



CARE MALAWI RURAL SMALLHOLDER PROGRAM (P1)

Impact population: Women in vulnerable, chronically food insecure, rural smallholder households

Goal: Women, who are empowered socially and economically, are able to exercise their rights to access and have control over productive resources and services, and enjoy more diverse and reliable access to income and sufficient nutritious food.

SITUATION ANALYSIS

Malawi is one of the least developed countries in the world. Of a total population of over 12 million, approximately 52% live below the poverty line¹ and about 85% live in rural areas and depend on subsistence agriculture for their livelihood. The country is ranked 160 out of 182 countries on the multi-criteria Human Development Index², and when measuring poverty in terms of income alone, Malawi ranks the 5th poorest country in the world.³

Malawi faces many challenges in trying to move beyond chronic food insecurity, including high population density, decreasing soil fertility, poor transport links to international markets, high rates of HIV/AIDs, and increasing exposure to climate change in the form of droughts and floods. Average per capita income is less than \$160 per year, and over 21% of the population are not able to meet their daily food needs⁴.

Apart from serious economic underdevelopment, low levels of education and poor health continue to frustrate development in Malawi. The country's national literacy rate is 71.8%; with **female literacy estimated at 64.6%**. In addition, 94.8% of all Malawians have less than an upper school education (e.g. have not completed secondary school nor technical school). In health, Malawi has one of the highest **maternal mortality** rates in the world with 18 out of every 1000 women dying while giving birth. **Rates of HIV infection** are estimated at around 11.8% for the population 15-49 years of age.⁵ As a result average life expectancy is less than 38 years³, and the increasing numbers of orphans and vulnerable children have increased the ratio of dependents living in productive rural households. In terms of **gender equity**, the UN ranks Malawi 134th out of 155 countries on its Gender Disparity Index indicating that only 21 other countries in the world have conditions in which the disparities between men and women are greater.⁷

1 United Nations, World Food Program, April 2010, <http://www.wfp.org/countries/malawi>

2 UNDP, 2009 Human Development Report. (Note: Statistics used are based on 2007 data)

3 Ibid.

4 World Bank Development Report 2005

5 Ibid

6 Ibid.

7 "Access to Land, Growth and Poverty Reduction in Malawi" Ephraim W. Chirwa, 2004, University of Malawi, Chancellor College

The majority (80%)⁸ of Malawi's farmers are 'smallholder' subsistence or semi-subsistence farmers with limited access to land and other livelihood resources. Smallholder is defined as people renting, borrowing, or owning small holdings of land. In Malawi the majority of smallholders own or work between one to three hectares⁹, with the majority cultivating less than one hectare of land.¹⁰ "It is estimated that one third of smallholders cultivate between 0.5 and 1 hectares of land.¹¹ 55% of smallholders cultivate less than 1 hectare of land. Of that number, 70% of smallholder farmers cultivate a median area of 0.6 hectares, and devote 70% of the land to maize, the main staple."¹²

Many households face **chronic food insecurity** in most years due to a combination of socioeconomic macro- and micro-level factors. The reasons for food insecurity are complex, but typically the most vulnerable households are land, labor, input, and/or know-how resource constrained. They may also be affected by HIV/AIDS, disability or age that may explain and/or reinforce their labor and resource constraints. Even households with available land and labor often only have limited access to critical inputs due to poor physical access, poorly functioning input supply markets, and lack of input finance. Such smallholders typically practice sub-optimal livelihood strategies¹³ that sacrifice medium-term benefits for short-term subsistence. Further, poorly functioning governmental extension services and limited reach of NGO and private sector providers mean these households rarely fully utilize the inputs they do have access to.

The vulnerability of rural smallholder households is made worse by acute food insecurity through natural events, such as regular drought and flooding. In three of the last ten years Malawi's smallholders faced significant national droughts and accompanying food shortfalls, with additional localized drought and crop failures, such as in Dowa District in 2006-07.¹⁴ Poor quality soil is often further degraded due to insufficient inputs and poor husbandry practices.

As guiding frameworks for poverty reduction, the Government of Malawi (GOM) has adopted the 2002 Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) and the 2006 Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS). Both of these multi-sector, national strategies place improving food security a cornerstone of the Government's national agenda¹⁵. In recent years input **subsidies** have been reintroduced, increasing focus on national production by smallholders, and shifting land use towards export crops and higher intensity production of staples for food security. While there remains some debate about the impact and effectiveness of these blunt instruments, the prevailing view is that they have contributed to short-term, macro-level increases in maize production. The main debate centres on food insecurity at the local and household levels, and questions about who is benefiting from these programs, coupled with their high costs, has raised doubts that subsidies alone will achieve the desired goals.

8 IFAD, no date, http://www.ifad.org/evaluation/public_html/eksyst/doc/prj/r070mwbe.html

10 "Access to Land, Growth and Poverty Reduction in Malawi" Ephraim W. Chirwa, 2004, University of Malawi, Chancellor College

11 "Formal versus Informal Institutions in Africa." Bratton, M., 2007, *Journal of Democracy*, 18:3

12 Exploring the Politics of Land Reforms in Malawi: A Case Study of the Community Based Rural Land Development Programme (CBRLDP), prepared by Chinsinga Blessings, 2008, Discussion Paper Series, Number Twenty, September 2008

13 These include selling subsidized inputs for cash; not cultivating land due to lack of labor or inputs; forgoing opportunities to participate in technical assistance and market linkage programs that demand resource and time;

14 Dowa is one of the targeted districts for the VLM Project.

15 For example Agriculture and Food Security is one of the 6 priority areas of the MGDS

Like most other agriculture production and livelihood security projects, the Government of Malawi targets “poor, smallholder farmers”. While widely used and implying a homogeneous set of households with similar characteristics and needs, the term¹⁶ fails to capture the actual **diversity of rural households** engaged in agricultural activities in Malawi. The Government of Malawi sets clear criteria for targeting under the input subsidy programs, but loose control over the decentralized implementation mechanisms leaves most of the ultimate decision-making in the hands of local leaders. The dilemmas faced by these leaders¹⁷ in deciding how to distribute the subsidies reflects the actual diversity of ‘smallholder farmers’ and the implicit understanding at the local level that, if selected, not all households will use the subsidy in the same way. Most local leaders direct the subsidy to specific sub-populations, based on their own logical criteria.¹⁸ Like the GoM input subsidy program, other interventions (such as those by NGOs) usually claim to target “smallholder farmers”, but either unconsciously or consciously, through the design of their approach, end up targeting a subset of this broad group. Where targeting is unconscious, there is often an (unwarranted) expectation that all ‘smallholder farmers’ will benefit. Where targeting is conscious, there is often an underlying belief that either not all households can be reached with existing methods, or that it is more strategic to reach higher level goals by targeting specific sub-sets. In the latter case, however, most programs still imply that their interventions will generally benefit a broad, homogeneous population of ‘poor, smallholder farmers’¹⁹.

According to the National Social Support Policy, November 2008 (at cabinet level) 40% of the total population falls under the poverty line. This group is further categorized into **ultra-poor (15%) and moderately poor (25%)**. The proportion of the ultra-poor has declined from 22% in 2005²⁰ to 15% by 2007²¹. Ultra-poor households are those that have few or no assets, little or no land, limited or no labor, are chronically ill and are child/female/elderly headed with high dependency ratios. Most of these households are socially excluded, extremely vulnerable to shocks, have limited coping mechanisms and struggle for survival on a daily basis

Include per capita expenditure figures for food and non food needs (MWK28/pp/day?).

Moderately poor households are those that have some members who are able to do productive work. They can respond to labor-based projects and programmes in order to overcome their poverty and hunger. These households are vulnerable to risks and shocks like hunger and further impoverishment. Poverty is extremely dynamic, with individuals and households shifting frequently from one category to another, and even a small shock (for example a poor harvest) can tip large numbers of “non-poor” into poverty

Include per capita expenditure figures for food and non food needs (MWK44/pp/day?)

16 which is often understood to largely encompass the rural economy outside of estate / commercial farms, civil servants, and urban traders

17 setting aside graft or other attempts to divert the resources away from the original goals of poverty alleviation and increasing production

18 some treat it as a consumption transfer and give it to the poorest households (whether or not they are actively engaged in own-production) with the assumption that they will sell it to farmers who can use it more effectively; others give the subsidy directly to farmers actively engaged in own-production; while still others add social factors, including gender and social status, to the targeting plan.

19 Source: WAA proposal

20 INHS 2005

21 WMS 2007

Based on this critical need and a desire to reach out to the most responsive group, CARE Malawi will target households within the moderately poor category targeting 25% of the population. CARE Malawi has conducted its own analysis of the underlying causes of poverty in Malawi in relation to developing their strategic plan, identifying five key underlying causes of poverty:

1. Social Exclusion: Seen in people's inability to fulfill their rights, responsibilities and aspirations as citizens in society due to inequality and discrimination.
2. Inequitable Access to Resources and Services: Situations whereby information, services and resources (which are in themselves inadequate) do not reach everyone due to differences in economic, social and political status.
3. Weak Governance: The failure of political, formal and informal institutional processes to contribute to poverty reduction.
4. Gender Inequity: Social construction of roles and positions that disadvantages one sex, leading to discrimination, exploitation and vulnerability of the disadvantaged sex.
5. Poor Macro and Micro Economic Environment: Deterioration of economic opportunities and productivity of the natural resource base, and thereby, the erosion of social and economic capital.

This Program will directly address inequitable access to resources and services, gender inequity and the poor micro-economic environment. However, by working to improve these underlying causes of poverty in Malawi, the Program also will be indirectly contributing to improving **social inclusion** for women and stronger more equitable governance.

CARE's impact group of "chronically food insecure" is very large, especially if deemed roughly equivalent to the 40% of population to be "moderately poor" and "ultra-poor." However, CARE Malawi has undergone a range of field research and program design activities to more clearly define and differentiate the households and individuals commonly grouped under the rubric of 'poor, smallholder farmers'.

The LIFT-UP research for Malawi proved extremely useful for this, providing a large set of quantitative and qualitative data from different regions of Malawi (including areas where CARE has and has not worked) to correlate household and individual demographic and social characteristics to participation in a broad range of development interventions aimed at poverty alleviation. It also gathered data on household's own perceptions of the impact of these interventions. The team used an iterative process of modelling, data gathering, and hypothesis testing to refine a working model of the different types of households engaged in rural agriculture. Some of the most important findings included:

- CARE Malawi found that there appear to be a finite number of characteristics that define rural household types, which are based on levels of resources and types of livelihood strategies that form stable equilibrium around which most households cluster at any given point in time²². Households that fall between these clusters are often 'in transition' from one stable equilibrium to another (due to an intervening factor that disrupted a previous equilibrium state)²³.

22 It is important to note that the word 'cluster' should not be construed as implying that all households or individuals in the cluster have a specific, homogeneous set of characteristics. Rather within a given cluster there will be a range of values for any given variable, and there were some cluster outliers. The generalizations derived from this clustering effect proved critical to understanding which factors defined the stable equilibrium, and were therefore key potential levers of change.

23 For example, there are very few households that are headed by single men, except for men who have been recently widowed and are actively seeking to remarry.

- Clusters are defined by a relatively small number of demographic and social factors. The team examined many different variables that might contribute poverty status of households and individuals. This revealed a sub-set of underlying, determinate factors that were alone sufficient to predict the cluster grouping of a given household. The key factors included: **labour-constraint/dependency ratio**²⁴; current asset base; gender composition; and existence of active, chronic illness²⁵.
- Households and individuals move between clusters through time (either due to an individual leaving their household or combining their household with another, or by an intervening event (shock) that shifts the household from one livelihood and social equilibrium to another).
- The poorest 60% of the population are not evenly distributed amongst clusters (livelihood equilibria)²⁶. A few clusters account for the majority of households²⁷.
 - Cluster Type 1: Poor and very poor, non-labour-constrained households with an able-bodied, male adult member (usually a married couple);
 - Cluster Type 2: Very poor and ultra poor, labour-constrained, single-female-headed households.
- Understanding the background of the households and individuals in clusters with fewer households, as well as cluster outliers, proved very important to understanding and defining the potential pathways out of poverty.
- **Different households have different pathways out of change** – there is no one intervention package that will help everyone – but households who moved from a given cluster to another often did so in very similar ways.
- Households in different clusters are differentially vulnerable to different **shocks**, and are able to differentially benefit from different types of opportunities / interventions. For example very poor, male-headed households primarily dependent on rainfed maize monoculture are more vulnerable to drought or erratic rainfall than similar households with access to irrigation and/or more diversified income-generating activities. Similarly, only certain clusters are well-placed to benefit from the type of stand-alone agriculture interventions that are most commonly designed for ‘smallholder farmers’ in Malawi. For example, SFHHs often struggle to access agricultural extension services and financial services, which de facto target male-headed households (including women in male-headed households).

24 Dependency ratio is currently measured by the ratio between able-bodied adults between 18-55 to children, elderly, and disabled household members. The field teams discovered that rural communities use a more nuanced system to judge the dependency level of a given household. This system assigns a household member a ‘labor value’ based on a continuous scale. As such, two teenage boys might equal one adult male, and a healthy, 56-year old woman would equal 0.8 of a 35-year old woman. When communities own perceptions of labor-constraint were considered, the distinction between clusters became more apparent.

25 This is often a euphemism for implied HIV status and included people with non HIV-related chronic illness, and excluded people who were not actively ill.

26 The team didn’t closely at households above this level, which included civil servants, NGO workers, urban traders, etc.

27 The team was ultimately not sure what explains this observation. It could be just a reflection of the current level of advancement of households on a development continuum. However, it might also reflect some sort of stable equilibrium of relative household composition and corresponding roles at the community level. For example, if all the households engaged in ganyu (working as day laborers) become own producers or receive an ongoing transfer, does this decrease the livelihood security of other households who relied on this labour pool as part of their livelihood strategy? Common sense and the limited existing data on the effects of transfer programs do suggest that this might be the case, in the absence of other interventions that also mitigate the effects of the transfer on ganyu purchasing households (for example through access to irrigation technology that reduces labor demand relative to production). The project hopes to learn more about this by doing more community-level systems analysis in the future. However, the indication is strong enough to suggest that interventions should target both ganyu suppliers and ganyu purchasers in the same community to avoid simply reversing the roles of the very poor and slightly better off.

Thus, Country Office analysis was able to determine which households and individuals had benefited from a range of development interventions, including economic development and agriculture, in rural Malawi, and to identify the characteristics of households who were able to access and benefit from different categories of interventions as well as those who were not. The research team then developed a typology of the various factors that allowed households (and particularly women within those households) to move from one level of poverty to a better-off position,²⁸ or to move from one type of household to another (horizontal movement)²⁹

This analysis is presented through a matrix of population groups having a spectrum of broad livelihoods strategies, ranging from those who have:

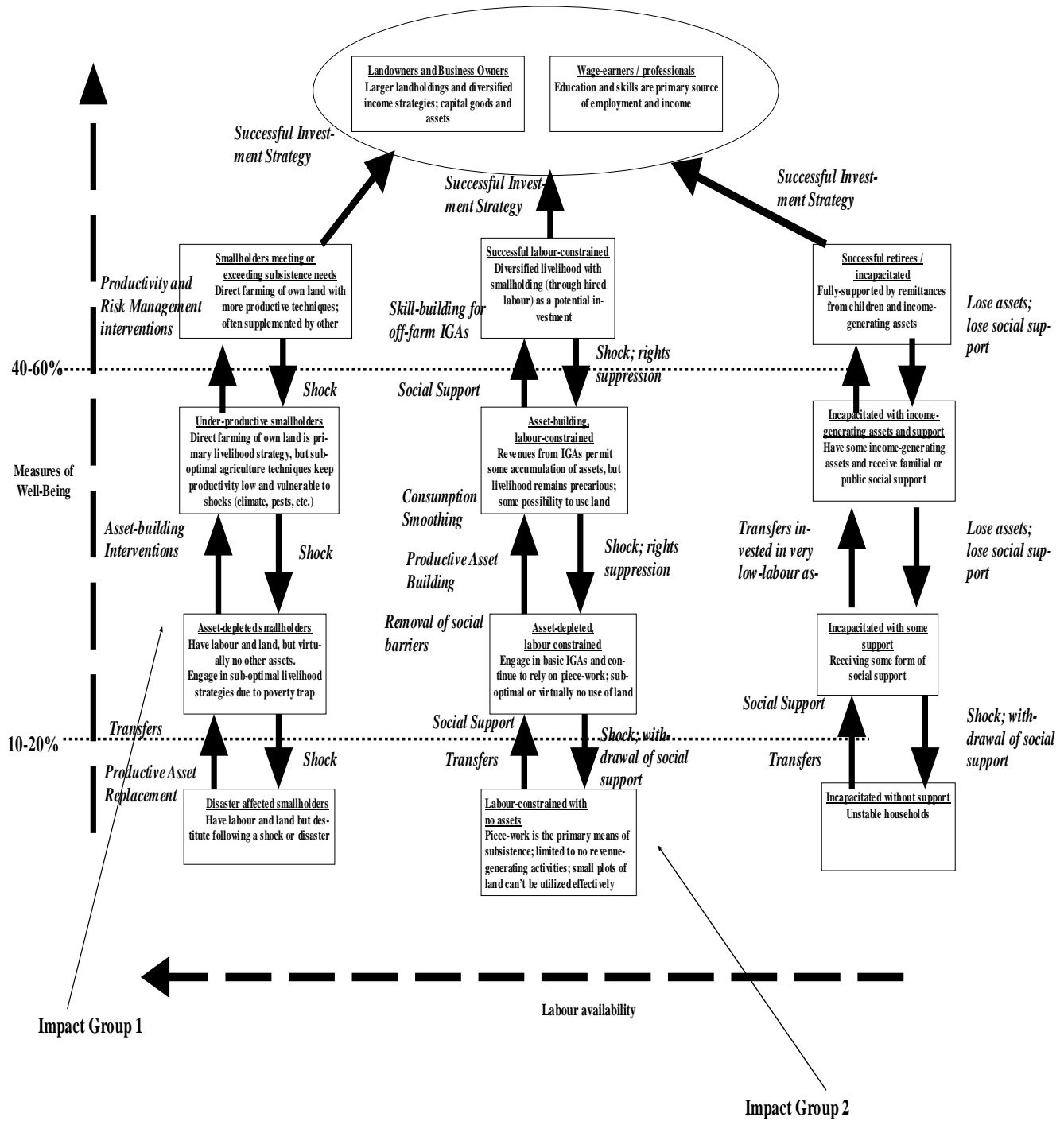
- relatively better access to land, labor and other productive resources (and hence the potential to engage in some agriculture),
- those with more limited access (and who therefore rely more on other forms of income, such as petty trading) and
- those who have virtually no such resources (and who are largely dependent upon others).

They then refined this by breaking each of these 3 categories into various levels, ranging from those who are near the top of this 40% of the “very poor” down to those who are below the 15% “ultra-poor” line. (See diagram 1 below)

28 Example: SFHHs could improve their economic status by investing in off-farm IGAs

29 Example: Very poor/ultra poor SFHHs were less attractive marriage partners, but after investing in IGAs and improving their economic status SFHHs, some married or attracted male relatives to live with them (e.g. a brother), returning to economic activities practiced by intact households.

Diagram 1: Levels of Program Success by Impact Population



Country Office analysis into the underlying causes of poverty for rural smallholders demonstrated has demonstrated key constraints in the micro/macroeconomic environment as well as in social equalities (especially gender):

Micro- and Macroeconomic Environment

- Weak agricultural extension system and input supply systems do not reach poor people
- Government input and marketing systems do not reach rural areas effectively and the private sector has monopolized markets in the rural area. This creates an environment for easy exploitation of rural farmers. Market imbalances – exploitative nature of markets, middlemen capitalize on gap in market to pay poor prices, or swindle farmers
- An unfavorable market structure that creates marketing issues because of no access to information and absent linkages with private sector as well as a lack of value addition and limited competition
- Costs of inputs are high compared to other countries (e.g. South Africa)
- The financially excluded are unable to access funds from financial institutions, largely due to their lack of collateral
- Voice of financially excluded not represented in government policy.
- Lack of predictable finance chain for microfinance institutions: Microfinance institutions are not able to access funds because capital investors are needed to lend money to microfinance institutions in order for them to on-lend. However, microfinance institutions do not have consistent financial support in order to operate effectively
- Dependence on rain fed agriculture, insufficient agricultural technology such as irrigation systems or techniques to conserve moisture
- Weak governance and inappropriate technical guidance for farmers
- Narrow focus by non profits and governments on marketing crops while excluding other forms of farming such as animal husbandry
- Low crop production and unavailability of farmer clubs
- Weak decentralization – poor delivery of services at local level (agric extension, financial services etc), don't reach the poorest or poor quality
- Poor quality of education services
- Don't have access to information
- Inaccessible health and agric services
- Women can't access legal recourse on property rights
- Fragmented land ownership in communal areas: holdings are very small
- No (social) insurance systems, social safety nets
- Women of business skills (VSL has been a positive initiative for these women)³⁰

Social inequalities

There are many social dimensions of what restricts women from being empowered, having more access to and control of resources and higher incomes, and what is needed is a shift away from viewing women as merely production units³¹.

- Poor health status of children, pregnant and lactating mothers due to socio cultural belief and practices which deny them access to nutritious food
- Farmers tend to be unorganized, hence unable to influence public & private sectors

³⁰ Observation from the SARMU Program Quality conference field works for P1, May 2010

³¹ Observation from the SARMU Program Quality conference field works for P1, May 2010

- Limited access to public and private resources and services by vulnerable groups such as OVC's, females and elderly, resulting in inability to influence public and private sectors
- Influential people have better access to farm inputs, including those distributed through government-subsidized programs. Female PLHAs failing to access farm inputs as they are perceived not wealthy
- Exploitative ganyu (Piece work) hurts those who rely on work for payment in kind. The amount of work required to receive benefits is grossly misaligned
- Social and cultural practices - gender, e.g. male control of resources; women lack durable rights to land (practice contradicts policy)
- More powerful and influential people have greater access to community resources (elite capture) – the powerful exploit the weak, perpetuate poverty of others

Gender Inequalities

- There is a lack of enforcement of property rights for women: Socio cultural practices and beliefs prohibit women from owning property
- Women are discriminated against through legal frameworks, institutional practices and social practices
- Limited access to basic services, e.g. health and HIV services for women
- Gender constraints on women's "acceptable activities"
- Sexual exploitation by husbands and village and community leaders as they take advantage of existing unequal power relations between men and women. They are able to control access to subsidies, abilities to utilize grinding mills and household food security
- Men are one of the biggest underlying causes of poverty for these women. Men are not supporting the aspirations of the women, and although they will negotiate with women they do not support giving women control of finances/business/decision making³².

Discriminatory attitudes exist related to women's participation in agriculture; their voice in society and politics; as well as their inequality and subordination in the household. These underlying causes work together to further subordinate and impoverish women in Malawi. The Constitution specifically provides for equal rights for women, but in everyday rural life, **traditional norms and gender roles** still predominate. Women often have limited access to agricultural extension services, training, and credit. Typically, women work more hours than men to complete the same farm tasks because they rarely have comparable tools and equipment, yet they still also remain responsible for all household tasks. Women also bear the extra burden of caring for chronically ill family members. Women often have less access to legal and financial assistance, and wives are often victims of discriminatory inheritance practices in which the majority of the estate is taken unlawfully by the deceased husband's family³³. Women's empowerment is a critical element of eliminating poverty and social inequality in Malawi. Regarding women's rights and discrimination, the Women and Law in Southern Africa Research and Educational Trust (WLSA Malawi) reported the following in 2009:

1. The failure to pass any gender related laws submitted to Parliament by the Law Commission is entrenching state-sanctioned discrimination against women
2. A weak public legal aid department is exacerbating the inaccessibility of justice to women
3. Lack of implementation of the Prevention of Domestic Violence Act 2006 is depriving victims of domestic violence of maximum legal protection

³² Observation from the SARMU Program Quality conference field works for P1, May 2010

³³ African Women's Alliance for Gender, 2004

4. Women's property rights are insecure due to constitutional ambiguities
5. The proposed HIV/AIDS Bill contains provisions that perpetuate the victimization and stigmatization of women and the infringement of their rights
6. The criminal justice system is hostile towards women
7. Women continue to be the poorest, signaling the weak responsiveness of government's development strategies to women's challenges
8. Maternal mortality rate continues to be staggering and to be triggered by the avoidable cause of unsafe abortion³⁴

Regarding agriculture, women farmers in Malawi typically carry the main burden for agricultural production; yet face greater vulnerability as they are often the most disadvantaged in access to inputs, technology, finance and markets, particularly the poorest and most vulnerable women. Despite representing 70% of agricultural sector labor and 30% of all smallholders,³⁵ women derive fewer benefits than men from policy developments and related initiatives, such as the Government of Malawi's (GoM's) Farm Input Subsidy Program (FISP), which does not directly address women smallholder's particular constraints and needs.³⁶

For many female smallholders the **lack of access to inputs, technology, finance and markets** is compounded by additional barriers as a result of discriminatory attitudes, behaviors, and practices. These include limited access to land and **property rights**, greater responsibilities for household and subsistence labor than men, limited control of inputs and proceeds, lower wages, minimal support from government and institutional systems, and limited access to cultivation of higher value crops and agricultural enterprises. In addition, women are often allocated the poorest land for household food crop production.

Institutionally, where extension services operate, these are often not gender sensitive and typically target men, even when the subject is a 'food' crop that women grow. Accessing inputs often involves traveling to markets, as does selling production surpluses, which is difficult for women with their multiple household roles. Further barriers to market access are: **women's limited participation in farmer's groups/associations**; low capacity of producer associations for most crops other than tobacco, cotton or mainly male-grown cash crops; and **lack of experience and opportunities** for market linked outgrowing and contract farming³⁷.

These analytical efforts clearly show that poverty in Malawi has a decidedly female face. CARE Malawi's strategic plan, which is based on the underlying causes of poverty analysis, focuses on key strategic objectives relevant to this impact population, in particular:

1. to reduce vulnerability amongst marginalized women and
2. to achieve sustainable economic empowerment and food and nutrition security for vulnerable household

34 A Shadow Report To The Malawi Government Sixth Periodic Report On The Implementation Of The Convention On The Elimination Of All Forms Of Discrimination Against Women, Submitted To The Cedaw Committee'S 45th Session, By Women And Law In Southern Africa Research And Educational Trust (WLSA Malawi), Ngo Gender Coordinating Network, 2009

35 "Malawi: Women, agriculture and food security" FAO 2008; "Malawi: Multi-Sector Gender Profile" ADF 2005.

36 For example, where women work on family farms that can now expand output of cash and staple crops, this may increase the labor required of women but reduce their control over proceeds.

37 Source: WAA proposal

ADDITIONAL ANALYSIS/INFORMATION REQUIRED:

Summarize **key features of food insecurity** (e.g. from M-VAC, country office baseline): stunting rates, progress on MDG1, etc

Identify major sources of food and income flows for different sub-groups; key constraints and opportunities

Expand analysis to include **peri-urban food insecurity** (current focus is on rural areas) and define peri-urban & how is rural food security influenced by peri-urban issues (remittances; flow of goods, services and people etc)

Women's knowledge of their own rights

Mapping key laws, policies on gender, mapping key actors in the gender movement in Malawi

Include information on **climate change mitigation** and how this impacts this population.

The **program should broaden its focus** on agricultural production and nutritional security to look at the woman as more than just a productive unit.

Need to look beyond just the participation and representation of this group. There needs to be more focus on their ability to negotiate – the relationship between men and women and how that impacts on a woman's empowerment.

Holistic view of the woman: not just a producer but also a homemaker, caregiver, wife, childbearer, mobilising resources outside of the home, counsellor for the children, social responsibilities (representing family, church, community member, reciprocal community relations). Consider her:

- health needs (maternal and child health, family planning, sexual and reproductive health, HIV/AIDS),
- issues of social capital and exclusion (less of an issue for this impact population than P2 and P3 but can still be a constraint)
- capabilities (resources for the household and access to technology and skills)
- influence and participation in institutions (Does she influence structures, whether in the household or in forums such as VDCs, and how does that link with hopes and aspirations of other women who see this influence in public spaces. How does this attribute to changing social institutions?)

More explicit analysis is required in the strategy document on issues of **gender relations** and **empowerment** of women, and recognizing the rights of women, and this should be reflected in the Theory of Change.

Recommend the team goes back to the UCP analysis to see if there are other critical factors which contribute to transforming gender relations (How to involve men in a holistic way? How do men view women? How do you balance providing access to women's rights/productive resources without creating conflict between men and women? How do you ensure men understand that by collaborating with women the household's economic situation will improve? Not just about giving women better access to institutions but ensuring they are supported by men when they do. How do you measure improvement's in a woman's decision making within a household?)

Analysis could be strengthened with a greater focus on sexual and reproductive health issues for this impact population. Recommended that the program reviews the supporting documents/UCP analysis used to identify this impact population and include issues such as:

Informed and negotiated choices on family planning, and availability of quality services (more important for this impact population than P2 and P3);

Voice in decision making;

Leadership & effective representation;

Specific issues for lactating women;

HIV/AIDS (this is not coming out clearly enough in the strategy. What are the specific needs of this impact population – education, prevention, treatment, coping, care and support, extension workers, HIV nutrition?).

Include the **CARE Malawi SRH research outcomes** as they relate to this impact population, once it is completed.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Impact goal statement

Women, who are empowered socially and economically, are able to exercise their rights to access and have control over productive resources and services, and enjoy more diverse and reliable access to income and sufficient nutritious food.

The impact goal focuses on control of productive resources and economic outcomes. **Suggest rephrasing the goal** to also include a rights-based focus which reflects the importance of empowering women. This will be informed by the additional analysis on these issues.

Impact population statement

Women in vulnerable, chronically food insecure, rural smallholder households³⁸.

Impact Population Characteristics

These include economically productive women who earn less than \$2/day³⁹; have land and labor and minimal assets, practicing sub-optimal production techniques, with limited access to, use and control of resources, opportunities and services, and are under producing. They also include women in households hosting chronically ill. Their households are chronically food insecure and exposed to a range of vulnerabilities

Characteristics:

- Low agricultural productivity due to reliance on rain fed agriculture, limited and inadequate skills required to increase production, no access to improved seeds (hybrids) and fertilizers, inadequate crop diversification leading to low nutrient diets in small quantities
- There are high levels of chronic or untreated health conditions such as malnutrition, water born diseases, worm related illnesses etc.
- Their children are chronically malnourished, approximately 30% of children under five
- Low income returns from crop sales
- Limited access to formal and informal financial services creates an inability to purchase or produce adequate food.
- Limited information about existing economic opportunities.
- Unreliable source of income
- Limited capacity in food processing and utilization
- Limited trained government extension workers
- High dependency ratio among poor families: high food demand, less labour to supply it
- Low literacy and numeracy: inhibit access information and understanding, skills
- Skills constraints: May have land and labor, but insufficient skills; or have land, but insufficient labor
- Low diversity in livelihoods
- Low asset base
- This impact population includes people from a range of social status – they may be close to the chief, or not close to the chief but in their community of origin, or in obwera marriage.

³⁸ The relevance of this impact population was confirmed at the SARMU Program Quality Network meeting in May 2010, due to the chronic food insecurity and marginalization (by men) suffered by this group.

³⁹ National Statistics Office Household Survey use a figure of Mk44 (30c) expenditure per person per day

- Adult women including the elderly.
- Land holding or landless households

Need to define:

Vulnerability

Rural (does this include peri-urban?)

Sub groups

- The landless, or those with no time to work on their land

Need to define sub groups

Target population

Working at the underlying cause level requires us to rethink our traditional understanding of “target groups.” A key aspect of addressing underlying causes is being able to influence the relationships between groups. Thus, in addition to the impact population discussed above, the project will target a broader array of community members and leaders that will help to support these aspirations because they have productive production resources such as land, labour but are still practising some subsistence farming, as well as specific actors and institutional structures at the regional and national level. For example, improving women’s productive engagement in agriculture and women’s empowerment requires working with:

- Local and National government to influence policies that level the playing. For example, working with the Ministries of Agriculture, Irrigation, Community Development to create direct linkages between existing extension services and community-based extension facilitators;
- Ministry of Agriculture and extension agents to ensure women have access to technology, information, and technical assistance;
- Private sector (agricultural and micro-finance) to open up space for women’s participation in market, value chains, and in gaining access to credit and financing;
- Civil society groups and networks (i.e., CISANET) on issues of equity and promotion and protection of women’s rights;
- Community leaders, village savings and loan committees, and other community actors to promote inclusion of women;
- Community Facilitators to promote women’s participation and place at the table (may include community leaders, merchants/shop owners, civil servants, and youth, etc.);
- Youth (boys & girls) on issues of agriculture, natural resource management, gender equity, etc, and, importantly,
- Working with men from target households as well as men participating in VSLAs on issues of gender equity, fairness, and respect.

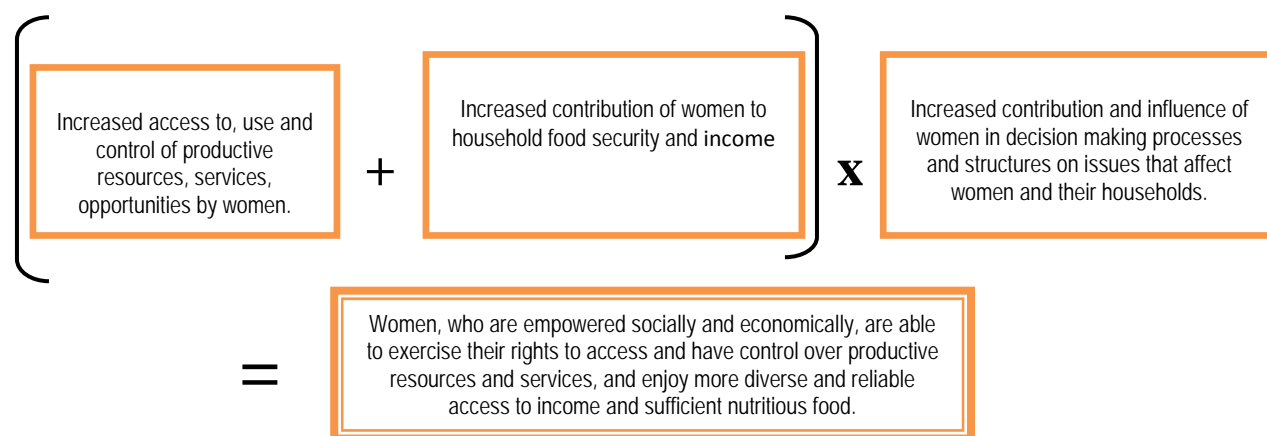
THEORY OF CHANGE

CARE Malawi have developed a Theory of Change for how households, and especially women, in the impact population could make permanent changes in their livelihood and social status (ie. move from one cluster to another).⁴⁰ The team then attempted to select and design the package of interventions that would most effectively achieve the desired shifts at the lowest costs (the least expensive path to shift per person / households)⁴¹.

Domains of change

Based on these and other findings, the following three domains were developed:

1. Increased access to, use and control of productive resources, services and opportunities by women.
2. Increased contribution of women to household food security and income
3. Increased contribution and influence of women in decision making processes and structures on issues that affect women and their households.



Consider whether the team wants to include the mathematical model in this strategy document. Does it help to interpret the domain of change and understand the hypothesis or could it confuse people (especially external viewers/donors)? Does CARE have the rigorous data required to support such a model?⁴²

By helping women gain access to, use of, and control over productive resources, they will be able to contribute more agricultural enhancement and production. They will also develop skills, knowledge and relationships along the way that will raise their profile in the agriculture sector. As their profile is raised and discriminatory attitudes and other barriers are reduced, women will be able to increasingly have more control over decisions that affect their labor, resources & assets, households, their bodies, and local governance issues that affect women, their households, as well as future generations. As women

⁴⁰ The team decided to work with both of the largest clusters, because, as was described earlier, the research suggests that focusing on only one subset in a given community at a given time is extremely difficult – the community itself will find ways to spread the inputs more thinly and include a broader percentage of households, even if this means that no one achieves a tipping point. There are cultural reasons for this, related to how chiefs and community leaders maintain their leadership (patronage). How, working with both groups does not imply using the same ToC or interventions strategy with both subsets.

⁴¹ This TOC is based on the TOC for the Women in Agriculture project, which will be the key implementing project for this Program/impact population.

⁴² Questions raised by the P1 team at the CARE Malawi SRH workshop, 24 May 2010.

can more equitably engage in productive agricultural activities and extra-household decision making they will become increasingly empowered both socially and economically.

Domain of Change 1 – Increased access to, use and control of productive resources, services and opportunities by women

- Service delivery takes women’s needs and constraints into consideration⁴³
Women gaining greater access and control of productive assets
- Men consult or engage with women on household resource allocation⁴⁴
- Legal framework in place that secures women’s inheritance and tenure rights⁴⁵

Consider collapsing first three pathways into one?

Domain of Change 2 - Increased contribution of women to household food security and income

- Women able to engage in gender-appropriate production options⁴⁶
- Women’s participation in producer groups, networks and associations strengthened
- Access to microfinance services and VSL-IGA
- Access to markets and market information services
- Off-farm and non-farm livelihoods diversification
- Productivity enhancing inputs, improved husbandry and conservation agriculture methods applied
- Communities have improved capacity to mitigate risk of disaster

Need more inclusion of issues of nutrition security in this domain. Need more exploration of consumption patterns and who malnutrition affects most in the household.

Domain of Change 3 - Increased contribution and influence of women in decision making processes and structures on issues that affect women and their households

- Building women and men’s understanding of rights and responsibilities at individual and community level to increase women’s agency
- Activities to support men in changing of practice that negatively affect women
- Accountability, transparency and effectiveness of district and community structures (including VSL groups) in planning & budgeting and management processes
- Improved coordination b/w Community institutions
- Enhanced civil society that supports women’s lives

Domains of change need more clarity/strengthening. Need to reflect broader issues identified for further analysis above.

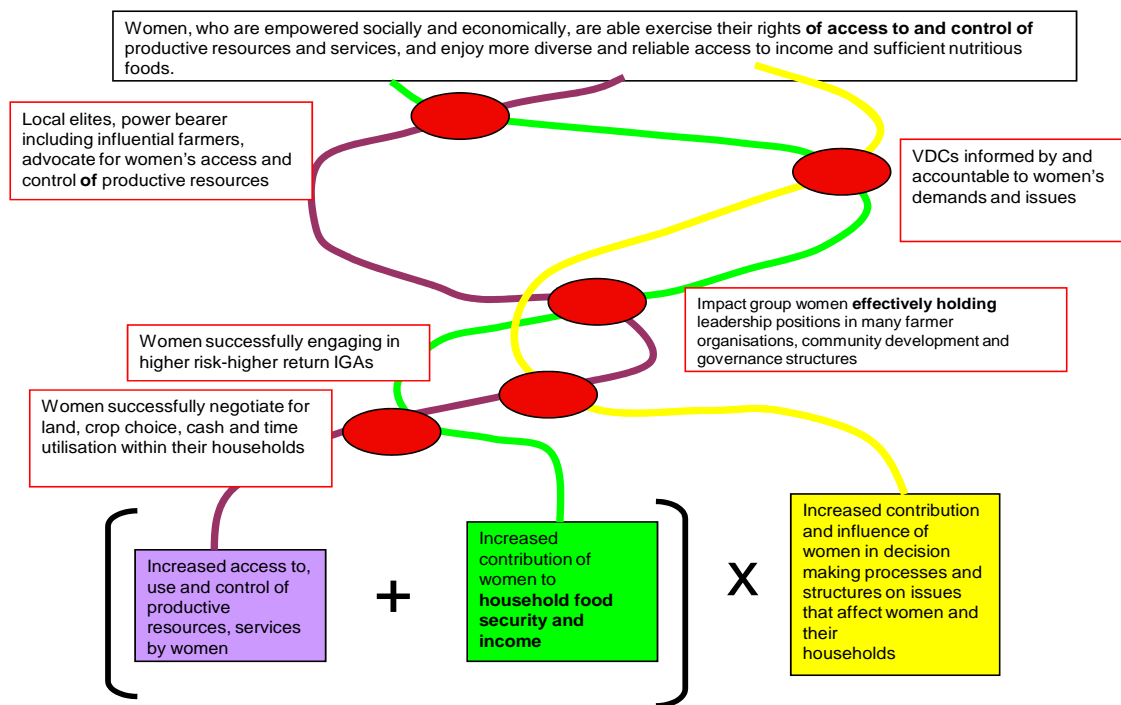
43 Re-writing of original Pathway 3 as this needs to go beyond just agriculture. Recommendation from SARMU PQ meeting, May 2010

44 New pathway to reflect increased recognition by husbands of their wives role in household decision making. Recommendation from SARMU PQ meeting, May 2010

44 New pathway to reflect need for institutional framework to support and protect women) Recommendation from SARMU PQ meeting, May 2010

45 New pathway to reflect the need for women to know what is an appropriate crop or iga for them as women, taking into account social position. Recommendation from SARMU PQ meeting, May 2010

Diagram 2: Summary of recommended P1 Theory of Change



Pathways, Activities and Indicators

Domain 1: Increased access to, use and control of productive resources, services and opportunities by women

This domain enables the impact groups to increase their access and use key productive resources, (such as seed and fertilizer), services (agricultural extension services) and access market opportunities (agricultural and non-agricultural).

The impact indicators for Domain 1 are:

- # of women reporting consistent contact with gender-sensitive agricultural extension services.
- # and type of agricultural production technologies adopted by women farmers.
- # of women reporting their ability to make and/or influence choices and decisions on land use.
- # of women with improved access to productivity enhancing inputs
- # of services and products favorable to women offered by MFI and Financial Service Providers
- # of women that are members of VSL-IGA based groups that are collaborating with other groups in a network

To achieve the above, there are four related pathways and supporting activities:

Access to gender sensitive community-based extension agents and government extension staff improved

Extension services from the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MoAFS) do not function well and where they operate they tend to be focused on male farmers. To address this gap and male-focus, the Program will work with communities to select and train community based extension workers. CARE's experience has been that community based extension workers are more accessible to farmers, especially if equipped with a bicycle, enabling them to service community extension needs from within

the community. The experience of CARE's partners, such as SSLPP and ICRISAT, has been that female community based extension agents, who are also smallholder farmers, are more diligent and likely to continue beyond the immediate support period. It is also clear that female agents also better understand the constraints and issues faced by women farmers, and are better able to communicate with them. 100 Paravets and 300 Farmer to Farmer Trainers will be chosen by the communities, trained and equipped by CARE and its partners, and linked to the District structures for recognition, certification and support. The training of FFTs and Paravets will involve input from CARE, SSLPP, IITA/CIP and ICRISAT.

Access to productivity enhancing inputs (seed, fertilizer etc.) through VSL-IGA Groups and links to input dealers improved

Improving production of target crops and livestock requires improved husbandry (see Domain 1.1) and access to productivity enhancing inputs. Increasing productivity will increase food security and, for some women, increase availability of surplus crops and livestock for selling. To achieve this increase, there is a need to increase productivity for the limited land and labor available to these women. Key inputs are not generally available in rural areas, except at larger markets. The cost of travel to buy inputs and the other constraints on women being able to move around (domestic commitments and cultural views), require that inputs need to be more accessible to these women. The result is that many smallholder farmers, particularly women, are caught in a low input-low output farming system.

To break out of this trap, inputs need to be more accessible in these localities and to the impact populations in particular. Input suppliers are reluctant to incur the high cost of delivery, especially when the level of demand is uncertain. Therefore, CARE and its partners will facilitate the newly formed VSL-IGA groups to undertake collective buying of key inputs. CARE will also enable groups with the necessary capacity and interest to become community based input suppliers themselves, selling beyond the immediate membership, as a group based IGA. Such groups will be linked with input suppliers, where they can source inputs for resale. The linkages will be made through the Agricultural Input Suppliers Association of Malawi (AISAM) and the RUMARK network of input suppliers. The community based agents will be linked with VSL-IGA groups that have decided to supply inputs and also be linked to district level input suppliers to be able to access the full range of inputs and information on them. In some cases, the community based extension agents will also supply some inputs to farmers as part of their own income source.

It is expected that 70% of VSL-IGA groups will be collectively buying at least one type of input by project end. It is also expected that 25% of VSL-IGA Groups will be involved in supply of inputs beyond their membership, with links to at least five significant district level input suppliers. Finally, at least 75% of community based extension agents will be sourcing productivity-related information from public and private sector organizations.

Access to microfinance services through linkages with MFIs and microfinance-focused banks improved

VSLGs enable communities to mobilize their own 'cash' resources and to inter-lend small amounts of capital. In some cases VSLGs accumulate capital through continued saving and lending activities, but others distribute members' savings and accumulated profits at the end of the cycle. Whilst VSLGs can go a long way to meeting small capital needs, groups and individuals that operate IGAs need capital to start and grow their activities. Financial exclusion rates are high in rural areas at over (>60%) and even higher for those with limited incomes. Most banks and non-bank financial institutions (NBFIs) have not been interested in serving rural areas based on a view that the demand is very limited and the risk is high.

However, a few banks and Microfinance institutions (MFIs) have been extending their reach and developing their products/services to be more appropriate for smallholder farmers and poorer clients. In reality, these have not yet reached down to the impact population, but there continues to be interest amongst several institutions to reach further down.

Therefore the program will identify MFIs and banks with microfinance services covering project districts that are interested in linking to VSL-IGA Groups, assist MFIs/banks to research and develop appropriate and accessible products, and link microfinance providers with VSL-IGA groups for service provision. This will not involve providing financial resources to the institutions for their product development/adaptation, rather it will involve making available information on the impact areas and groups, facilitating linkages and research by the institutions and guiding them on how they can increase their reach and suitability of products. The fact that many VSLGs have established their internal track records of savers and borrowers will be of interest to financial service providers as it reduces the lending risk. It is also intended that services will not be restricted to credit, but also include savings and perhaps transmission and micro-insurances.

Producer groups, networks, associations (including impact population) are well organized to access market information and opportunities

Individual smallholder farmers lack purchasing power and have very limited negotiating power when selling their produce, making them vulnerable to exploitation by buyers. Associating with other smallholder farmers for accessing inputs and selling collectively, appears to be an obvious solution. However, the experience of formal producer organizations, such as co-operatives, has generally been poor in Malawi. Levels of trust are low due to past poor experiences of attempts at collective IGAs.

An incremental, responsive and flexible clustering and networking approach to producer groupings is adopted. This brings groups together on issues where collaboration benefits are strongest to deliver practical outcomes. It requires an agreed structure of representation in coordinating committees starting at Village and/or Group Village Headman levels, then across the TA. The main advantage is that the approach focuses on areas of maximum benefit and avoids a significant (time) investment in formalization when groups are not ready for it. It is an incremental approach taking the groups as far as they are willing to go in their trust of each other. It maintains group and even individual control over proceeds from sales, to avoid the risk of misappropriation.

Opportunities for VSL-IGA Groups to collaborate will be mapped, with a view to link groups producing the same commodity both to receive production related support (access to inputs, extension, technical service etc.) and for collective selling. This worked well in I-LIFE through which 80 VSL-IGA groups collaborated to establish common collection points and dates to sell to one buyer on terms negotiated collectively and agreed with each group. Group-determined initiatives will be supported ensuring the approach is demand responsive, but lessons and ideas from other areas will be shared, including exchange visit opportunities.

It is expected that at least 400 VSL-IGA groups will be involved in collaboration on either production and/or marketing initiatives.

Synergies and potential for forming area-based VSL-IGA Group networks for joint production and marketing initiatives will be assessed and formation of area-based VSL-IGA Group 'clusters' based on location and commodities facilitated. CARE will also assess and address capacity limitations of 400 existing immature VSLGs, particularly the needs of the most vulnerable women to enable them to participate.

Finally, there will be support for area-based VSL-IGA Group clusters in joint production and marketing initiatives. Over time, these networks may become more formalized, but this is not a requirement for this project, rather that groups work together where they perceive there to be benefits in doing so.

Domain 2: Increased contribution of women to household security and income:

This domain focuses on increasing food and cash crop production thereby increasing women's contribution to the household food security and income. This will have benefits in improving their 'negotiating' position in intra-household decision making as well as increase resources available to the household for its activities. Through support from BMGF, CARE undertook a scoping process on 15 possible agricultural commodities. Of these, groundnuts, chickens, sweet potatoes and fish-farming were identified by stakeholders, smallholders and through analysis as having most potential. Value-chain studies were conducted on groundnuts and chickens to identify opportunities for vulnerable women and the appropriate entry points and these have informed the Program design and will inform specific interventions such as training. The Program will undertake value-chain studies on sweet potatoes, fish farming and probably horticulture and bee-keeping based on demand from VSL-IGA Groups.

The impact indicators for Domain 2 are:

- Change in time spent in economic activities or in productive paid work
- Level of Women's engagement in profitable income generating activities.
- At least 9,000 vulnerable women and their households have increased food security by at least 2 months
- At least 9,000 vulnerable women and their households have increased production of marketable commodities by at least 25%
- At least 5,000 vulnerable women and their households have more than one source of income

To achieve the above, there are nine related pathways and supporting activities:

Productivity enhancing inputs, improved husbandry and conservation agriculture methods applied.

Building on Outcome 1, CARE will sensitize smallholders on crop production, conservation agriculture, soil and water conservation, irrigation and small livestock opportunities. It will train smallholders in improved husbandry and practices for production of target crops/livestock according to needs and procure and distribute starter packs of seed, small livestock, fruit tree seedlings, equipment and inputs for demonstration purposes. Finally, it will facilitate regular technical advice and guidance to groups by community-based and government extension staff. Essentially this output makes use of the community-based extension staff, input supply and organization of women established under outcome 1. There is a focus on conservation agriculture that will sustain productivity gains and extend these to all aspects of the smallholder's farm though adopting measures that boost soil productivity and reduce its degradation. These methods have been proven in many CARE Malawi projects. 9,000 women and their households will benefit, as well as 3,000 other households in the community that will be able to take part in the training in each target community.

New and existing VSL Groups facilitated to organize group based and/or coordinated individual IGAs

200 new VSLGs will be formed over the life of the project and 400 existing VSLGs will be supported that include large proportions of vulnerable women. New and existing VSLGs will be facilitated to organize

group based and/or co-coordinated individual IGAs. The VSLGs will be facilitated in IGA selection and preparation through the EASPM methodology. Based on the I-Life experience, it is expected that many will focus their IGAs around their current livelihood areas, particularly groundnuts, poultry and sweet potatoes.

CARE, with the assistance of BMGF, has already analyzed the poultry and groundnut value chains to identify intervention points and specific support needed for these categories of women. Further work is required to analyze the sweet potato value-chain and identify opportunities for these women. The VSL-IGA Groups will need to be trained in production and management skills related to their selected economic activities/commodities. Beyond this, CARE will support at least 80 advanced and 20 more mature VSL-IGA Groups to engage in higher level IGA activities for those women and groups that are assessed to be ready to move into potentially higher return activities. Through these groups moving up, other groups will be able to take on the lower level activities that have been vacated.

Crop, livestock and fish farming diversification opportunities targeting women with available land and/or labor, adopted

From CARE's experience in the target areas, there are several crop, livestock and fish farming diversification opportunities. Some of these are related to more complex or resource demanding IGAs within chains that these farmers are already involved in, such as moving from chicken broiler production to layers. Others relate to locally available opportunities, such as utilizing irrigation infrastructure (head ponds etc.) for fish farming and for high value horticulture.

This requires assessing potential for mature and advanced VSL-IGA Groups to diversify into higher value crop/small livestock/fish production; procuring and distributing seed/ small livestock/ fish and related equipment for demonstration purposes; training mature and advanced VSL-IGA Groups on relevant practices for advanced crop, livestock and fish production and processing opportunities; and facilitating links to relevant input providers for higher level commodities. At least 100 VSL-IGA Groups (1,500 women and their households) will be engaged in higher level IGAs.

Off-farm and non-farm livelihoods (trading and small scale processing) targeting land and labor constrained women, strengthened and diversified

Those women with very limited resources, particularly land and labor will have difficulty to engage in agriculture based IGAs that are within their resources. Therefore, the potential for at least 100 immature and less mature VSL-IGA Groups (1,500 women) to undertake trading and small scale processing will be assessed linked to the analysis of value-chains through the EASPM process. Opportunities include trading of commodities and small scale processing, such as frying and packaging nuts for selling as snacks. Further analysis on specific approaches to each type of enterprise will be undertaken to determine ideas and approaches for vulnerable women within their resources and capability. Training will be developed that shares best ideas and practices for particular categories of enterprises, as well as providing more generic IGA/enterprise training modules in key aspects of running an IGA/enterprise. Finally, where needed, links will be made to input suppliers. This will also involve training these VSL-IGA Groups on relevant practices for trading and processing opportunities and facilitate links to relevant input providers.

Availability of marketable crop surplus through improved post harvest management practices increased.

Whilst productivity can be increased for most smallholder crops and livestock, increased production surpluses can increase post harvest losses with more produce stored in increasingly sub-optimal conditions for longer. Therefore improvement in harvest⁴⁷ and post-harvest management practices is needed.

Current practices need assessing to identify good and poor practices to be shared and corrected respectively. It is important to ground any improvements in the reality of these target groups so that new practices reflect limitations, priorities and resources of the target group. For example in groundnuts, there is an increasing trend to indoor storage due to theft, therefore simply focusing on better Nkhokwe⁴⁸ design will not solve the main problem. Attention should be focused on improving security of storage or better indoor storage methods. Appropriate approaches will be piloted and when proven, demonstration units established in target communities, with accompanying training. Technical partners will manage this component, such as ICRISAT on groundnuts. Linkages and research from US-based partners such as General Mills will also be utilized to resolve key problems.

Assessment will be followed by research and pilot testing of improved harvest and post harvest methods based on identified good practices, ensuring adaptation to household constraints. Demonstration units will be established in each community and VSL-IGA groups trained.

VSL-IGA Group members' skills and knowledge in identifying and meeting local market opportunities improved

Smallholders, particular vulnerable women are generally passive in selling commodities. This reflects practical difficulties in getting to markets and/or searching for buyers, as well as psychological difficulties (confidence) and social constraints (on travel). Yet more options for selling increases the chance to sell and the returns for the seller.

The activities involve further research and analysis into how successful individuals/groups undertake their IGAs. This will enable good ideas and practices to be identified for particular types of IGA, as well as good generic IGA ideas and practices. A parallel assessment of skill and knowledge gaps will also be conducted and from this and the previous activity, then targeted practically oriented training will be designed and tested. Mature and advanced VSL-IGA Groups will then be trained.

Access to market information service providers and sources improved.

Information on market opportunities is often limited. Although there are various attempts by GoM and development partners to disseminate market information, none of these approaches have yet adequately filled the information gap. Asymmetry of information, especially on prices and demand, disadvantages smallholders. Simple and readily accessible sources are required, as well as encouraging groups to understand the importance of information and to seek it out in time to make key decisions.

Further research and analysis will identify what information is needed, when and in what form, and how groups and individuals currently meet that need. Research would also cover the information supply side to see what formal and informal sources are or could be available. Appropriate training modules will be developed to utilize approaches within the target groups' capacity, encouraging a pro-active

47 Poor harvesting can result in damage or sub-optimal treatment that increases post harvest losses.

48 Traditional outdoor storage basket.

information getting. Groups will be linked with each other to improve information sharing, and coordinated with collective selling activities. 100 VSL-IGA groups will be trained and linked.

Linkages to a wider range of buyers improved. Access to market information service providers and sources improved.

Smallholders rarely have many links to buyers, other than local traders. Often they rely on traders coming to a community rather than taking produce to the local market. As a result they tend to be price takers and relatively easily exploited, especially where the buyer knows the seller has limited, or no other options.

The completed value-chain research will be complemented by analysis of the trading chains in these localities to identify better/best opportunities and as the basis for developing more effective selling strategies. Requirements of appropriate local, regional and potentially national buyers, will be researched, including volume, location, timing, variety, presentation, quality etc. and how these affect returns to smallholders (higher price offset by additional costs e.g. to transport to the buying point). Buyer-VSL-IGA Group meetings will be convened to enable direct engagement between both parties. CARE will act as a facilitator not an intermediary, working with partners to strengthen VSL-IGA group capacity to negotiate e.g. through training in costing and access to relevant price information. One approach that worked well in I-LIFE to be replicated, is establishing bulking points where buyers can collect larger volumes on a single visit, making it more efficient for all parties. In such cases, buyers pay a premium for extra volume rather than a discount as occurs in some markets.

Communities, including impact groups, have improved capacity to mitigate against risks of disasters and effects of climate change

Climate risks, particularly drought are a recurrent risk for rain fed agriculture. Only a few communities have access to irrigation that can mitigate against failure of the rains, and most locations are not suited to irrigation development. CARE has worked with communities in these target areas to develop drought mitigation measures including small-scale irrigation and water harvesting, catchment conservation, watershed management promotion and seed banks. There is a need to sensitize all communities in Disaster Relief and Recovery (DRR) preparedness and strategies to further reduce the impact of an increasingly volatile climate.

Domain 3: Increased contribution and influence of women in decision-making processes and structures on issues that affect women and their households.

The impact indicators for Domain 3 are:

- # of women in community committees leadership positions
- # of women completing adult Literacy classes.
- Change in literacy and numeracy levels of women.
- Reduced Time spent out of productive or reproductive work through illness (self and HH members).
- Representation women and women in key formal decision-making positions at community and Local Authority levels.
- Representation of women and men in informal civil society bodies and groups.
- Strategic needs of women addressed through different levels of decision making processes and structures
- Enhanced quality and relevance of services to communities especially for women

To achieve the above, there are four related pathways and supporting activities:

Support within the impact population in numeracy and functional literacy skills to form new VSL groups and fully participate in new and existing groups improved

Some of the most vulnerable women are either not yet in VSLGs or marginalized within exiting groups. One of the key reasons for this is their limited literacy, numeracy and confidence to participate. These women are also limited by health-related issues, such as lack of control over their sexual and reproductive health, HIV/AIDS and poor nutrition. Therefore the first step is to identify the most vulnerable women using the vulnerability tiered criteria set in consultation with communities. Thereafter the communities will identify 150 adult literacy trainers (ALTs) from within the community that will be trained and linked with the Department of Community Development.⁴⁹ At least half of the ALTs will be women. 2,500 of the most vulnerable women will be trained. Alongside this, CARE will provide sensitization and training around the health issues that constrain women's participation in VSLGs and community structures.

Formation of new VSLGs, incorporating many of the most vulnerable women, will be facilitated by 50 Village Agents (VAs), of which at least 60% will be women. These new VSLGs will provide the platform for the women to benefit from the project, starting from access to community mobilised savings and loans through the VSLG.

Capacity of Community institutions to coordinate own areas of activity and collaborate with other institutions to reflect women's issues, strengthened

CARE's experience is that there is a need to complement the district and sub-district level community bodies (Village Development Committees (VDCs), Area Development Committees (ADCs) and the District Executive Committee (DEC)) with village level bodies that bring together the various formal and informal groups in each village, so that they can be recognized by the VDCs and be involved in them.

The program will build capacity of institutions (VUCs, ADCs, VDCs, CBOs) and promote democratic representative processes, as well as promote the inclusion of women into leadership positions. It will support community review meetings and develop links with civil society organizations (CSOs).

Accountability, transparency and effectiveness of district and community structures in planning and budgeting and management processes improved

A key challenge for the program is to increase accountability of district and community structures in planning, budgeting and management, as well as service delivery. CARE has developed tools that it has utilised to improve accountability, including Participatory Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (PPME) and the Community Scorecard.

Following sensitisation and training, Community scorecards will be used for various functions e.g. social auditing, planning, monitoring, and evaluation and reporting. This will increase the demand for accountability, transparency, inclusion and responsibility from service providers by service users through jointly analyzing issues underlying service delivery and finding a shared way of addressing those issues.

The Community Scorecard leads communities and partners into rights based approach without actually discussing 'rights' per say. Common tools that are used in the process include, scoring, ranking, social mapping, focus group discussions and trend analysis.

⁴⁹ E.g. Under the SMILHE Project.

Enhanced capacity of civil society to sustain development process and influence policies relating to women

As well as holding district institutions to account, the establishment of VSL-IGA Groups that include vulnerable women provides a considerable opportunity for gathering, analysing and sharing information on these impact groups that can be utilized to influence policies at the national level. Through its Local And Global Action for Food Security in Africa (LAGAFA) project, CARE and its main partner, Civil Society Agriculture Network (CISANET) are working as part of a three country project to raise the effectiveness of civil society advocacy, incorporating community level inputs and evidence into food security and nutrition policy decision making. Too often the voices of the communities and the marginalised are not heard in the policy dialogue. This is partly related to policymakers' lack of priority given to local voices, but also due to the lack of a mechanism to make those voices heard.

The program will map existing agricultural CSOs and networks and strengthen these (particularly those for and involving women) to enhance voice and dialogue. It will support community advocacy (including citizen education) to ensure citizens understand their rights and responsibilities, and are able to engage with local government structures on issues that affect them. Finally it will facilitate links with established CS networks at district/national level to foster advocacy at district/national level

Breakthroughs⁵⁰

- Local elites, power bearer including influential farmers, advocate for women's access and control of productive resources
- Impact group women effectively holding leadership positions in many farmer organisations, community development and governance structures
- VDCs informed by and accountable to women's demands and issues
- Women successfully negotiate for land, crop choice, cash and time utilisation within their households
- Women successfully engaging in higher risk-higher return IGAs

Risks and Assumptions

Need to include risk and assumptions for program delivery. This can be pulled from the Women in Agriculture design and other project design documents/M&E frameworks for contributing activities.

⁵⁰ Breakthroughs recommended at SARMU PQ meeting May 2010 to reflect pathways.

PROGRAM APPROACH

This program brings together several operational approaches that have each been piloted/proven in other projects implemented by CARE and its partners over recent year, particularly in Central Region, which is the operational area for this project:

1. Using Village Savings and Loan Groups (VSLGs) to strengthen women's capacity to develop leadership and group skills, to save and inter-lend, and as a vehicle to increase their involvement in household and community decision-making;
2. Using established and well functioning VSLGs as the basis for establishing group and individual IGAs for vulnerable women;
3. Using clustering and networks of groups to increase production and marketing collaboration between groups; and
4. Using the Village Umbrella Committee model to increase women's engagement in community and district level decision making, and to demand services from district and national level government;⁵¹

Integration of these operating models provides a unique opportunity to test and prove the combination in a way that will significantly impact on vulnerable women.

In addition, CARE will utilize a number of proven tools in support of the above:

- Value-chains analysis to establish the position and the production and market opportunities for vulnerable women;
- Economic Activity Selection Planning and Management (EASPM) to enable VSLGs to select appropriate income generating activities (IGAs).
- Participatory Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation to enable vulnerable women to participate in district and sub-district service planning and delivery.
- Community scorecards to promote the voice of the vulnerable and improve participation and accountability of all community members in development activities;

The Program approach is to enable women in the targeted impact groups to be able to participate in decision-making concerning their lives and access relevant services through Groups.

Groups are one of the best targeting mechanisms to promote change if they involve both men and women. Through training, consciousness raising and organizing among women and men, women can gain skills and confidence to negotiate power in community and household affairs. Groups present opportunities to explore more equitable relationships between men and women and greater acknowledgement of how structures perpetuate gender inequity to ensure gender equity and sustainable development. Working in groups that have economic power at the household and community level also helps women to engage with community institutions and power centers (VDCs, chiefs, etc.) on issues of land and water access in ways that individual women cannot.

Through groups, there is also good uptake of targeted training messages and services, increased confidence and self worth of individual members, enhanced awareness of issues of power and gender, increased social networks and sense of unity with other women and men and groups, and some equitable relationships between men and women. CARE has also witnessed that women working in

⁵¹ CARE's SMILHE Project pioneered this work

groups, even those who are most marginalized, can push gender boundaries further than women acting individually. It is however important to understand that groups are sites for power struggles too: Groups and the women in them have their own unique power relations, preferences, strategies, strengths and vulnerabilities. Working with groups we must take into account differences among women to ensure the inclusiveness and effectiveness of groups as drivers for women's empowerment.

CARE's internationally proven Village Savings and Loan (VSL) methodology enhances solidarity among women and builds social economic and political influences around their shared agendas; it organizes women and creates opportunities for women as recipients of knowledge, goods and services. The VSL approach makes it easy to promote economic development, and also creates an opportunity and platform with which women can raise demands for gender equity and rights. For the women, VSL also increases their ability to contribute to household decision making, and making easier for them to meet their increased responsibilities.

Lessons drawn from projects indicate that VSL Groups (VSLGs) and the networks among VSLGs significantly increase women's social capital, knowledge and support. Using VSL creates a very sound platform as an entry point to address other issues important to women.

The success of the 'VSL-IGA Groups' contrasts with previous experience in Malawi where groups established just for IGAs have mostly not succeeded. Grafting IGA onto established and well functioning VSLGs proved much more successful than forming IGA Groups from scratch. High group cohesiveness and experience of working together (and resolving problems) are critical success factors. The VSL part of the Group also acts as a source of initial capital. The I-LIFE Project developed this concept into a pilot using the VSL-IGA Groups as the entry point for productivity enhancing support (training and inputs), for introducing alternative income-generation strategies, for improving market access opportunities through collective selling. The Group structure provided peer support and confidence to members to engage in IGA opportunities.

Intra-household Gender Dynamics:

Decision-making for women in smallholder households involves complex issues of intra-household gender dynamics; women make economic choices based on consideration of these dynamics; these choices seem sub-optimal from a purely economic standpoint, but are eminently rationale when seen from a social standpoint; women intrinsically know how far they can push gender boundaries at a given moment in time and tailor their actions accordingly. Key finding / breakthrough: women working in groups, like VSLGs, can push gender boundaries further than women acting individually. VSLGs can undertake activities and control assets and resources that individual women cannot, as these would be confiscated by male relatives. Common wisdom is that group-based IGAs are less desirable than individual ones, because of the management and trust issues. This is why many producer associations/co-operatives are not sustainable. However, VSLGs have already sorted out the trust issues by the nature of how they are formed and develop. The group structure is the mechanism to overcome gender barriers.

By increasing their economic power in crops and enterprises in value chains that are traditionally 'more open' to women, women increase their ability to negotiate control and influence over other household crops and value chains where they do not traditionally exercise influence (e.g. tobacco).

Economic Activity Selection, Planning and Management:

VSLGs in this method are classified into three: immature (15-25%), mature (50-60%) and advanced (15-25%). Due to different levels of maturity, loan fund portfolios, savings, and loan delinquencies, VSLGs pursue different IGAs. Given that most VSL members are either semi-literate or illiterate, sometimes choosing the best enterprise can prove very difficult. Economic Activity Selection, Planning, and

Management (EASPM) has been designed and tested to help the VSL members make informed choices of economic activities in a truly participatory manner.

The EASPM process is a highly participatory methodology where a facilitator, such as a Village Agent (VA), works with a group over 2-3 days to enable the group or individuals to self-identify possible IGA opportunities suited to that particular group. The group makes its own decision based on technical, marketing potential, environmental and financial viability of the economic activity and this is the starting point for establishing a VSL-IGA Group.

Value Chain Linkages:

The WIA team chose to include value chain linkages and business development as key approaches due to the realization that there are limits to the increases in food security for women that can be realized through the consumption smoothing and safety net features of VSLAs and development of IGAs that market only to the local community. This is the phenomenon where local demand for selling cakes and petty commerce is saturated as more and more VSLAs are formed, and as more women become involved in VSLAs, the profitability of enterprises that target the local community diminishes. In order to increase the overall size of the local economy, there must be links with external markets⁵². While mature VSLAs provide a stable base for the formation of agribusiness ventures, other support is needed to help them effectively tap external markets on a larger scale.

Likewise the choice of the value chains themselves is based on the understanding analysis of gender dynamics. Among the array of value chains that provide a potential form of income to women (as compared to ganyu), there were roughly 3 types:

Lucrative but women have little control	Relatively less lucrative (at least initially) but women can participate in certain circumstances	Even relatively less lucrative but women can engage very freely
e.g. tobacco; maize	e.g. broiler production, large livestock, fish farming	Groundnuts; sweet potatoes
Strategy = enable women to gain power and influence in this sphere, either by improving their ability to negotiate for access or targeting men and community leaders to change the enabling environment	Strategy = support women to undertake these 'boundary pushing' activities starting from the protection of a group IGA linked to a VSLA	Strategy = support women to increase their revenues in these value chains; increased income will translate into increased confidence and power that will enable them to engage in more lucrative value chains.

The WIA team eventually chose the second two strategies, choosing to support women from the impact population in mature VSLAs to venture into new (and potentially more lucrative activities) through group IGAs. The theory is that as women gain economic power and push gender roles in group IGAs, that this will help to create more space for women (either in groups or as individuals) to feasibly enter into 'men's crops', while still maintaining control over resources. This might or might not happen

⁵² It is not necessary for all VSLA groups and individual members to be targeting external markets. Even if only a portion do, the increased revenues that they bring into the community increase demand for local products and create new markets for VSLA members that are still only targeting local markets.

automatically. But either way, we felt that it is a necessary precondition for potential later interventions that would attempt to improve the enabling environment for women in men's value chains / crops.

Functional Literacy and Business Skills Development:

Many vulnerable women have low literacy and numeracy, as well as being disempowered in their sexual and reproductive health relations. They are especially vulnerable to and affected by HIV/AIDS. The most vulnerable women may often be excluded from most development activities including VSLAs or are unable to fully participate in existing VSLAs or other economic activities. Empowering women with numerical and functional literacy skills enhances their ability to actively participate and benefit from development activities and also reduces the risks their success might bring on issues of HIV/AIDS, sexual reproductive health and nutrition.

The empowerment benefits of functional literacy and numeracy are well documented. However, projects often avoid the former due to the high cost. We believe that we have a very low cost model that can be easily grafted onto the core VSLA training and agricultural extension through CFs model.

Crop and Livestock Diversification:

Most smallholders rely on low productivity and undiversified farm-based livelihood activities. Low production and poor diversification reinforce vulnerability to external factors such as drought, flood and common pests/diseases that impact crop and livestock production. These households are also vulnerable to factors such as HIV/AIDS, disability challenges and other health related problems. With limited accumulated assets, there is a need to strengthen existing farm productivity to increase food security and generate surpluses of marketable crops/livestock. There is also a need to diversify the livelihood base with higher income yielding crops/livestock and off/non-farm income activities, such as small-scale processing and trading. Diversification reduces the risk posed by failure of monoculture. Livestock will enhance access to the much needed animal protein to the household, as well as increase household income when liquidated. Crop and livestock diversification is a key disaster risk reduction strategy for the impact populations.

Participatory Planning Monitoring and Evaluation (PPME):

PPME is a community based planning and monitoring tool that aims to strengthen community based institutions and structures to become more effective and inclusive in service delivery. This helps the structures to build common vision and mission, common understanding of roles, responsibilities and relationships, creates a platform for communities to participate in planning and evaluation of community activities. PPME strengthens internal capacity of institutions to interface with service users from the planning through to evaluation. The scorecard process complements the PPME through active engagement of service users to evaluate the services provided.

Community Institution strengthening and the Village Umbrella Committee Model:

Although the process of Government decentralization has progressed somewhat over the past decade, one of the major risks is in the opportunity for local elites and their traditional leaders to capture resources. This is because much of the decentralization process is being replicated through former patron-client relationships⁵³. In the absence of effective representative structures at the sub-district level, local elites will likely capture the majority of benefits of decentralization and further alienate poorer households who will therefore have less access to government services and resources.

53 Underlying causes Of Livelihood Insecurity Among The Poor In Malawi: The Testing of Five Potential Hypotheses, TANGO International Inc., November 2003.

The main objectives of decentralization in Malawi are to promote democracy, good governance, and broad based participation in local level development through the devolution of responsibility to the district level. Decentralization provides an opportunity to effectively coordinate all development activities at the district and community levels with the equitable allocation of scarce resources and improved access to government services in response to community priorities and needs.

Without strong community institutions such as ADC, VDC, AEC and VUCs, the contribution of community members to the district planning process is stifled. The recognized decentralization structure ends at VDC level, which conglomerates surrounding villages under one group village head to contribute to the development planning and management process. However, the community members (mostly the weak/vulnerable) are too far/low from the structure that their voices can hardly be heard as representation is dominated by village leaders and few power bearers.

Experience from previous projects indicate that creating a structure (Village Umbrella Committee) below the VDC, which is closer to the people at village level promotes voice of the vulnerable and improves participation of and accountability to all community members in development activities. These VUCs have representatives from all existing committees in a particular village, which, apart from enhancing wider community participation in assessment, planning and implementation of development activities, it improves coordination among different activity groups enhancing synergy and reactivates existing committees in the village, it facilitates information sharing among activity groups, and promotes decentralized planning and broad based constituent representation at Group Village/VDC level.

Community Scorecard process:

To improve transparency and accountability in service delivery, community scorecards were developed, an adaptation to the “citizen’s reporting card process”, to provide a mechanism for service providers and users to jointly devise a process towards improved transparency and accountability, as well as increased participation and shared responsibility in service delivery and use. It improves community capacity to monitor, support, and sustain community development activities because it takes into consideration the community voice.

Under WAA, the scorecard process will be modified to assess accountability and transparency of services between levels of users and providers e.g. between communities and community level organizations such as VDC, ADC and VUC and District Assemblies. In addition, members of VSLGs and other groups including women groups would also use the community scorecard to evaluate the quality of services provided by the village, area and district organizations in providing relevant services and support to these particular sector based activities.

The community scorecard process will be modified to train facilitators to administer the scorecards, facilitate participants PRA in communities focusing on access to, perception of and experience with service delivery and use, generate indicators from community appraisals to evaluate service delivery and use, and discuss and grade each indicator in communities and group village focus groups.

Linkage with national policy dialogues:

The final linkage is to connect the voices, information and insights from the work with the impact population to national level dialogue on food security, agriculture, nutrition and other relevant debates. Too often the voice of the marginalised, particularly of women, is not heard and when it is, it carries too little weight. CARE and its partner Civil Society Agriculture Network (CISANET) through its Local And Global Action for Food Security in Africa (LAGAFA) project, is strengthening district level food security and agriculture civil society networks and facilitating direct inputs into policy dialogues. The linkage brings the voices of the marginalised and women to the direct attention of policy makers.

The integration of all the above elements is a major challenge and innovation in its own right.

Partnerships

Recommendation: program should consider the broader focus of the program, beyond just agricultural production and food security (see analysis recommendations). How does this influence who CARE should partner with to attain the program goal?

Key partnerships for this Program include:

- a) Strengthening CARE Malawi's ongoing partnership with research institutions, such as ICRISAT, the World Fish Centre, and the University of Wisconsin. As a learning lab for CARE, CARE Malawi has made development of action research partnerships a key part of our country strategy. Given the different nature of NGOs and research institutions, these types of partnerships are often awkward. Over the past several years, we've developed a strong understanding of how we can best work together on the ground with research institutions to both improve the quality of development interventions and to contribute to a broader body of knowledge. For example, working with ICRISAT ensures that agriculture extension training reflects the most recent and rigorous technical knowledge from research stations in Malawi and provides a direct link to the broader body of world knowledge. Likewise, because of the ongoing relationship, CARE is able to contribute to the formation of ICRISAT's research agenda, including addressing specific problems of pressing importance for women (i.e. making the research agenda more practical and relevant to ongoing development initiatives).
- b) Strengthening ongoing partnerships with local NGOs, such as SSLPP (livestock) and CISANET (agriculture and food security policy and advocacy). By consistently working with a core group of local partners from one grant to the next, CARE has developed a de facto consortium of collaborating organizations for the implementation of livelihood security and agriculture programs. Because of the ongoing working relationships, partners participate in the design of new programs and have a good understanding of each other's operational capacities and technical expertise, with each partner focused on refining a specific portion of the program strategy and approaches over time.
- c) Developing meaningful relationships with government institutions. CARE Malawi has ongoing partnerships with the collaborating government partners including the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MoAFS), Ministry of Irrigation and Water Development and the Department of Forestry and the Dept. of Community Development (Ministry of Gender, Children and Community Development)
- d) Developing new partnerships with local private sector stakeholders.
- e) CARE will take a consultative approach with communities.

Advocacy

Add strategy for CARE's advocacy role in the delivery of this program.

Geographic focus and scale

The Program targets vulnerable women from impact populations in three rural Districts of Central Region, Malawi. Further discussions need to be had on initial program focus areas and opportunities for scale.

Scalability

In discussions with households and individuals that had participated in various interventions, it became clear that most interventions failed to improve the long-term status of households or individuals by enabling them to move to a better-off cluster. Key informants implicitly understood that there was a ‘tipping point’ where they or their household could permanently shift from a sub-optimal (but stable) livelihood strategy to a more optimal (and also stable) livelihood strategy (and maintain that without further intervention), but lamented the fact that most interventions weren’t designed to allow them to do this. The reasons for this were complex. Many interventions made design decisions based on resource constraints and the need to show a low cost-per-beneficiary while achieving the highest level of short-term outputs. As such, these interventions limited the investment per household to the minimum level necessary to show short-term (within project life) gains in livelihood status, instead of defining success in terms of the number of beneficiaries who transited permanently from a sub-optimal livelihood strategy to a more optimal one. A similar effect was seen where community leaders themselves chose to spread resources too thinly to have any discernable long-term impact, in order to avoid angering some community members. This often happened even when the project design tried to target a specific-subset population with sufficient resources to reach a tipping point.⁵⁴ To some degree, trade-off between higher cost per beneficiary in short-term project design and the probability of achieving long-term impact is understood in both these cases, but social pressures (at the community level) and economic pressures (for government and NGOs) usually prevailed.

CARE Malawi has designed the proposed project with scalability as a central objective. We hope to achieve the following:

- An efficient, well-tested, and scalable model for taking different types of rural households, including women farmers, to the next level of livelihood development as quickly as possible
- A clear estimate of the minimum costs of producing sustainable livelihood shifts for different types of households
- Develop objective measures of cost per unit impact (as linked to specific, known outcomes), to provide a more accurate measure of cost-effectiveness than cost per beneficiary

This Program already incorporates several innovative strategies to reduce the cost per unit impact, and developing more efficient ways of achieving impact will be a core focus of the project learning framework. Examples of strategies employed, include:

- Use of the Community Facilitators⁵⁵ model identifies able community members, who are trained in specific technical skills with particular emphasis reaching out to women with various extension messages. This approach, not only does it multiply the coverage of the extension service, it deliberately targets the women as providers as well as users of the extension service. It builds the capacity of the community to sustainably access the technical support services beyond the project.
- Women are targeted as service providers because they better appreciate the limitations, needs and priorities of other female smallholders. CARE’s Technical partners report that

54 This happened with both asset transfers (seeds and livestock) where the amount of seed given per farmer was incredibly small, or with community works programs where a program designed to benefit 15 ultra poor households for 8 weeks would be redistributed to benefit 60 households for 2 weeks.

55 “Community Facilitators” is a generic term that includes individuals selected from the community to implement specific project activities. Examples include community health workers, model farmers / farmer leaders, paravets, Village Agents (trainers of VSLA groups), literacy trainers (linked to the department of community development), etc.

women are more committed than men in such roles, though cannot travel far from their communities for cultural and social reasons

- Cost / scalability and effectiveness in reaching more vulnerable households and women are the primary reasons for using the CF model. CARE's experience with this model (especially under SAFE (agriculture extension) and SAVE-UP (VSL) which are both implemented almost exclusively through CFs) is that, intermittent, but consistent extension services were often more effective than an expensive, one-off intensive training. An interesting finding related to this is that well-trained community facilitators often proved more effective at producing sustainable impact outcomes than intensive, direct training from skilled government or NGO staff. This was due to their ability to interact intermittently, but frequently with a given household over a longer period of time. They were especially effective at reaching risk averse households (including ultra-poor and SFHHs)⁵⁶

Synergies with other programs

Improved family planning for this impact population may free up time for adolescent girls to stay in school (esp birth spacing). This is a synergy with Program 2.

Need more analysis on synergies with other programs.

REFERENCES

- Women in Agriculture project design document.
- P1 Theory of Change summary
- P1 Recommendations from the SARMU Program Quality Meeting, 17-21 May 2010
- Program Strategy Development Workshop (P1), 4 May 2010
- *Underlying Causes of Livelihood Vulnerability and Insecurity in Malawi*, CARE Malawi, November 2004
- CARE Malawi: Refining Impact Groups and Developing Impact Goals. 4 February 2010
- CARE Malawi Strategic Plan 2009-2013
 - o Country Office Strategic Direction/areas of focus to impact statements and indicators
 - o CARE Malawi key planning matrix for core indicators

⁵⁶ This was also a finding of the BMGF SAVE-UP project which is funding a scale-up of VSLAs in Malawi, entirely through the use of local NGOs and Village Agents.

P1: RURAL SMALLHOLDERS THEORY OF CHANGE SUMMARY

IMPACT POPULATION: Women in vulnerable, chronically food insecure, rural smallholder households.

GOAL: Women, who are empowered socially and economically, are able to exercise their rights to access and have control over productive resources and services, and enjoy more diverse and reliable access to income and sufficient nutritious foods.

CHARACTERISTICS	UCP/PROBLEM STATEMENT	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Economically productive women who earn less than \$2/day - Minimal land and labor and assets - Practice sub-optimal production techniques Limited access to, use and control of resources, opportunities and services - HH is chronically food insecure and exposed to a range of vulnerabilities & shocks like hunger and further impoverishment - Lack of empowerment 	<p>AGENCY: Low levels of literacy, Lack of technical knowhow and business skills, Gender based discrimination</p> <p>RELATIONS: Limited decision making power, Lack of time to pursue opportunities as they are overburdened with labor & high dependency ratio, Unequal gender power relations</p> <p>STRUCTURAL: Inequitable tenure or leasing systems, Lack of information flow on resources, services, opportunities; Unfamiliar and complicated procedures, Inadequate access to trade information and market research, Inadequate access to credit and finance , Weak governance processes, Poor representation of impact group priorities in formal and informal decision making spheres, Lack of voice, Weak civil society</p> <p>TECHNICAL: Poor production techniques; unfertile soil; inadequate storage facilities; poor infrastructure; limited diversification</p> <p>ENVIRONMENTAL: Depleting or increasingly scarce natural resources, unpredictable rainfall patterns and water tables; shifts in weather patterns</p>	
DOMAINS OF CHANGE	PATHWAYS OF CHANGE	MAJOR BREAKTHROUGHS
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased access to, use and control of productive resources, services and opportunities by women. 2. Increased contribution of women to household food security and income 3. Increased contribution and influence of women in decision making processes and structures on issues that affect women and their households. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Producer groups, networks, associations strengthened - Access to microfinance services & VSL-IGA - Access to gender sensitive community-based extension agents and govt extension staff - Communities have improved capacity to mitigate risks of disaster risk - Linkages to a wider range of buyers - Access to market information service providers - Off-farm and non-farm livelihood diversification - Productivity enhancing inputs, improved husbandry and conservation agriculture methods applied. - Enhanced civil society - Accountability, transparency and effectiveness of district and community structures in planning & budgeting and management processes - Improved coordination b/w Community institutions - Develop numeracy and functional literacy skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local elites, power bearer including influential farmers, advocate for women’s access and control of productive resources • Impact group women effectively holding leadership positions in many farmer organisations, community development and governance structures • VDCs informed by and accountable to women’s demands and issues • Women successfully negotiate for land, crop choice, cash and time utilisation within their households • Women successfully engaging in higher risk-higher return IGAs

