBV such as rape, sexual abuse, and forced marriages become more pronounced during and after disasters. In the FGDs, participants indicated that child and forced marriages increase after disasters as girls drop out of school to get married for economic survival. One respondent said

*“Parental support, during and after disaster, is low. Fathers migrate to urban areas leaving mothers alone to take care of the children. Care and support are low, and the girls decide to just get married so that they can be taken care of”*

Others noted that, after disasters, parents force their female children into marriages to access support from their potential son-in-laws.

*“It is typical butter trade. I give you my child for marriage and in exchange you give me money, food, and other items for my family’s survival and recovery”*

There is a high tolerance for GBV among the locals especially if the GBV leads to economic survival. Respondents noted that disaster affected women and girls are emotionally stressed and have reduced coping capacities. As such, they resort to negative coping strategies to survive economically. For instance, the study found that women and girls accept to sleep with relief workers to be prioritised in the distribution of relief items.

Child trafficking cases are high during and after disasters. As noted by FGD participants, young women and men want to escape poverty hence they accept offers to work as house boys/maids in the cities. However, not all of them end up working as houseboys/maids when they get to the city, some are forced into prostitution.

A key informant in Chikwawa said,

*“In recent years, trafficking has become a serious issue every time we have disasters. Young girls and boys after losing hope here due to economic burdens, they prefer to migrate to Blantyre and many of them end up in illicit businesses including sex trade”*

Persons with disabilities and the elderly are the most vulnerable to GBV during disasters as security and protection decreases. Respondents noted that the persons with disabilities and the elderly have difficulties in accessing support and services that can reduce their risk and vulnerability to GBV. One respondent noted that

*“They are generally easy targets as they find it hard to flee and there is no available social support in case of need for help, making them more vulnerable to attacks”*

It is recommended that gender trainings targeting DRM structures should include topics on the intersectionality of gender, age, and disability. The idea is to equip practitioners with knowledge on how best to plan and respond in ways that do not discriminate persons with disabilities and the elderly. It is also important to include persons with disabilities and the elderly in all DRM consultations to ensure that their opinions and voices are considered during the planning and implementation of disaster preparedness, response, and recovery.

### **Summary of Findings/Gaps and Recommendations in GBV Services**

	<b>Finding/Gap</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
1	women and girls are sometimes accommodated in unsafe places that increase their risk and vulnerability to sexual abuse and exploitation.	Ensure that location for shelters and camps is safe, secure, and gender sensitive. Engage the police to provide security in all shelters and camps.  Strengthen community policing services and ensure that victim support units are functional in the shelters and camps
2	persons with disabilities and the elderly have difficulties in accessing support and services that can reduce their risk and vulnerability to GBV	Strengthen community policing services and ensure that victim support units are functional in the shelters and camps  Gender trainings targeting DRM structures should include topics on the intersectionality of gender, age, and disability
3	Community GBV services become scarce, and structures become non-performing	Victim Support Units should be established in all camp sites and well stocked with personnel and resources to effectively provide GBV support
4	There is a high tolerance for GBV among the locals especially if the GBV leads to economic survival	Work with community-based youth and women groups to create awareness and help challenge negative norms and practices
5	Child trafficking cases are high during and after disasters	Work with community-based youth and women groups to create awareness and help challenge negative norms and practices

## **4.4 DISASTER RECOVERY AND ADAPTATION**

Disasters disrupt livelihood and the economy resulting in rapid social and economic changes. Assets are lost, infrastructure is destroyed, services are altered, and life deteriorates. One FGD participants in Balaka noted that

*“Disasters renders us useless. It reduces our ability to support ourselves and because of our entrenched poverty, it takes forever for us to recover”*

In the camps, hygiene was identified as a challenge posing high risks of outbreaks of diseases such as cholera. All respondents indicated increased cases of forced and child marriages, sexual abuse and exploitation, and the likelihood of many teenage boys and girls not returning to school as life normalises. Study findings show that crops have been washed away, jobs and livestock lost, and businesses heavily disrupted resulting in food insecurity and loss of income. Reconstruction and repairing of damaged infrastructure take time and is a strain on the economy. It is therefore important that disaster recovery and adaptation should be strategic and gender sensitive to ensure that inequalities are not reinforced and that communities build back better together. To achieve this, key informants highlighted that planning and implementation of disaster recovery and adaptation should be inclusive and gender sensitive. In addition, stakeholders recommended that recovery and adaptation must ensure that voices of both women and men are recognised so that the activities address the specific respective specific needs.

### **4.4.1 RECOVERY ASSESSMENT**

District Councils carry out disaster recovery assessments to assess the needs of affected individuals and communities. Since recovery programmes are not funded or implemented by the government alone, individual NGOs also carry out independent recovery assessments. There is need to harmonise the recovery assessment activities to ensure synergy, alignment and coordinated recovery efforts. The assessments should be complementary and not repetitive and or competitive. In addition, use of gender sensitive approaches should be prioritised to ensure that both women and men are reached, and their voices recognised. The assessment tools should include specific gender indicators so that all recovery and reconstruction interventions clearly target vulnerable groups, including women, girls, children, the elderly, and people living with disabilities.

Recovery assessments treat community members, especially women and people living with disabilities, as passive recipients of support and not active actors in the recovery and reconstruction process. Respondents indicated that disaster affected people have capacity for recovery, though limited, as such there is need for stakeholders to recognise the existing capacities in their design and implementation of recovery activities. To achieve this, recovery assessments should be participatory, and rights based so that identified recovery needs and priorities reflect contextual gendered realities.

Some NGOs and private sector organisations fail to register or communicate their recovery operations with district councils and/or DoDMA. This creates challenges for the DCPCs to track progress and leads to unnecessary duplication of efforts. Without an updated database of recovery activities, the DCPCs are unable to clearly coordinate and direct recovery support.

### Summary of Findings/Gaps and Recommendations in Recovery Assessments

	<b>Finding/Gap</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
1	Recovery assessments treat community members, especially women and people living with disabilities, as passive recipients of support	Assessment tools should be participatory, inclusive, intersectional, and include specific gender indicators  Actively involve women, the youth, the elderly, and people living with disabilities in all needs assessments.  Adopt rights-based approaches so that identified recovery needs and priorities reflect contextual gendered realities
2	Duplication of Efforts and lack of standardisation of assessment tools	DoDMA and DCPCs respectively should harmonise the recovery assessment activities to ensure synergy, alignment and coordinated recovery efforts

#### 4.4.2 RECONSTRUCTION AND RESTORATION

Reconstruction is not aligned with gender strategic and practical needs. The study found out that Government takes time to reconstruct damaged physical infrastructure such as schools, hospitals, water facilities, and roads. Respondents indicated that roads and bridges are generally prioritised. While this is appreciated, respondents noted that delays in the construction of hospitals and schools have very huge health and social impacts. They noted that it is women and the youth that are affected more if hospitals, schools, and water facilities are not reconstructed on time. In reconstruction, it is recommended that the Government should always balance needs and interests of different gender groups.

Corruption and favouritism among ACPC members and chiefs in identifying rightful beneficiaries for reconstruction support. FGD participants indicated that where there is support for reconstruction, like cash transfers, ACPC members and chiefs identify their relations leaving out deserving individuals. In the event of drought, this practice is also common as the local leaders ask for favours for one to be included on the list of beneficiaries. Orphans and people living with disabilities are the most affected resulting in misallocation of resources. DCPCs should enhance oversight and monitoring to ensure

that this is addressed. In addition, sensitisation should be strengthened to community members identify and report malpractices.

Building technical skills of women, men, and the youth is critical in restoration and recovery. The study found out that compared to men, women and the youth have limited coping capacity because of lack of physical and technical skills. In building back, Government and stakeholders should develop appropriate technical skills in women and the youth. Institutions like Technical, Entrepreneurial, and Vocational Education and Training (TEVETA) and Ministry of Labour through Community Colleges are critical in this regard.

Limited financial capacity among community members to restore their businesses and other income generation activities. Study findings show that both women and men have lost their businesses and have used remaining resources to address immediate needs related to relocation and displacement. To build back better, restoration efforts should be inclusive and aim at providing equal opportunities to women and men to recover. Respondents indicated that the Government, through the National Economic Empowerment Fund (NEEF), should provide short term loans to help those that lost their businesses. It was noted that both men, women, and the youth should be targeted and that the loans should have flexible requirements.

Village Savings and Loans (VSLs) groups have been disrupted however they are a key strategy that can help communities, especially women and the youth, to build back better. The VSLs are an informal but well-coordinated source of financial services and support in most local communities in Malawi. They are heavily patronised by women enabling them to have a better access to financial support before and after disasters. A key informant in Chikwawa noted

*“VSLs are a key innovative intervention that can contribute to improved recovery and adaptive capacities of men and women in the rural areas”*

This was collaborated by a female FGD member in Balaka who said

*“Banki M’khonde ndi chombo chowolokera ku umphawi ndipo pano timakhala ndi ndalama zathu posavutitsaso abambo (VSL is an enabler and a passport to economic independence. We now have our own money and do not fully depend on our husbands for financial support).*

Disaster recovery and restoration should prioritise strengthening of the VLSs to help community members especially women to weather shocks, set aside resources for the lean season, and invest off-farm income generating activities as they rebuild their lives after a disaster.

Innovative climate risk insurance can contribute to effective recovery and restoration however available products are low and not well marketed. In the FDGs, most of the farmers expressed ignorance of the existence of climate risk insurance while those that said that they were aware, indicated that they have never utilised such services. Generally, FGD participants expressed interest however they cited conflicting financial priorities as their biggest setback. There is need for more awareness creation to help rural

farmers understand and patronise such services. Innovative linkages of climate risk insurance to VSLs are recommended to ensure increased uptake. Unlike the FGD participants, 60 percent of the key informants noted that some farmers have benefitted from innovative climate risk insurance programs that are being supported by institutions such as the World Food Program (WFP) and Red Cross among others. These climate risk insurance programs provide pay-outs to smallholder farmers in times of crisis, which enables them to mitigate disaster shocks and recover. Both women and men participate in this insurance programs though decision making on how to use the pay-outs largely sits with men owing to the gendered social fabric of the Malawian society. The key informants noted that while uptake of climate risk insurance among community members is still low, this is an innovative approach that needs support and upscaling.

Recovery and restoration should build on existing social support programmes. Under the Malawi National Social Support Programme (MNSSP)II, the Government is implementing the Social Cash Transfer Programme (SCTP), Public Works Programmes (PWP) and School Meal programme (SMP). The MNSSP II provides an opportunity for Malawi to institutionalise shock-sensitive social protection systems that support recovery and restoration after disasters. In addition, programs like the Spotlight Initiative that ensures that women and girls play a key role in development, can help restoration by addressing multiple and intersecting forms of exclusion that women face owing to disasters. The Spotlight Initiative and other gender programmes can help in bringing back girls to school, providing bursaries, rescuing girls from forced marriages, strengthening GBV prevention and response mechanisms, and addressing structural barriers to sexual and reproductive health rights among others. The National Economic Empowerment Fund (NEEF) and the Community Savings Promotion and Investment Program (COMSIP) can help in filling in the gap of lack of financial support for SMEs.

### **Summary of Findings/Gaps and Recommendations in Recovery Assessments**

	<b>Finding/Gap</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
1	Reconstruction is not aligned with gender strategic and practical needs.	Integrate Rapid Gender Analysis in recovery assessment or carry out independent Gender Analysis  Adopt rights-based approaches so that identified recovery needs and priorities reflect contextual gendered realities
2	Corruption and favouritism among ACPC members and chiefs in identifying rightful beneficiaries for reconstruction support	DCPCs should enhance oversight and monitoring  Work with grassroots-based youth and women organisation to strengthen sensitisation of community members and motivate them to identify and report malpractices.

3	Village Savings and Loans (VSLs) groups have been disrupted however they are a key strategy that can help communities, especially women and the youth, to build back better.	Recovery strategies should integrate VSLs as a restoration and recovery mechanism. Provide minimum of 200-thousand-kwacha cash bail out to VSLs
4	Innovative climate risk insurance can contribute to effective recovery and restoration however available products are low and not well marketed	Enhance sensitisation of farmers on climate risk insurance Promote innovative linkages of VSLs to climate risk insurance so that farmers can afford premiums
5	Limited financial capacity among community members to restore their businesses and other income generation activities.	Link persons who lost their business to NEEF for possible credit support  Establish Gender Transformative Fund  Recovery Packages should include financial support and/or integrate VSLs
6	Build technical and vocational skills of women and the youth	Arrange community based short technical and vocational courses to be facilitated by TEVET  Utilise Constituency Development Fund Expedite the operationalisation of the Women Economic Empowerment (WEE) fund or Establish Gender Transformative Fund to support skills development for women and girls.
7	Bring back Girls to School	District Councils should work with community structures to rescue girls from forced marriages Provide bursaries and learning materials to girls Strengthen enforcement of community byelaws that prohibit forced and early marriage

## 4.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The main objective of this Rapid Gender Assessment was to identify constraints and challenges militating against the involvement of vulnerable population especially women and girls in DRM preparedness and response in Malawi. Specifically, the RGA was carried out to identify viable solutions to address the constraints and challenges as well as mechanisms for sustainable transformation of the DRM approaches towards gender equality and women empowerment.

There is no alignment of existing DRM policies in Malawi with the National Gender Policy, the national constitution, and other global and regional frameworks that aim to mainstream gender in DRM. However, Sections 20 and 41 of the Constitution of Malawi uphold the principle of equal rights for men and women and prohibit any discrimination based on gender or marital status. While the National Gender Policy is silent on the specific involvement of women in disaster risk management issues, the policy states that gender should be mainstreamed in natural resources and the environment. The Disaster Preparedness and Relief Act (1991) is under review and the National Disaster Risk Management Policy (2015 – 2020) is due for review. This presents opportunities for mainstreaming gender and addressing the gaps identified in this study.

DoDMA and the Ministry of Gender does not have a specific budget line for mainstreaming gender in DRM. The DCPCs, specifically the protection clusters, are hardly funded to implement their planned gender activities and the little progress that they have made is largely due to resources that are made available by Non-Governmental Organisations. However, the new DRM Bill has proposed the creation of a national disaster fund which presents an opportunity for the allocation of resources specific for gender mainstreaming in DRM. The Government should be lobbied to allocate a percentage of the disaster fund towards gender mainstreaming activities.

Most of the DRM structures and cluster members are not trained in gender. This has resulted in poor understanding of gender mainstreaming at the policy and implementation level hence limiting gender mainstreaming to collection of sex disaggregated data without addressing the root factors that perpetuate inequalities and imbalances in DRM. In addition, there are no clear gender mainstreaming guidelines at both national and council level to guide the committees in gender transformative decision making. There is need to develop specific gender mainstreaming guidelines for national and council structures that are involved in DRM. In addition, periodic gender trainings should be organised targeting all DRM structures at both district and sub district levels. The gender trainings should employ gender transformative tools and approaches to challenge negative social stereotypes and prejudices among all council staff involved in DRM work.

The Department of Gender in the Ministry responsible for Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare is barely coordinating mainstreaming of gender in



disaster risk management structures and interventions. The Department of Child Affairs is more proactive and visible as a result, the focus of the Protection Cluster is mainly on GBV, and child protection as opposed to gender mainstreaming of the DRM architecture. This has resulted in DRM personnel and structures that lack guidance and knowledge required to address gender issues.

There are few women that are members of the ACPC and leadership of ACPC is dominated by men. In VCPCs, representation is gender balanced however leadership of the committees is predominantly male. Election of VCPC members follows election guidelines for local government/decentralisation structures. These guidelines are clear on the 60:40 quotas (as enshrined in the Gender Equality Act, 2013). Disparities, however, exist in the decision-making positions of the VCPCs as all key positions are dominated by men.

People living with disabilities, specifically the deaf and the blind, have challenges in accessing early warning information through some of the formal channels. For instance, IEC materials are not printed in braille and there is hardly any use of sign language in community awareness meetings. Both women and men participate in awareness raising meetings however men are targeted more in formal capacity building interventions. This is because of several factors including that decision making structures of ACPCs and VCPCs are predominantly occupied by men, most women are illiterate, and deep-seated cultural traditions that favour men as natural leaders.

Annually, the Government sets aside 2 percentage of the national budget to cater for disaster risk management and other unforeseen circumstances however accessibility and utilisation of these resources is not clear. The national disaster response is highly dependent on external financial support rendering it generally reactive and unstrategic. The creation of a disaster fund, as proposed in the DRM bill, is the best alternative to ensuring proactiveness and preparedness of the country. It is recommended that the enactment of the DRM bill should be expedited.

Some specific forms of GBV such as rape, sexual abuse, and forced marriages become more pronounced during and after disasters. In addition, persons with disabilities and the elderly are the most vulnerable to GBV during disasters as security and protection decreases. Unfortunately, community GBV services become scarce, and structures become non-performing during disasters. It is imperative that community policing services are strengthened to ensure that victim support units are functional in the shelters and camps. In addition, gender trainings targeting DRM structures should include topics on the intersectionality of gender, age, and disability.

Recovery assessments treat community members, especially women and people living with disabilities, as passive recipients of support and not active actors in the recovery and reconstruction process. It should be emphasised that disaster affected people have capacity for recovery, though limited, as such there is need for stakeholders to recognise the existing capacities in their design and implementation of recovery activities. To achieve this, recovery assessments should be participatory, and rights based so that identified recovery needs and priorities reflect contextual gendered realities.

Reconstruction of damaged infrastructure is not aligned with gender strategic and practical needs. Roads are preferred while schools, hospitals, and water facilities are delayed. Women and the youth are affected more if hospitals, schools, and water facilities are not reconstructed on time. Therefore, in reconstruction, it is recommended that the Government should always balance needs and interests of different gender groups.

Disaster recovery and restoration should prioritise strengthening of the VLSs to help community members especially women and the youth to weather shocks, invest off-farm income generating activities, and build back better. The VSLs are an informal but well-coordinated source of financial services and support in most local communities in Malawi. They are heavily patronised by women enabling them to have a better access to financial support before and after disasters.

Innovative climate risk insurance can contribute to effective recovery and restoration however available products are low and not well marketed. There is need for more awareness creation to help rural farmers understand and patronise such services. Innovative linkages of climate risk insurance to VSLs are recommended to ensure increased uptake. The key informants noted that while uptake of climate risk insurance among community members is still low, this is an innovative approach that needs support and upscaling.

Based on the findings of the assessment, the following recommendations are being made

- **Involvement of women in decision-making/governance:** DoDMA in collaboration with the Ministry of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare should build innovative partnerships with community-based women's groups/organizations to help raise awareness for gender equality and advocate for the inclusion of women in ACPC and VCPC leadership structures. There is need to strengthen their capacity in DRM to ensure gender-equitable governance structures and systems that creates a conducive environment to encourage gender-responsive DRM.
- **Gender Mainstreaming Guidelines and Tools:** Develop and institutionalize gender mainstreaming guidelines and assessment tools to help carry out gender sensitive vulnerability, risk, and capacity assessments, collect gender specific data and statistics on the impact of disasters, and develop gender sensitive indicators to monitor and measure progress. This will enable a gender-sensitive approach to DRM that challenges the structures giving rise to inequalities.
- **Targeted Capacity Building in Gender Mainstreaming:** Carry out periodic trainings targeting DoDMA staff and DRM structures at all levels to build institutional and individual capacity for mainstreaming gender in DRM. All trainings should use Gender Transformative Conscious Practice Tools and Frameworks. In addition to the targeted capacity building, gender training principles should be mainstreamed into all training that DoDMA delivers so that gender equality concepts and theories are being delivered regularly and from a range of different sources.

- **Strategic Involvement of the Ministry of Gender, Community Development, and Community Development in DRM:** Strengthen the leadership role of the Ministry of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare in mainstreaming gender in Disaster Risk Management across all DRM structures. Within the Ministry, the Department of Gender should be positioned to lead in the proposed strategic involvement. This should be complemented by targeted capacity building of the Ministry's staff in DRM to help strengthen their understanding of disaster prevention, response, and recovery for effective mainstreaming of gender in DRM.
- **Collection and Use of Sex, Age and Disability Disaggregated Data:** Institutionalise the collection and use of disability, age, and sex disaggregated data to inform planning in all stages of the DRM cycle. This should involve periodic assessments of the social and gender dimensions of the risks addressed in DRM Plans to have a full understanding of how women and men's livelihoods are affected by disasters; and how gender-based differences in decision-making and ownership of/access to assets affect people's vulnerability as well as how it leads to different abilities to respond to disasters. Training on the collection and use of disability, age, and sex disaggregated data for DRM cycle should be prioritised.
- **Lobby and advocate for a 5 percent allocation of the proposed disaster fund to support the institutionalization and mainstreaming of gender in DRM at all levels.** This will help the civil society, WROs, and other DRM structures to foster accountability and transparency in DRM resources allocation and utilization for better institutionalization of gender mainstreaming.
- **Gender Sensitive Early Warning Information and Management.** Critically analyze women's and men's preferences in the use of available channels for early warning information and ensure variability and flexibility in the identified channels to be as inclusive as possible. In addition, print IEC materials in Braille and ensure the use of sign language in all community awareness meetings.
- **Expedite the enactment of the Disaster Risk Management bill.** The Ministry of Justice and the National Assembly respectively should be strategically engaged to prioritize the enactment of the bill to achieve harmonized policy clarity and direction in disaster preparedness, response, and recovery.
- **Gender Sensitive Disaster Recovery.** Integrate Rapid Gender Analysis in recovery assessment. The recovery assessments should be inclusive, participatory, and rights based so that identified recovery needs and priorities reflect contextual gendered realities. In building back better and together, recovery packages should include access to finance, skills, and means of production. The distribution of these recovery packages should be equitable and non-discriminatory to ensure that no one is left behind.
- **Support Innovative Disaster Recovery and Restoration Products/Interventions.** Innovative linkages and strengthening of VSLs in disaster recovery, innovative climate risk insurance products, and skills development of women and youth should be promoted and supported. In addition,

there is need to enhance awareness creation to help rural farmers understand and utilise climate risk insurance.

- **Fastrack the establishment of a Fund to support gender responsive DRM.** This fund should be aligned to the disaster fund (proposed in the DRM bill) but implemented independently with the joint coordination of the Department of Disaster Management Affairs (DoDMA) and the Ministry of Gender, Community Development, and Social Welfare.
- **Strengthen Women’s Access and Control of Resources for Disaster Preparedness, Response, and Recovery.** Based on identified gaps and opportunities, strategically implement gender transformative activities that can help strengthen women’s agency at both household and community level.

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## **ANNEX A. CHECKLIST FOR DATA COLLECTION**

What are the Acts, Policies, and Strategies that guide coordination and implementation of disaster risk management activities in the country?

Are there any identified gender gaps in the planning, implementation, monitoring, and reporting of the policies, legislations, and programs of disaster risk management?

Are the different social situations, capacities, and vulnerabilities, of both men and women considered when designing disaster risk management interventions?

What are some of the existing key structures for disaster risk management in the country? How does these structures interface and influence the results and outcomes of the other?

Are women and men actively involved in disaster risk management consultations and decision making in programmes, structures, and budgeting?

Do both men and women have access to information and capacity building concerning disaster preparedness and prevention?

Is data disaggregated by disability, sex and age used to develop a profile of at-risk populations with special requirements regarding disaster?

How involved is the Ministry of Gender, Community Development, and Social Welfare in disaster risk management in the country? How involved is the Ministry in ARC's work in the country? How best can the role of the Ministry be improved and/or strengthened?

What capacity gaps exist in the mainstreaming and implementation of gender issues/activities in disaster risk management? How can the gaps be addressed?

Are there any social factors that affect the participation of women and men, the disabled, and the youth in disaster risk management in the country? How does these social factors affect the achievement of gender outcomes in disaster risk management? How best can they be addressed and/or transformed?

How resourced are gender activities in disaster risk management? How can this be improved? And how best can innovations and creativity in gender programming contribute to increased resource allocation for gender mainstreaming in disaster risk management?

## **ANNEX B: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE**

### **1. FACILITATOR AND NOTE TAKER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The team conducting the focus group will include a facilitator, who will lead the discussion, and a note-taker who will support the focus group (FG) session logistics and be responsible for capturing the key points and detailed discussion. Below we provide an overview of the roles of the facilitator and the note-taker.

#### **1.1 Role of the Facilitator**

- Ensure room arrangements are made and that participants are invited with sufficient notice
- Arrive 15-30 minutes prior to the FG to ensure the room is arranged appropriately
- Greet participants
- Explain study and purpose of the FG to participants
- Moderate the pace of the FG to ensure that all topics are covered as thoroughly as possible
- Facilitate the discussion to ensure the group stays on topic and that all participants have a chance to give their input
- Thank participants at the end of the FG.

#### **1.2 Role of the Note Taker**

- Arrive 15-30 minutes prior to the FG to set-up room
- Help greet participants
- Distribute and collect Participant Information Sheets and Informed Consent and Agreement to Participate forms
- Take notes and operate the recorder during the FG (if applicable)
- Ensure comments are accurately captured

### **2. FOCUS GROUP PREPARATION**

The consultancy team will work closely with the Gender District Officers in each of the districts to ensure that appropriate facilities are available for and will be arranged in a way suitable for the session in each district (Balaka and Chikwawa).

#### **2.1 Room Arrangements**

Below is a list of requirements for the rooms where the FG sessions will be held:



- FG sessions should be held in a room provided by a local organization that allows for confidential conversations to take place
- The room should be easily accessible to FG participants
- The room should be large enough to accommodate 10-13 individuals comfortably
- To facilitate conversation, participants should be seated in a U-shape, or chairs in a circle
- The room should have at least one flip chart and markers.

## **2.2 Pre-Group Logistics**

The Facilitator and the Note Taker should greet participants as they arrive and ask them to take a seat and make themselves comfortable and to help themselves with the healthy snack available.

The Note Taker should distribute the ***Informed Consent and Agreement to Participate Form*** to each participant and ask her to read the form while waiting for the FG to begin. This document:

- Describes the meeting format
- Details the privacy protections that will be provided to participants
- Gives the potential participant an opportunity to decline to participate.

The Facilitator and the Note Taker should ask participants if they need any help in completing the forms.

## **3. FG PROTOCOL**

The Facilitator should formally welcome the FG participants to the discussion and explain the purpose of the focus group and standard procedures (see below):

### **3.1 Opening and Introduction**

The Facilitator should read the following statement:

*Thank you for coming today. My name is [FACILITATOR NAME] and this is [NOTE TAKER NAME]. We are working on behalf of the Ministry of Gender, Community Development, and Social Welfare. We have been contracted to lead this session.*

*My role, for the most part, is to make sure that we get through our agenda, keep to the time frame and make sure that you all have a chance to share your perspectives and experiences. [NOTE TAKER NAME] will help me do these things and will also be taking notes. In addition, we will be audio-taping the session, which will ensure that we record the discussion accurately. The discussion session today will last for about 1 hour.*

*The purpose of this focus group is to gather opinions and experiences from women and men in Balaka and Chikwawa on the sociocultural norms, legal and political factors that affect their participation in development work including climate change and resilient activities at community*

*level. The results of these group discussions will be included in a report which will be used to improve the implementation of disaster risk management in the country.*

*It is important that we hear what your needs and recommendations are so that the DRM activities and other policies and programs can address them as effectively as possible.*

*I know that some of you have gone out of your way to be here, and we genuinely appreciate your interest and willingness to share your experiences and perspectives.*

### **3.2 Participant Privacy**

The facilitator should read the following statement:

*Privacy and anonymity mean that we will not share or use your name, address, or any other identifying information in reports or other materials related to this study. We will not identify any of the participants by name. All the information we collect here today is private to the extent permitted by law. In all reports, data will be pooled with data from similar sessions with participants in other focus groups and published in aggregate form only.*

### **3.4 Participant Consent and Agreement**

The Facilitator should read the following statement:

*Your verbal consent to the Informed Consent and Agreement to Participate form will be our record that you have agreed to participate in the focus group and that you have agreed to be tape-recorded. Do you have any additional questions about the focus group or about the consent and participation form?*

After all participants have verbally agreed with the contents of the Informed Consent Form, hand out name tags (each participant will select a name of a fruit or flower that she would like to be called during the FG) to all participants.

### **3.5 Focus Group Definition and Working Procedures**

The Facilitator should read the following statement:

*Let me begin our discussion by reviewing a few ground rules about how we will conduct the session.*

*During this discussion, we would like you to focus on topics that are of particular interest to us. We are interested in what everyone has to say about our discussion topics. If someone brings up an idea that you want to expand on, or if you have a different point of view, please feel free to speak up. Occasionally, I may have to interrupt the discussion to bring us back to a particular topic to make sure that we cover everything on our agenda.*

*There are a couple of basic rules that we will follow during this session:*

- a. There are no right or wrong answers.*
- b. All ideas are good ideas.*
- c. Respect different points of view.*

- d. Say what you truly think.
- e. Give everyone a chance to speak.
- f. Don't share if you aren't comfortable.
- g. No cell phones or recording devices.

*Would you like to add other ground rules?*

*Because we are also recording the session, it would really help us if you could speak up so that everyone can hear you. I would also very much appreciate it if you would state your fruit/flower name the first couple of times you speak.*

### **3.6 Focus Group Discussion Questions**

#### ***Participant Introductions***

Ask each participant to introduce herself using a name of a fruit or flower that she likes and to briefly tell the group something about themselves, such as a favorite activity. The Facilitator should start with his or her own introduction and favorite activity.

During this process, the Note Taker should make sure that the recording equipment is working appropriately and that the microphone is picking up all voices in the room.

#### **Section A: Gender Activity Profile**

*A1. What are the major roles/activities that boys, girls, women, and men in your community engage in? When and where are these roles/activities carried out?*

#### **Household Chores**

<b>Men</b>			<b>Women</b>		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>When/Time</b>	<b>Where/Place</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>When/Time</b>	<b>Where/Place</b>


**Income Generation Activities**

Men			Women		
Activity	When/Time	Where/Place	Activity	When/Time	Where/Place

**Community Activities (including DRM activities like consultations, risk profiling and assessment, relief, and recovery)**

Men			Women		
Activity	When/Time	Where/Place	Activity	When/Time	Where/Place


A2. Do you think these roles are shared equally?

A3. Do you think men and women have equal time to participate in community work including project activities such as DRM? Justify your answer?

A4. What opportunities and/or barriers are existent for equitable participation and distribution of roles in this community?

A5. What should be done to improve equity in both participation and distribution of these roles especially in community work?

**Section B: Participation in Public and Household Decision-Making**

B1. What are some of the most important decisions made by a) men and b) women in your household and Community (give rankings in order of priority).

B2. Who benefits from these decisions in B1 above? (Ask and indicate whether men or women on the responses given)

B3. What do you think influences the decision makers? e.g culture, ethnicity, financial strength

B4. Do the decisions made meet your needs? a) as men, b) as women

B5. What should be done to ensure that the decisions made a) meet our needs and b) ensure gender equality?

**Section C: The Social, Economic, Cultural, Political, Legal and Policy Barriers**

C1. What is your understanding of gender equality?

C2. Would you elect a woman as your leader/representative (for your community, group, church, ...)? Give reasons

C3. What is your view on equal participation of women and men in leadership positions?

C4. Between men and women, who should make decisions in households/communities/relationships? Why?

C4. How does sociocultural norms and practices contribute to:

- Creating opportunities for gender equality and women empowerment?
- Creating barriers for gender equality and women empowerment?

- *Disaster preparedness, response, and recovery?*

*C5. Are there any socioeconomic/cultural norms and practices that lead to gender-based violence incidences in this area?*

*C6. In your view, is Gender Based Violence contributing to the disempowerment of women and girls, and disaster risk management in general?*

*C7. In this community, what are the social beliefs and perceptions (religious and/or cultural) that condition women and men's expectations and aspirations? Does these affect women's and men's capacity to prepare, respond, and recover from disasters?*

*C8. How involved are women and men in disaster risk management structures in this community?*

## **SECTION D: KNOWLEDGE OF DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT**

*D1. What do you know about climate change? Resilience? Adaptation? Disaster Risk Management?*

*D2. Are women and men affecting the same way by disasters? Are there variations in how women and men respond and recover from disasters? Are these variations socially influenced?*

*D3. Do women and men have the same opportunity and access to information on disaster risk reduction, prevention, resilience, and adaptation in this community?*

*D4. If No (in D2), is this variation influenced by social cultural norms?*

*D5. Does men and women participate equally in disaster risk management processes, systems and structures in this community? Why?*

*D6. How can we improve the participation of women and men in disaster risk management in this community?*

*D7. How can we improve the participation of other socially excluded groups such as the disabled and the elderly in disaster risk management in this community?*

### **Recommendations**

In your opinion, which interventions for women and girls should be prioritized in the disaster risk management?

### **3.7 Closing and post FG activities**

*Are there any other topics related to needs and experiences of women and men in disaster risk management that we have not covered?*

*I can stick around a bit if any of you want to chat privately about the focus group experience. Otherwise, the focus group has concluded, and again, thanks for your help today.*

## ANNEX C: LIST OF STAKEHOLDERS

### Key Informants

NAME	INSTITUTION
Doshanie Kadokera	Ministry of Agriculture
Chikondi Chabvuta	CARE International
Ronald Phiri	Ministry of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare
Fwayupi Mwafongo	Department of Disaster Risk Management
Aaron Macheka	Chikwawa District Council (Social Welfare)
Clara Nanchingwe	UN Women
Koffi Konin	African Risk Capacity (ARC)
Victoria Nkasala	Chikwawa District Council (Gender)
Julie Sibale	United Nations Development Programme
Davie Chibani	Balaka District Council (DoDMA)
Mac Donald Nyaka	Balaka District Council (DCDO)
Gladys Nakhumwa	World Food Program
Anderson Chikomola	Ministry of Agriculture (DAES)
Nelia Kumalere	Balaka District Council (Social Welfare)
Angela Abdula	Africa Risk Capacity (ARC)
Lusungu Chinombo	Christian Aid
Scholarstica Datchi	Balaka District Council (Gender)
Pamela Mkwamba	UN Women
Chimwemwe Kaunda	Ministry of Finance
Charles Chinkhutha	Ministry of Agriculture
Barbara Banda	NGO Gender Coordination Network (NGOGCN)

## ANNEX D. REFERENCE GROUP MEMBERS

<b>NAME</b>	<b>INSTITUTION</b>
Alice Mkandawire	Ministry of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare
Fwayupi Mwafongo	Department of Disaster Risk Management (DoDMA)
Clara Nanchingwe	UN Women
Mercy Chirambo	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
Anderson Chikomola	Ministry of Agriculture (DAES)
Chimwemwe Kaunda	Ministry of Finance
Charles Chinkhutha	Ministry of Agriculture
Barbara Banda	NGO Gender Coordination Network (NGOGCN)
Ronald Phiri	Ministry of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare