Gender, Protection and Inclusion in Anticipatory Action - Malawi Analysis

Country Report

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Contents

Tables

Figures

Acronyms

AA	Anticipatory Action
CLEAR-AA	Centre for Learning on Evaluation and Results - Anglophone Africa
CBO	Community-Based Organization
DODMA	Department of Disaster Management Affairs
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GVH	Group Village Head
KII	Key Informant Interview
MACODA	Malawi Council for Disability Affairs
MoGCDSW	Ministry of Gender, Community development and Social Welfare
NAP	National Adaptation Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PWD	Persons with Disabilities
TA	Traditional Authority
TWG	Technical Working Group
UBR	Unified Beneficiary Register
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WFP	World Food Programme

Foreword

Malawi stands at a critical crossroads, where recurring climate shocks collide with deep-rooted social inequalities. I have witnessed firsthand how communities brace for droughts, floods and cyclones, only to find the most marginalised slipping further behind. This report provides a vital compass for steering timely and targeted interventions that uphold the dignity and rights of everyone.

Between September and November 2024, our team undertook comprehensive field research across Chikwawa and Nsanje districts. The exercise engaged 790 households, facilitating five focus group discussions and conducting 11 key informant interviews. This mixed-methods approach revealed how dimensions like gender, age, disability and geographical location influence patterns of vulnerability and resilience. It effectively bridged the gap between high-level policy objectives and the everyday experiences of women, men, children, older adults, and persons with disabilities.

The findings reveal stark disparities: men tend to access early warning systems more readily, while women, persons with disabilities and child-headed households often depend on second-hand information. Evacuation centres lack gender-sensitive facilities and health and sanitation needs surge with each climate shock. Coping strategies, from food rationing and savings groups to distress migration and transactional sex, underscore the urgent need for inclusive planning and support.

Our recommendations chart a bold path forward. We must integrate gender and disability perspectives into every phase of anticipatory action, reinforce community leadership, harmonise triggers across stakeholders and strengthen complaints and feedback mechanisms that ensure accountability. Only by embedding fairness and accessibility at the core of our collective efforts can we build lasting resilience.

I extend my deepest gratitude to the Government of Malawi, our partner, and the communities who shared their stories. May this report inform strategic decisions, inspire collaboration and drive a future where no one is left behind.

Dr Hyoung-Joon Lim
Country Director and Representative,
WFP Malawi

Executive Summary

This report presents an in-depth Gender, Protection, and Inclusion Analysis for Anticipatory Action (AA) in Malawi, commissioned by the World Food Programme (WFP) Regional Bureau for Southern Africa in collaboration with Ministry of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare (MoGCDSW). The Analysis was Conducted from September to November 2024 in Chikwawa and Nsanje districts. The study aims to inform WFP's Anticipatory Action programming by identifying the diverse vulnerabilities, barriers, and risks faced by women, men, adolescents, and people with disabilities in climate-induced emergencies. The findings provide actionable recommendations to enhance gender-responsive, inclusive, and effective disaster preparedness and response strategies in Malawi.

Malawi is among the poorest countries, with 71% of its population living in extreme poverty and 62% of the workforce engaged in agriculture. These high poverty levels exacerbate the effects of climate change, as the country faces recurring droughts and cyclones. In 2023, Malawi declared a state of emergency due to El Niño events, which severely affected livelihoods and food security. The vulnerability of communities to climate hazards is further compounded by gender inequalities, social stigma, and exclusion of people with disabilities, which are often rooted in religious and traditional beliefs.

The study employed a convergent parallel mixed-methods design, combining both quantitative and qualitative research approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by vulnerable groups in Malawi's AA framework. Quantitative data was collected through structured household surveys conducted in Chikwawa and Nsanje districts. A representative sample was drawn to ensure diversity across age, gender, socio-economic status, and disability status. The survey captured information on demographic characteristics, climate hazard exposure, access to early warning information, and coping mechanisms. Data analysis was performed using STATA, where descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were applied to identify trends and correlations.

Qualitative data was gathered through focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIIs) with community members, local leaders, government officials, and representatives from NGOs. FGDs were conducted separately for women, men, youth, and persons with disabilities to capture diverse perspectives and minimize power imbalances. Key informant interviews were held with stakeholders involved in disaster risk management and gender-focused programming, including officials from the Department of Disaster Management Affairs (DODMA), the Ministry of Gender, and humanitarian agencies such as WFP and the Red Cross.

The study finds that early warning information is not equally accessed by all members of society. Men have better access to radios, phones, and community meetings where they receive critical weather updates, giving them decision-making power within families and communities. Women, on the other hand, rely on their husbands or other community members for information, putting them at a disadvantage when it comes to preparedness. Similarly, people with disabilities struggle to access information due to literacy barriers and physical constraints that prevent them from attending community meetings. Child-headed households, particularly those without older children, also face challenges in receiving early warning messages and understanding available support mechanisms.

During disasters, communities are often displaced and moved to temporary shelters. Overcrowded shelters heighten the risk of

harassment and gender-based violence (GBV) for women, while inadequate sanitation facilities complicate menstrual hygiene management and pregnancy-related care. Women bear the burden of food preparation and caregiving, while men experience heightened stress due to income loss and their traditional roles as providers. Reports indicate that some men sustain injuries or even die while attempting to rescue family members and livestock during floods. Single mothers face compounded challenges, as they struggle to balance caregiving and rebuilding efforts with limited support. The elderly, particularly those caring for orphaned grandchildren, face significant hardships during and after disasters.

Different groups employ varying coping strategies to deal with climate hazards. Women tend to rely on small businesses, informal lending groups, and cooperative farming initiatives to generate income, but their access to credit, land, and training remains limited. In some cases, financial desperation has led to increased engagement in transactional sex, exposing women to further exploitation and health risks. Reports also indicate rising levels of child labour, as children are forced to work when parents lose income or assets. School disruptions due to damaged roads and infrastructure further hinder children's well-being and future opportunities. People with disabilities remain highly dependent on caregivers, as evacuation and food distribution processes often fail to accommodate their needs.

Geographical isolation exacerbates these challenges, particularly in remote villages such as Champhanda and Chazuka. Disaster relief efforts are often centralized, making it difficult for those in isolated areas to receive timely support. Community networks play a crucial role in survival and recovery, with families and neighbours often serving as the primary sources of assistance. Chiefs and local leaders hold significant authority, making them key stakeholders in securing support for gender and inclusion initiatives. However, instances of aid mismanagement and corruption among community leaders have contributed to mistrust in AA interventions, highlighting the need for more transparent and accountable governance structures.

The study finds that Malawi's AA framework faces challenges in harmonizing triggers, addressing inclusivity gaps, and building community trust. There is no standardized approach to ensuring gender and disability inclusion in disaster response, leading to inconsistent treatment of marginalized groups. Beliefs that disability is a form of divine punishment or witchcraft contribute to social stigma, making it difficult for people with disabilities to participate in community decision-making. As a result, their needs are often overlooked in the planning and implementation of AA interventions, including the design of flood camps and the distribution of aid. While organizations such as World Vision and the Red Cross have integrated gender and disability-sensitive practices, systemic barriers such as patriarchal leadership, corruption, and inadequate outreach, continue to limit equitable access to resources.

To ensure inclusive and effective AA programming, it is necessary to strengthen gender and disability inclusion, enhance community engagement and capacity building, improve early warning systems, promote economic diversification for resilience, and harmonize triggers while strengthening forecasting systems. WFP and its key partners should ensure meaningful representation of women, youth, and persons with disabilities in AA planning. Community-led resilience efforts must be strengthened by integrating local leaders, women, and marginalized groups into disaster preparedness initiatives. Early warning systems should be tailored to the needs of diverse groups, particularly persons with disabilities, older adults, and those in remote communities. Economic diversification should be prioritized by developing livelihood programmes that support women-led businesses, youth entrepreneurship, and income-generating activities for persons with disabilities.

Standardized trigger mechanisms should be developed for AA interventions, and forecasting systems must be strengthened to enhance early warning accuracy and effectiveness.

The study underscores the urgent need for inclusive and gender-responsive anticipatory action to mitigate the disproportionate impact of climate hazards on Malawi's most vulnerable populations. Strengthening community participation, improving early warning systems, ensuring economic empowerment, and fostering multi-stakeholder collaboration will be essential to enhancing resilience and ensuring equitable disaster preparedness and response. By implementing the recommended strategies, WFP and its partners can significantly improve Malawi's capacity to anticipate, prepare for, and mitigate the impacts of climate-related disasters, ensuring that no one is left behind in resilience-building efforts.

1. Introduction

The World Food Programme (WFP) Regional Bureau of Southern Africa contracted the Centre for Learning on Evaluation and Results - Anglophone Africa (CLEAR-AA) - to conduct an in-depth analysis on Gender, Protection, and Inclusion in seven countries of southern and West Africa. The countries where the analysis was undertaken include Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Burkina Faso and Niger. This report focuses on Malawi, where the study was conducted from September to November 2024. It aims to inform WFP's Anticipatory Action (AA) programming in Malawi, where climate-induced disasters significantly affect vulnerable populations. By examining power dynamics within families, communities, and policies, the study identifies the diverse needs, barriers, and risks faced by women, men, adolescent boys and girls, and people living with disabilities. The findings will guide the design and implementation of inclusive anticipatory actions, strengthening national and local capacities to build resilience while promoting food security in future emergencies.

1.1 Country context

Malawi is one of the poorest countries, with 71 percent of the population living in extreme poverty (UNICEF, 2023). This high poverty rate exacerbates the country's vulnerability to climate-related disasters. In recent years, Malawi has been frequently experiencing severe droughts and other climate-related hazards. For instance, the country was heavily impacted by the El Niño events in 2023, which led to a state of emergency and international aid requests (OCHA, 2024).

ANTICIPATORY ACTION IN MALAWI

AA in Malawi focuses on pre-emptive measures to reduce the impacts of climate hazards, including relocation, distribution of essential resources, and implementation of triggers based on weather forecasts and real-time data (OCHA, 2024). This method forecasts the occurrence, location, and kind of occurrences such as floods, droughts, and storms using risk analysis and early warning systems. These expectations serve as the basis for prompt responses aimed at mitigating negative impacts. The Department of Disaster Management Affairs (DODMA) plays a pivotal and leading role in implementing and coordinating disaster risk management efforts, particularly within the AA framework. DODMA developed

a National Anticipatory Action Roadmap, collaborating with a consortium of partners including UN agencies such as UNDP, OCHA, FAO and WFP, International NGOs such as Red Cross, Save the Children and government ministries including the Ministry of Agriculture, Gender and Water (WFP, 2024). Guided by the roadmap, DODMA ensures collaboration across 11 disaster management clusters including shelter, search and rescue clusters facilitated by Red Cross and social protection cluster coordinated by the Ministry of Gender. This roadmap was created to unify diverse AA approaches such as risk-based financing and preparedness into a cohesive strategy.

Key WFP AA initiatives in Phalombe and Blantyre provided cash distributions to vulnerable households, particularly those impacted by disasters like cyclone Freddy. These efforts are complemented by strengthening forecasting systems and harmonizing predictive and observatory triggers to ensure early and effective interventions. Regular monitoring and advocacy are central to improving the adoption and impact of AA interventions across the country.

CLIMATE CHANGE IN MALAWI

Malawi is highly vulnerable to climate change, experiencing a variety of climatic hazards such as intense rainfall, floods, seasonal droughts, and dry spells (UNDP, 2021). Over the past few decades, these climatic events have severely affected critical sectors, including agriculture, health, water, and infrastructure (World Bank, 2022). These climate shocks have also exacerbated socio-economic challenges, disproportionately impacting rural communities reliant on natural resources (UNDP, 2021).

The agriculture sector in Malawi employing 62 percent of the workforce and central to the economy, suffers from erratic rainfall and prolonged droughts, reducing crop yields and causing food insecurity (World Bank, 2022) (USAID, 2019). Floods further disrupt productivity, displace communities, and destroy infrastructure,

while reliance on rainfed agriculture and high population growth amplify vulnerability (USAID, 2019).

In response to these challenges, Malawi has implemented a National Adaptation Plan Framework aimed at building resilience and integrating climate change adaptation into Malawi's development strategies (NAP Global Network, 2020). Its strategic pillars include enhancing disaster risk management, infrastructure resilience, and sustainable resource use (UNFCCC, 2015). The framework is complemented by the strategic AA roadmap by implementing actionable measures during emergencies, contributing to the broader adaptation goals. Despite these measures, the increasing intensity of climate-related disasters continues to hinder progress toward sustainable development (The New Humanitarian, 2023).

GENDER, PROTECTION, AND INCLUSION IN MALAWI

Malawi continues to grapple with significant gender and social inequalities, deeply entrenched by cultural norms, systemic barriers, and climate-related vulnerabilities. Only 38 percent of girls, compared to 43 percent of boys, complete secondary school, often hindered by early marriage and household labour responsibilities (World Bank, 2023.21). Women, who constitute the majority of the agricultural workforce, face limited access to land, credit, and decision-making platforms, exacerbating their vulnerability during climate-related disasters (Chinsinga & Chasuka, 2018; Mussa & Masanjala, 2015; Nosheen et al., 2023; Onah et al., 2024). Shared facilities in displacement camps often compromise the safety and dignity of women and girls, while inadequate infrastructure significantly impacts persons with disabilities and older adults during disasters. Gender-based violence (GBV) remains widespread, often intensified by disasters, overcrowded shelters, and resource scarcity (Thurtson et al., 2021). Children, especially unaccompanied minors, are highly vulnerable to abuse, exploitation, and

early marriage during displacement (UNCHR, 2024). Systemic issues like unequal inheritance laws, patriarchal norms, and discriminatory practices further limit women's access to resources and decision-making, compounding their socio-economic marginalization (Nosheen et al., 2023).

While the 2024 Persons with Disabilities Act represents progress in disability inclusion, focusing on rights, protections, and institutional support (MACODA, 2024), systemic gender inequality persists. Addressing these disparities requires inclusive development strategies that target intersecting vulnerabilities, ensuring equitable access to resources, education, and decision-making for women, persons with disabilities, and other marginalized groups (Lovell, 2021).

1.2 Objectives

This assignment focused on understanding the unique vulnerabilities and risks faced by diverse populations in Malawi, particularly in the context of climate hazards such as droughts, floods, and cyclones. Malawi has been significantly affected by these climatic events, which have led to severe food insecurity and economic instability. The study aimed to provide actionable recommendations for WFP to design, implement, and monitor anticipatory actions that are inclusive and responsive to the needs of women, men, boys, and girls, as well as other marginalized groups in Malawi. Through the outcomes of this analysis, WFP sought to enhance resilience and ensure gender responsive, safe and inclusive AA in the country. Table 1 presents key questions and sub-questions that guided the study.

TABLE 1: KEY AND SUB QUESTIONS

KEY QUESTIONS	SUB QUESTIONS
1. What are the gendered dynamics of the hazards and risks anticipatory action aims to cover in target locations (exposure, impact, vulnerability)?	• How do these differ for boys, girls, men, and women – and across other intersecting identities (e.g. gender-based violence)? • How do existing protection mechanisms address the specific vulnerabilities and needs of women, children, and other marginalized groups during climate shocks? • What gaps exist in ensuring their safety and well-being?
2. What are the implications of different hazards for various socio-demographic groups (e.g., based on gender, age, disability) in target locations?	• How do these differ within the country? • What are the implications for people with disabilities, chronic illnesses, and others in situations of vulnerability?
3. What are the needs and priorities of women, men, boys, girls and persons with disabilities when disasters strike or in case of fast onset of disaster in target locations (based on past experiences, and current perspectives) that anticipatory actions should address?	• How do other factors including social norms, power dynamics or identity factors (e.g. age, disability, ethnicity, religion) influence these? • What are the different needs of women, men, persons with disabilities in case of fast onset of disaster or hazards? • What would women, men and persons with disabilities do or prioritize differently if they received the AA support?

KEY QUESTIONS	SUB QUESTIONS
4. What are the barriers faced by women, men, boys, girls, and others facing vulnerability in accessing support when exposed to a shock or hazard?	• How do these differ and intersect/overlap? (consider land tenure, resources, access to information, collective action/social capital, social norms, structural barriers, preferences, etc.) • How do social and cultural norms restrict certain groups, particularly women and girls, from accessing physical spaces or interacting with service providers during disasters? • How can these barriers be overcome to ensure the sustainability of gender equality in the long term?
5. What positive and negative coping strategies linked to climate shocks do women and men utilize?	• How do these differ and what are the implications for their resilience/recovery? • What are the risks associated to these differing coping strategies? • Who is affected by these coping strategies?
6. What roles and responsibilities do women, men, boys, and girls play and have in individual, households, and the community before, during, and after hazards/shocks/disasters in target locations (time use, household decision-making, community leadership/gatekeepers, economic activity, care work, etc.) and how are these driven by social and gender norms?	• How do the roles and responsibilities differ across the country? (time use, household decision-making, community leadership/ gatekeepers, economic activity, care work, etc.)? • What other intersecting identity considerations influence roles in these locations (e.g. age, disability, ethnicity)? • How do prevailing social and gender norms shape the expectations and responsibilities assigned to women, men, boys, and girls in disaster contexts?
7. Who is consulted and makes decisions in households/communities/local/regional and national government in community planning, such as the design of AA plans?	• Who is missing and why? • To what extent are AA plans developed on community, regional and national level? • What mechanisms or practices are in place to ensure that the voices of typically underrepresented groups are included in community planning discussions?
8. To what extent do the structures used to co-design/implement AAPs account for diversity, particularly in terms of involving more local organizations, women-led, etc?	• What are the structures in place? Who is represented and who is not?

KEY QUESTIONS	SUB QUESTIONS
9. What approaches are acceptable and what structures can be built on to facilitate inclusive and gender-responsive participation in HH/community/local government processes for the target locations?	• What are the roles of structures such as specific women's organizations, organizations of persons with disabilities, and community-based organizations in facilitating inclusive and gender-responsive participation? • What approaches are acceptable to facilitate inclusive gender-responsive participation in national disaster risk agencies/relevant ministries?
10. What early warning trends do women, men, boys, and girls identify?	• How is the access to and control over current early warning messaging perceived (taking into consideration intersectionality) and what are the context-specific gendered and vulnerability dynamics that need tracking? • How are the usability, accessibility, and trust in the current early warning messaging perceived by women men, and other groups (consider accessibility, usability constraints)? • How can the dissemination of early warning messages be improved to support certain groups overcome these constraints?

2. Methodology

2.1 Summary of methodological approach and design

The research employed a convergent parallel mixed methods design, combining quantitative and qualitative research methods to collect and analyze data. Mixed methods proved to be the most effective for the study, as it allowed for a thorough understanding of factors that the design and implementation of AA should consider in Malawi. These included: the gendered impacts of climate hazards, the vulnerabilities and capacities of different population groups drawn from quantitative and qualitative data.

2.2 Participants and Recruitment

Participants for this study were community members, including adolescents, boys and girls, middle-aged men and women, older adults, and persons with disabilities. They were selected from both communities where the AA project operates and those where it does not, enabling a comparative analysis. With guidance from WFP, this study was conducted in Chikwawa and Nsanje[1].

The sampling process followed these steps:

1. Communities in each district were clustered based on the TA and GVH.

2. Participant communities were randomly selected from the pool of GVHs.

3. Households were randomly selected from the clustered communities.

4. Participants were randomly sampled from the selected households.

5. Participants were stratified based on demographic categories such as gender, age, urban vs. rural residence, socioeconomic status, and vulnerability.

The selected Group Village Head units (GVHs) in Chikwawa included Kabudula, Champhanda, N'gombe, and Mphungu, while in Nsanje, they were Mapulango, Chazuka, Chithumba, and Kadyamba (refer to the appendix for details).

2.3 Ethical considerations

Standard ethical protocols were strictly followed in selection of participant and data collection.

2.4 Data collection

Quantitative data was gathered through a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire captured details of participants' sociodemographic characteristics, as well as the AA programme-related information, on needs, barriers and experiences. Concurrently, qualitative data was collected via in-depth interviews and focus group discussions to explore participants' lived experiences and perceptions in greater depth. This dual approach combined quantitative data for measurable insights with qualitative data for contextual understanding, particularly on gender dynamics, vulnerabilities, and community responses to climate hazards and anticipatory action strategies.

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1 Beyond Nsanje and Chikwawa WFP is also implementing AA in Phalombe, and Blantyre, with plans for expansion into Mangochi and Machinga.

2.5 Quantitative data

HOUSEHOLD SURVEYS

The structured questionnaire was administered by trained research assistants using tablets. It targeted a representative sample across the selected geographic areas, ensuring consistency and reliability in data collection.

2.6 Qualitative data

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS (FGDS)

Community-based FGDs were conducted with various groups, including women, men, persons with disabilities, and other marginalized communities, categorized by age and gender. In Chikwawa, three FGDs were held: two with young women and men (18-25) from GVH Kabudula and one with women over 25 in Champhanda. In Nsanje, an FGD was held with men over 25 in Champhanda. These discussions explored participants' experiences, challenges, and perceptions of gender, protection, inclusion, and the impact of climate-related hazards on their lives.

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

Semi-structured key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted with local leaders, government officials, NGO representatives, community-based organization members, and AA practitioners, totaling 12 interviews. Respondents were selected in coordination with country offices after finalizing the study communities, with efforts to ensure gender balance, especially among community leaders.

2.7 Data analysis

QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

The data was cleaned in STATA software package and descriptive analysis was carried out across age, gender, employment, education status and other demographic variables to summarize and present key trends, patterns, and distributions.

QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

For the qualitative data analysis, we employed thematic analysis to identify and interpret key patterns and themes emerging from the data. This approach allowed us systematically to analyse narratives and responses from a wide range of participants, ensuring their unique perspectives were represented. The analysis applied an intersectional lens, recognizing how multiple identity markers such as gender, age, marital status, and disability interact to produce varied experiences of vulnerability.

2.8 Limitations

LIMITED REPRESENTATION OF VULNERABLE GROUPS

Despite efforts to include diverse perspectives, some vulnerable groups, such as people with severe disabilities or extremely remote communities were underrepresented in the study due to access challenges or logistical constraints and how small our sample was. However, local leaders could point us towards the specific groups of people needed.

CULTURAL AND SOCIAL BARRIERS

Cultural norms and power dynamics may have influenced participant responses, particularly in patriarchal settings or when discussing sensitive topics like gender-based violence or economic autonomy. By conducting focus group discussions and in-depth interviews separately for diverse groups (e.g., women, men, youth), the study minimized power dynamics and provided safe spaces for participants to share openly.

3. Findings

3.1 Characteristics of the respondents

Appendix Table 2 provides a detailed description of the respondents' characteristics. The survey covered participants from Chikwawa and Nsanje districts. In Chikwawa, 53.1 percent of respondents were women and 46.9 percent were men, while in Nsanje, 51.7 percent were men and 48.3 percent were women. A small proportion of respondents reported having disabilities, with 6.3 percent of women and 9.4 percent of men affected. The majority, 91.9 percent, resided in rural areas, followed by 7.1 percent in peri-urban areas and 1.0 percent in urban areas. In terms of age distribution, 50.7 percent were between 18 and 34 years, 30.1 percent were between 35 and 54 years, and 19.2 percent were 55 years or older. Most respondents, 65.1 percent, were married, with a higher proportion of men at 74.4 percent compared to 56.3 percent of women. Unemployment was high at 27.5 percent, affecting women more than men, with 40.7 percent of women unemployed compared to 13.4 percent of men. Self-employment was common at 31.1 percent, while 4.7 percent were students and 3.3 percent had formal jobs. Education levels varied. A total of 58.5 percent had completed primary education, 26.0 percent had secondary or vocational education, and only 0.8 percent had higher education. A notable 14.4 percent had no formal education, with a higher prevalence among women at 22.2 percent compared to 6.0 percent of men. Religious affiliation was predominantly Christian, with 96.8 percent of respondents identifying as such. Among them, 98.3 percent were women and 95.3 percent were men. A small proportion, 1.9 percent, followed Islam, while 1.1 percent had no religion and 0.1 percent reported other faiths. This highlights the significant role of religion in the respondents' lives.

3.2 Exposure to climate related hazards and impacts

Malawi experiences diverse and frequent climate-related hazards, which have significant impacts on communities, particularly in Nsanje and Chikwawa districts. Flooding is the most commonly recognized hazard, with 97.2 percent of respondents identifying it. Awareness was slightly higher among women at 98.1 percent compared to 96.3 percent of men. Drought is another major challenge, severely affecting agriculture. A total of 93.1 percent of respondents acknowledged its impact, with higher awareness among women at 95.1 percent compared to 90.9 percent of men. Other reported hazards include storms and cyclones at 87.3 percent, pests and diseases at 83.5 percent, heatwaves at 78.2 percent, water scarcity at 74.2 percent, and landslides at 54.5 percent. Cyclones, including Cyclone Freddy, have caused widespread destruction, displacing families and devastating crops, livestock, and infrastructure. Landslides, particularly in hilly areas, pose safety risks and result in damage to property and farmland.
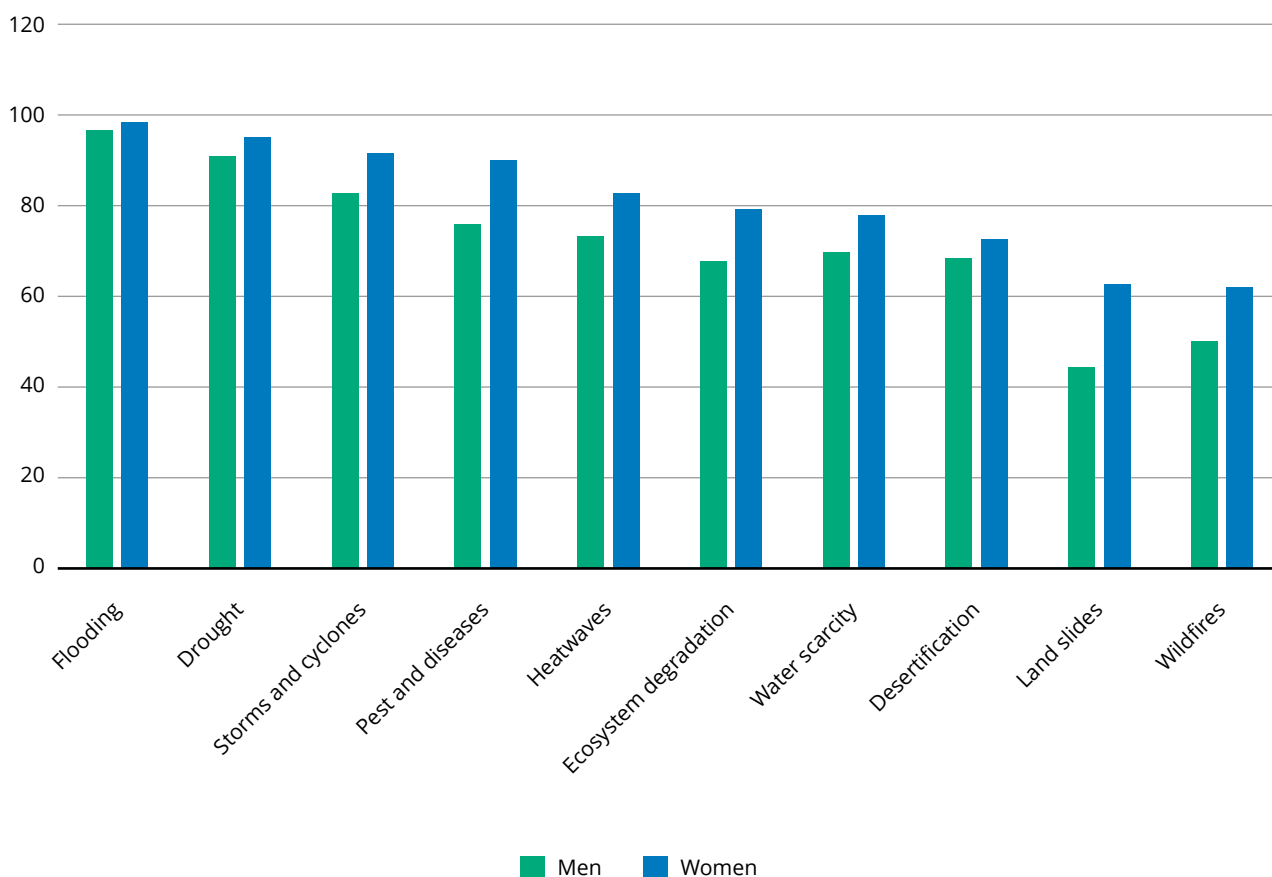
Figure 1: Awareness of climate-related hazards

The frequency of these hazards is widely recognized. A total of 78.7 percent of respondents in Nsanje and Chikwawa perceive them as frequent or very frequent. In Nsanje, 59.8 percent reported frequent occurrences, while 22.9 percent described them as very frequent. In Chikwawa, 55.7 percent considered hazards frequent, and 21.4 percent described them as very frequent. Occasional occurrences were noted by 18.2 percent of respondents, while only 1.8 percent described hazards as rare. The higher awareness among women across all hazards reflects their disproportionate exposure and vulnerability, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions to address these persistent climate challenges.
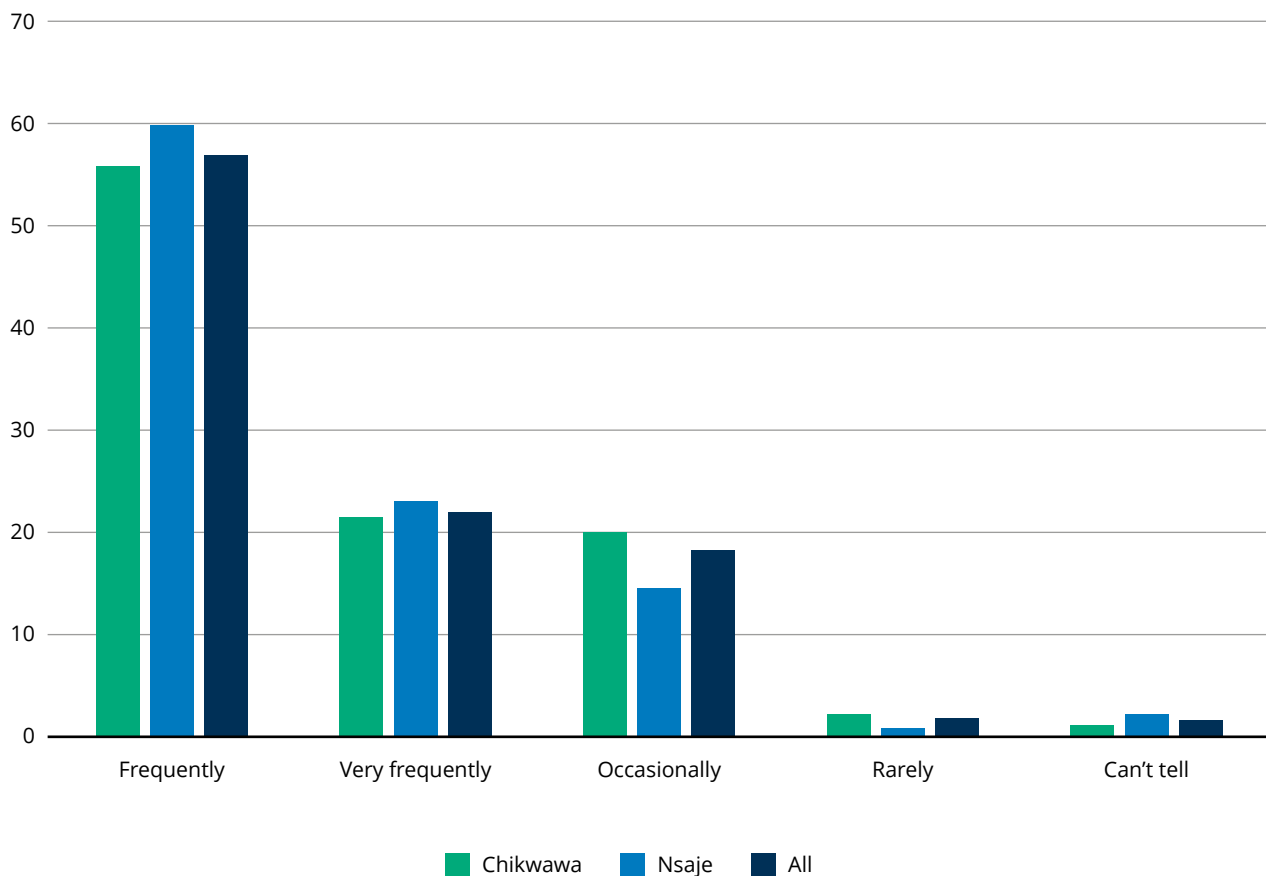
Figure 2: Occurrence of climate hazards

3.3 Gendered impacts of climate related hazards

Climate-related hazards in Chikwawa and Nsanje districts affect men and women differently due to societal roles, responsibilities, and vulnerabilities. Women face heightened challenges related to caregiving, health risks, and resource management, while men grapple with their traditional roles as providers and protectors. Figure 3 illustrates these differences.
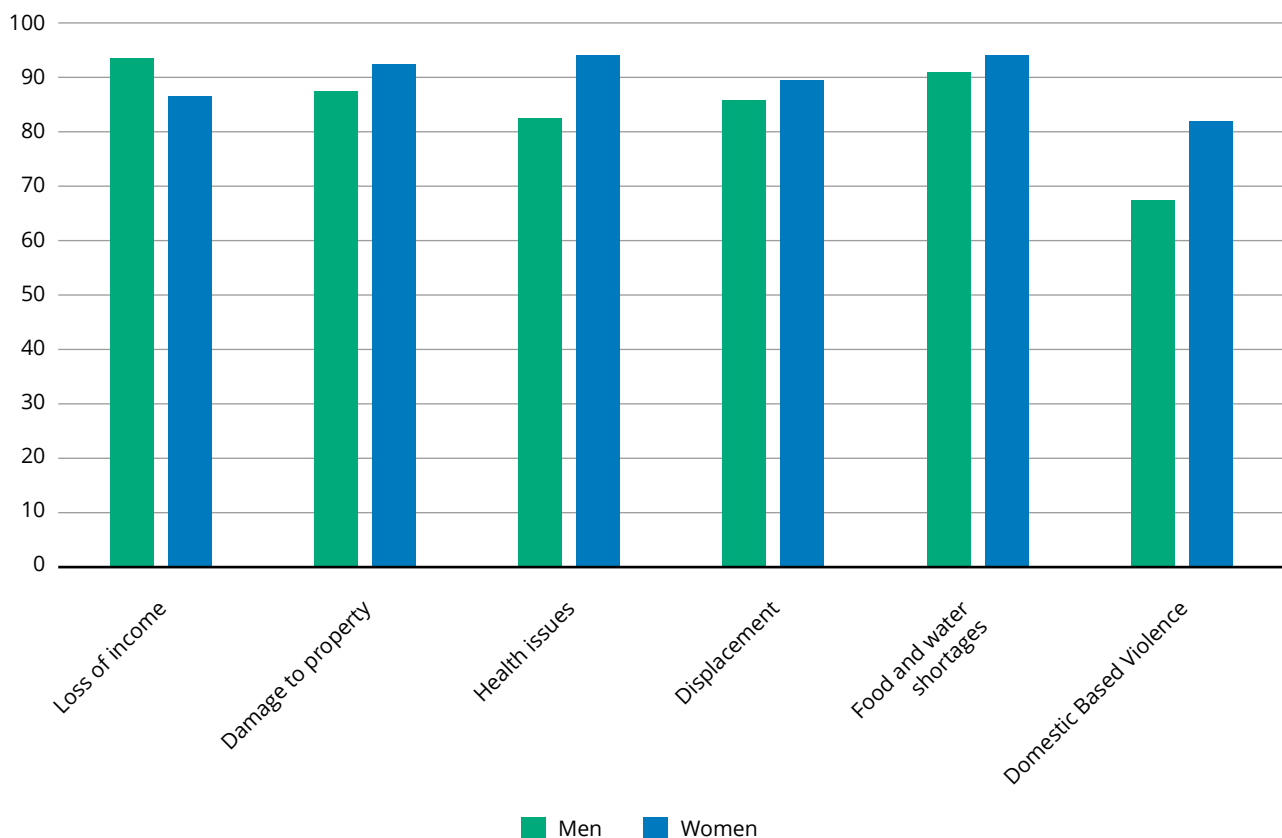
Figure 3: Impact of climate hazards by gender

WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES

Women reported slightly higher experiences of food and water shortages, with 94 percent compared to 91 percent of men. They also faced greater health impacts, at 94 percent compared to 82.7 percent of men, exacerbated by caregiving responsibilities and poor sanitation in shelters. A total of 89.7 percent of women reported challenges related to displacement, compared to 86 percent of men. Overcrowded shelters and lack of privacy heightened risks of gender-based violence and issues related to menstrual hygiene management. Women also reported higher rates of physical, emotional, or psychological violence, at 55.6 percent compared to 49.4 percent of men.
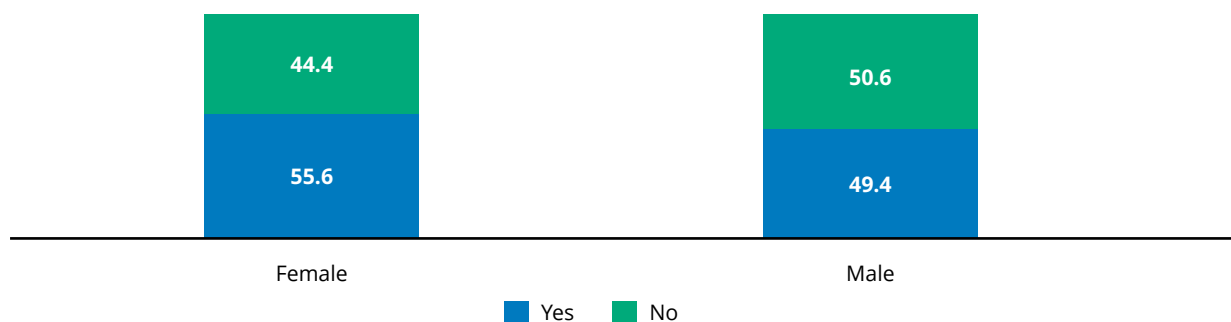

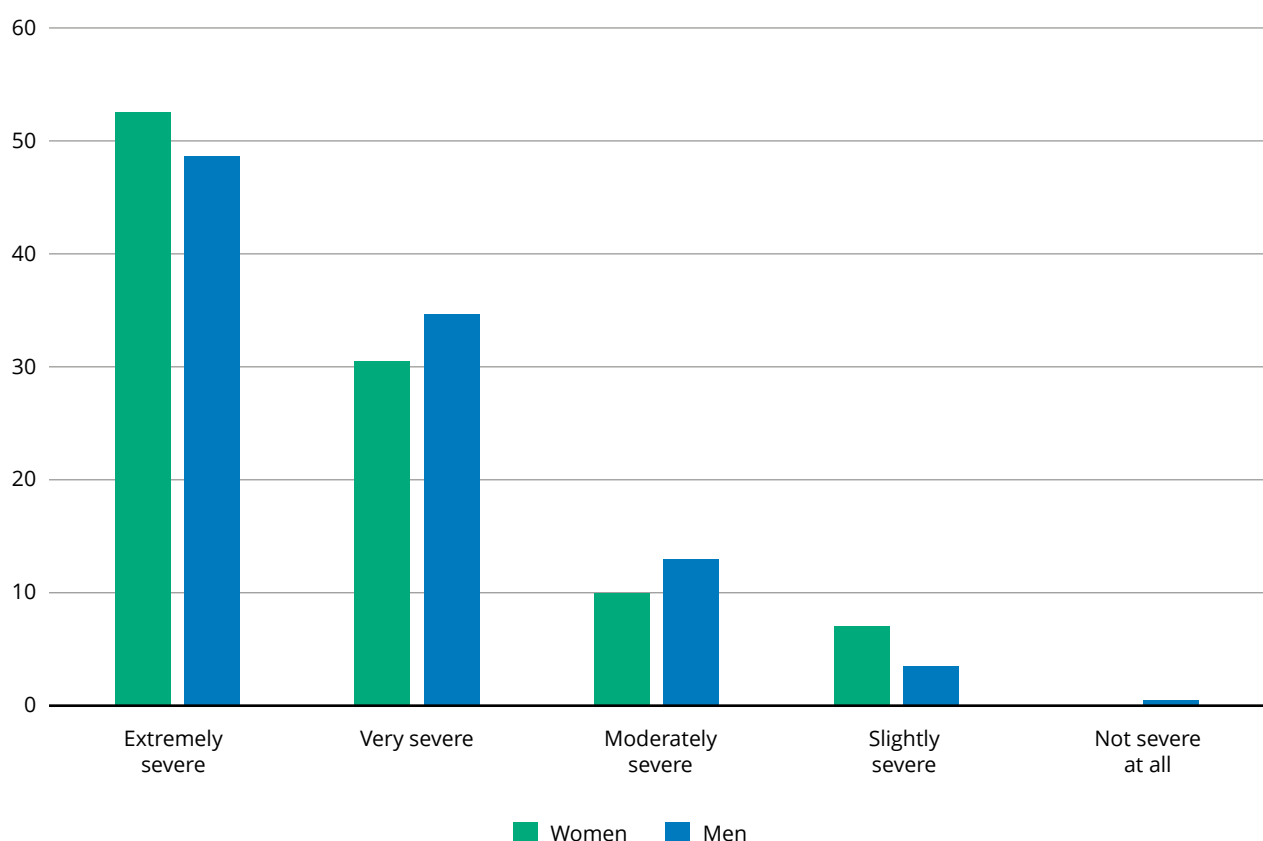Figure 4: Experience of violence by men and women

Figure 5: Severity of climate hazards over the years

Women face exploitative working conditions, including transactional demands for employment, which increase their vulnerability during rebuilding efforts. Additionally, 52.6 percent of women rated climate hazards as extremely severe, compared to 48.8 percent of men. This reflects their unique caregiving responsibilities and heightened vulnerabilities, as shown in Figure 5.

MEN'S EXPERIENCES

More men, at 93.5 percent, experienced income loss compared to 86.7 percent of women, reflecting their roles as primary providers, as shown in Figure 3. Men often engage in hazardous activities, such as rescuing family members during floods, which increases their risk of injury or death. They also reported greater emotional stress due to the pressure to support their families amid limited opportunities for stable income. While fewer men, at 48.8 percent, rated the impact

as extremely severe compared to women, a slightly higher proportion, at 34.7 percent, perceived it as very severe compared to 30.6 percent of women.

SHARED CHALLENGES AND GENDERED DIFFERENCES

Both men and women reported severe property damage, with slightly more women affected at 92.5 percent compared to 87.5 percent of men. A total of 82 percent of women identified domestic violence as a critical issue, compared to 67.8 percent of men, attributing it to heightened tensions over resource scarcity. Women's caregiving responsibilities and men's economic roles create distinct but significant pressures during recovery, emphasizing the need for tailored support strategies for both groups.

While both men and women face significant challenges due to climate hazards, the nature

and intensity of their experiences differ. Women are disproportionately burdened with caregiving responsibilities and vulnerabilities related to displacement and violence, while men endure economic and emotional stress from their provider roles.

3.4 Gendered impacts of climate hazards on roles and responsibilities

WOMEN'S ROLES AND CHALLENGES

Climate hazards in Malawi increase women's responsibilities, particularly in managing household survival. They often take on caregiving, food security, and income-generation roles, frequently working in unsafe conditions. Focus group discussions show many women engage in labour-intensive activities post-disaster, facing risks like exploitation and gender-based violence (GBV). Women with disabilities and single mothers face additional challenges, such as limited evacuation support and precarious livelihoods. Cultural norms restrict women's job options, hindering their contribution to recovery efforts. Despite these barriers, some women use innovative strategies like cooperative farming and small businesses, though access to credit, land, and training remains limited.

MEN'S ROLES AND CHALLENGES

Men face heightened economic and physical pressures during disasters. They are responsible for high-risk tasks, such as rebuilding infrastructure and rescuing community members. Many men migrate for work, with some reporting cross-border migration to countries like Mozambique for mining, though earnings are often insufficient for sustainable support. Men also engage in community resilience activities like planting trees and constructing flood barriers. However, the pressure to provide for basic needs often leads to emotional distress and difficult decisions, such as pulling children out of school.

CHILDREN'S EXPERIENCES

Children's roles shift during disasters, with both boys and girls supporting household recovery efforts. Girls often face interruptions in education and increased caregiving duties, with some engaging in transactional relationships, increasing risks of pregnancy and STIs. Boys, particularly those in child-headed households, assume adult responsibilities, sometimes resorting to risky behaviours like theft or substance abuse due to resource shortages.

CHALLENGES IN CAMPS

In disaster camps, women and girls face privacy and hygiene issues due to shared facilities, with a high percentage of women from focus group discussions reporting discomfort and lack of sanitary products. Persons with disabilities encounter additional barriers, such as unhygienic and inaccessible bathrooms, forcing some to crawl to facilities, increasing their vulnerability to disease. These issues highlight the urgent need for inclusive planning and improved infrastructure in disaster response settings.

3.5 Vulnerability, gendered needs, and priorities

Climate hazards in Malawi expose intersecting vulnerabilities related to gender, disability, marital status, and age, creating significant challenges for marginalized groups. Women, particularly single mothers, face heightened difficulties balancing caregiving and income generation. Many struggle to rebuild homes and secure stable livelihoods after disasters, earning as little as K1,500 ($0.88) through casual labour, which is often insufficient to meet basic needs. Single mothers frequently face impossible choices between work and

childcare, with many reporting exploitation and stigma when seeking financial aid. Cash assistance programmes like *Mtukula Pakhomo* are hindered by unclear targeting and exploitation by community leaders, who may demand bribes or confiscate resources.

Mobility challenges severely limit the ability of people with disabilities to escape hazards or access resources during and after disasters. Economic activities like farming or mining remain inaccessible, leaving them reliant on caregivers who often struggle with their own responsibilities. In one case, a man with disabilities and his children, who are also disabled, faced insurmountable recovery challenges when their house was damaged. Additionally, food and resource distributions often overlook marginalized groups due to logistical barriers and theft, though committees are sometimes established to provide protection. School-age children on the other hand experience educational setbacks during disasters, often dropping out temporarily due to a lack of

resources or unsafe travel conditions caused by damaged roads and bridges.

The older adults and people with disabilities highlight the urgent need for tailored support, including accessible evacuation measures, infrastructure, and recovery assistance. Accessible farming land and mobility aids were identified as critical needs. Men emphasized the importance of financial assistance and employment opportunities for recovery, with many advocating for loans to start small businesses or access farming inputs.

3.6 Barriers or challenges faced in accessing support

Accessing support during climate hazards is significantly more challenging for women than for men, with higher percentages of women reporting barriers across nearly all categories as illustrated by Figure 6.
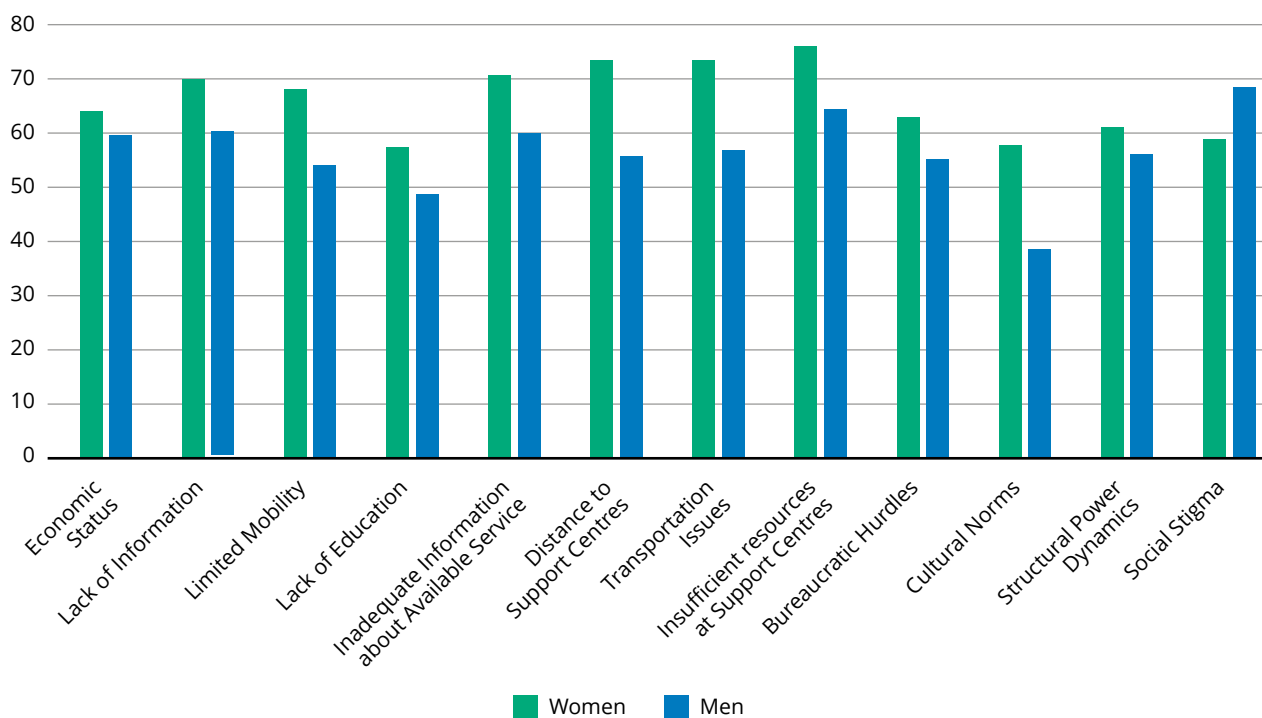

Figure 6: Barriers and challenges faced by gender

Women face greater economic limitations, with 63.93 percent affected compared to 59.9 percent of men, due to financial dependence on their husbands. Educational disparities hinder access to support for 57.63 percent of women compared to 47.89 percent of men, leaving many unable to navigate aid systems. A lack of information affects 70.37 percent of women, compared to 60.4 percent of men, while 68.22 percent of women report limited mobility, further restricted by long distances to support centres and household responsibilities.

Physical distance to support centres impacts 73.39 percent of women compared to 55.86 percent of men, while transportation barriers affect 73.39 percent of women compared to 57 percent of men. Women often lack funds or reliable transportation, limiting their ability to seek help. Insufficient resources at support centres are reported by 75.91 percent of women and 64.56 percent of men, with women frequently finding supplies depleted.

Bureaucratic hurdles deter 62.93 percent of women, compared to 55.23 percent of men, exacerbated by lower literacy rates among women. Cultural norms restrict 57.88 percent of women compared to 38.71 percent of men, limiting women's participation in decision-making. Structural power dynamics further marginalize women, with 61.29 percent affected compared to 55.99 percent of men, reducing their influence on support mechanisms.

While social stigma affects more men, at 68.47 percent, compared to 59.02 percent of women, their concerns differ. Men often perceive seeking aid as a sign of weakness, while women fear judgment from their communities.

These findings highlight the need for gender-sensitive strategies to address barriers to accessing support, particularly for women, who consistently report higher challenges across all categories.

3.7 Coping strategies

The findings reveal that coping strategies differ significantly by gender, with men adopting resource-intensive approaches more often than women.
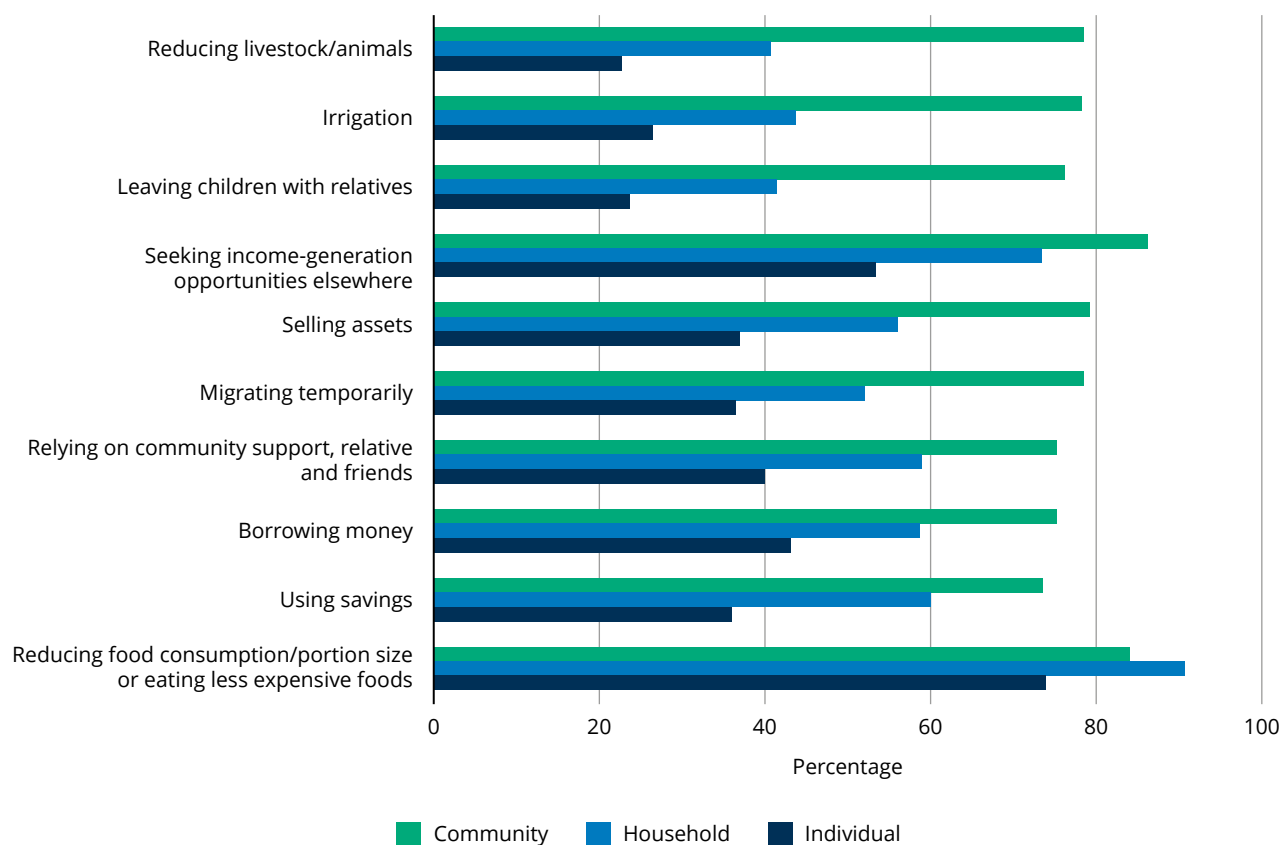
Figure 7: Coping strategies at individual, household and community level
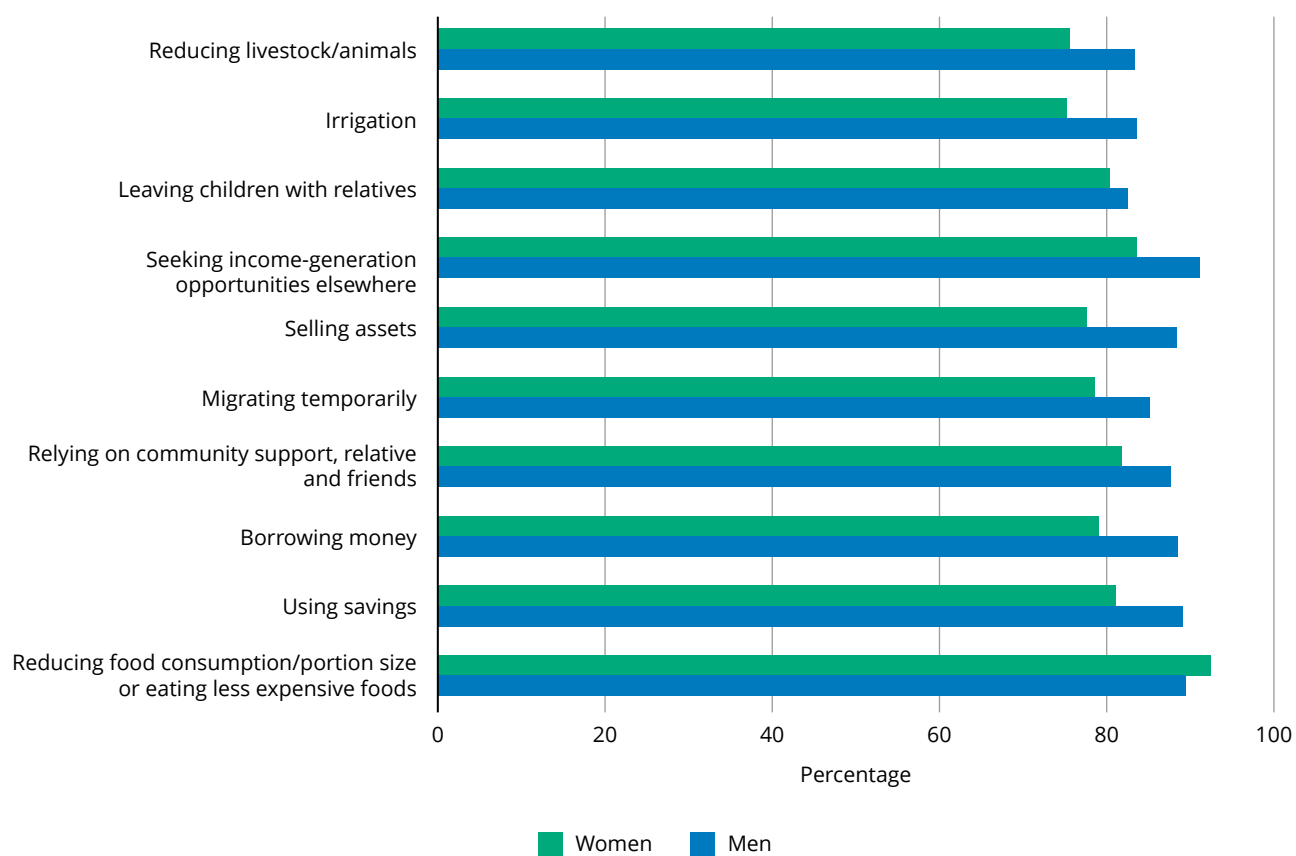

Figure 8: Coping strategies by gender

The most common coping strategy among individuals, households, and communities is reducing food consumption, adopted by 90.92 percent of households and 92.56 percent of women. Savings are used by 59.8 percent of households, with 81.19 percent of women relying on this strategy. Borrowing money is another widespread approach, used by 75.28 percent of communities, with men at 88.52 percent slightly more likely to borrow than women at 79.07 percent. Community support, including shared resources, is crucial for 75.35 percent of communities, with 87.64 percent of men and 81.72 percent of women participating.

Men are more likely to adopt resource-intensive strategies, such as migration, at 88.27 percent compared to 77.68 percent of women, and selling assets at 79.17 percent. Women, in contrast, rely more on food rationing and community support due to their household responsibilities. However, migration exposes women to harassment and exploitation, as reported in Chikwawa.

Seeking income opportunities is a significant strategy for 86.24 percent of communities, with more men at 91.17 percent participating than women at 83.73 percent. Less common strategies, such as irrigation at 26.56 percent and livestock reduction at 22.63 percent, remain important for 78.27 percent and 78.38 percent of communities respectively.

People with disabilities face severe barriers in adopting coping strategies. Discrimination and stigma prevent them from engaging in income-generating activities such as farming or mining. For example, a visually impaired woman from Nsanje reported resorting to begging due to cultural norms and safety concerns that limit her mobility and job opportunities.

3.8 Involvement in AA planning

PARTICIPATION OF DIFFERENT IDENTITY GROUPS IN AA

Women face systemic barriers, including limited access to early warnings, reliance on word-of-mouth communication, and low literacy levels, which restrict their involvement in decision-making and leadership. Only 70.62 percent of women receive education on disaster preparedness, compared to higher male participation. Cultural norms often discourage women from traveling to attend meetings or seeking leadership roles, further limiting their contributions.

Persons with disabilities rely on caregivers or neighbours for hazard information and evacuation assistance. However, inaccessible infrastructure and a lack of adaptive resources increase their vulnerability. Tailored interventions, such as training on adaptive tools, remain limited, leaving this group inadequately supported.

Men are more engaged in resource-intensive activities, such as hazard mapping and infrastructure construction, but they face mental health challenges due to societal expectations as providers. Youth remain underutilized in climate risk education, presenting an opportunity to involve them in resilience-building efforts.

INCLUSIVITY IN AA PRACTICES

Current AA efforts fail to fully integrate marginalized groups. Early warning systems primarily rely on radios and public meetings, excluding individuals with hearing impairments and women with limited access to these platforms. Camps for displaced persons often lack gender-sensitive facilities, including menstrual hygiene resources, increasing vulnerabilities for women and girls.

Integrating indigenous knowledge with formal early warning systems can improve accessibility and trust. Gender-sensitive communication strategies, such as engaging local leaders and using culturally appropriate channels, can enhance outreach to women.

PROPOSED INTERVENTIONS FOR INCLUSIVITY

- Capacity building: Tailored training for women, men, persons with disabilities, and youth on disaster preparedness, financial literacy, and leadership. Programmes should include practical skills like first aid, hazard mapping, and mobility tools.

- Strengthening early warning systems: Enhanced systems that cater to diverse groups, incorporating indigenous practices and modern frameworks, can improve reach and reliability.

- Community-based engagement: Increased involvement of trusted local figures like chiefs, religious leaders, and gender champions to foster trust and awareness about AA initiatives.

- Addressing trust deficits: Building community trust through consistent delivery on promises and transparent processes is critical to increasing participation and engagement in AA efforts.

Despite the structured AA framework, challenges include harmonizing triggers across organizations, addressing mistrust due to unmet promises, and ensuring resource availability for marginalized groups still exist. Efforts must focus on making AA truly inclusive, equitably addressing the diverse needs of Malawi's vulnerable populations.

3.9 Are AA planning strategies gender responsive and inclusive?

The passage highlights the lack of gender responsiveness in AA strategies, based on interviews with district councils in Chikwawa. While some gender-inclusive measures exist, they are often superficial or poorly implemented, with policies recognizing the need for inclusivity but failing to address the unique challenges women face. Cultural and social norms, such as patriarchal leadership and religious beliefs, significantly restrict women's participation in AA planning and disaster response. These norms affect women's decision-making power, mobility, and access to opportunities like training on climate adaptability.

Key informants stressed the importance of community-driven, inclusive planning, integrating gender-responsive approaches at all stages of the AA framework. They also emphasized that existing policies, such as those from Gender, Disability, and Social Protection departments, are not tailored specifically for AA, leaving gaps in gender inclusivity. As one official noted:

> "Rapid gender assessments are conducted to understand the needs of the affected population, but these findings are often not effectively integrated into AA interventions."

Participants highlighted the need for specific guidelines and standardized approaches to ensure equitable treatment of marginalized groups. Some of the recommended improvements include providing menstrual hygiene kits in emergency shelters, targeted support for single mothers, accessible evacuation plans and transportation for people with disabilities, safe spaces for children, and tailored support for the older adults.

In summary, while there is an acknowledgment of the need for gender inclusivity, current AA strategies are insufficiently gender-responsive, with cultural and social barriers further complicating women's ability to fully participate and benefit from disaster planning and response efforts.

3.10 Conclusion and implications for AA in Malawi

Discriminatory practices against people with disabilities limit the participation of these groups in recovery and resilience-building processes. Lack of capacity at the community level and inadequate training for local leaders further contribute to the challenge. Additionally, limited awareness about the specific needs of vulnerable populations, both at the policy and community levels, prevents the development of targeted interventions that address their unique challenges.

To make AA strategies more inclusive, there needs to be a concerted effort to bridge the implementation gap. There is a need to raise awareness about the unique needs of groups vulnerable to climate shocks and incorporate these needs into the design and execution of AA programmes. Moreover, capacity-building initiatives should focus on ensuring that local leaders and communities are equipped to address the specific challenges faced by marginalized groups. To ensure long-term

resilience, AA strategies must incorporate consultative and participatory frameworks, actively involving vulnerable groups and community members, because they are the best people to provide insight on what is happening and the extent to which projects are helping and what gaps there are in these projects. A gap exists in what AA is and how different it is from general preparedness activities. This is largely evident in the rural communities, where conversations with community leaders and focus group participants revealed that they do not understand what AA is. Furthermore, from conversations with Red Cross, WFP and DODMA, there is a need to harmonize the definition of a "trigger". The conceptualization of AA is crucial, especially among local leaders who often perceive it merely as preparedness activities. Partners from DODMA, Red Cross, and WFP have emphasized the comprehensive nature of AA. To ensure effective implementation, partners need to be aligned at all stages, from planning to execution. Moreover, strong partnerships should extend beyond the national level to include community participants who are essential for sustaining and following through with the implemented initiatives.

WFP and its key partners should focus on developing inclusive frameworks that integrate gender and disability sensitivity into all phases of AA planning and implementation. For instance, the study revealed the women do not have decision-making power, especially at village level, because of social factors like religious and cultural beliefs, and this has shaped their own perspective to think less of themselves. Consequently, if they have been given a platform, they don't particularly speak out either way. Furthermore, it was clearly stated that people living with disabilities are not well represented in planning platforms. 70.3% percent of the respondents expressed that their needs were not addressed despite mechanisms to undertake needs assessments before going to provide support in these communities, which shows a gap in terms of following up on implementation.

At community level, increasing the participation of people with disabilities and community-based organizations (CBOs) is crucial for fostering inclusive and effective disaster preparedness and response. These organizations bring valuable insights into the challenges faced by their constituencies and can play a pivotal role in planning, implementation, and advocacy. Collaborating with such groups can also enhance outreach efforts, build trust within communities, and ensure that interventions are culturally and contextually appropriate. To maximize impact, it is recommended that representative organizations be included at every stage of disaster management, from policy formulation to execution and monitoring, to ensure that no group is left behind.

Enhancing early warning systems is crucial to ensuring that all demographic groups, especially those with disabilities or living in remote areas, are adequately prepared for climate-related hazards. WFP should develop communication tools that are inclusive and accessible to all, including individuals with visual or hearing impairments. Offering a variety of formats, such as SMS, radio broadcasts, and community outreach announcements, can ensure broader accessibility. Collaborating with local leaders and organizations will help amplify these awareness campaigns, ensuring timely and effective dissemination of warnings. While radios, community outreach (e.g., speakerphone cars), and mobile phones are primary tools for spreading alerts, people in remote areas often remain uninformed.

Improving resource distribution mechanisms is another priority. Informants cited favouritism, lack of transparency, and systemic inefficiencies in how resources are allocated, which often leaves the most vulnerable populations underserved. Women, individuals with disabilities, the older adults and marginalized groups are frequently overlooked in favour of those with closer ties to community leaders or aid distributors, with reported cases of community leaders exploiting these vulnerable groups in

camps and villages when they receive these resources. For instance, there was a case in a village in Makhwira where the chief took a large portion of the money that people received as aid from World Vision. The police were consulted to investigate, however during the follow-up, people refused to accept that this happened, primarily because of their fear for the chiefs, although it was revealed with proper probing that the chief had in fact taken a large portion of each individual's money. These cases are common in these communities. Based on an interview with a district officer under the Malawi Council for Disability Affairs (MACODA) there is a need to revise the Unified Beneficiary Register (UBR) to better map out the most vulnerable groups, including people with disabilities, to ensure relief resources are appropriately distributed.

Investing in resilience-building efforts can empower communities to withstand future hazards. WFP and partners should promote sustainable livelihoods through climate-smart agricultural practices, small business development, and skills training. Programmes that focus on hazard preparedness and response, particularly at the community level, will enhance self-reliance and reduce dependency on external aid. For example, supporting women-led businesses or providing training in adaptive farming techniques can diversify income sources and strengthen household resilience. Particularly the youth expressed the need for entrepreneurial skills that remove their dependency on once-off assistance from partners, making them more resilient to withstand these hazards.

Strong partnerships with government bodies, NGOs, and community-based organizations as well as leaders like promoters, gender champions etc., are critical for aligning efforts and closing gaps in coverage. These collaborations can help streamline resources, share expertise, and build localized capacity for AA interventions. Advocacy for targeted funding is also essential to support inclusive AA strategies, ensuring resources are allocated effectively to vulnerable groups. Such partnerships enable more coordinated and

impactful responses to climate-related hazards, fostering sustainable development at both local and national levels. This bridges the gap between the national level initiatives, to the district level and down to the community level.

Finally, WFP must prioritize monitoring and evaluation to ensure the effectiveness of AA initiatives. Regular feedback from diverse community groups allows for a better understanding of what works and what needs adjustment. Using these insights to refine approaches will support continuous improvement and ensure that AA strategies remain adaptive to emerging challenges. Building mechanisms for learning from implemented programmes will not only enhance accountability but also strengthen resilience across communities facing the realities of climate change.

The study reveals that climate-related hazards such as floods, droughts, heavy rains, and cyclones have increasingly disrupted the lives and livelihoods of communities in Malawi. These hazards exacerbate vulnerabilities in marginalized groups, including women, children, persons with disabilities, and the older adults, who face disproportionate challenges in mobility, access to resources, and recovery efforts. The gendered impacts of these hazards highlight systemic inequalities, with women undertaking the worst of caregiving and economic responsibilities while being excluded from key decision-making processes. Men, on the other hand, face significant pressure to provide financially, often engaging in risky or precarious labour to support their families.

The AA strategies currently in place have shown promise in improving community resilience. While organizations like WFP, Red Cross, and World Vision have introduced gender-sensitive and community-led initiatives, structural barriers such as patriarchal norms, inadequate funding, and inaccessible early warning systems hinder the effectiveness of these interventions. The findings emphasize

the importance of adopting an intersectional and inclusive approach to climate resilience. Tailored interventions, such as providing mobility aids, financial support for women, and community-driven capacity building, are critical for addressing the diverse needs of affected groups.

3.11 Recommendations

These recommendations aim to address the systemic challenges identified in the study, ensuring that AA initiatives in Malawi are more inclusive, equitable, and effective in building resilience against climate-related hazards.

1. **Integrate gender and disability sensitivity into all phases of AA**: WFP and its key partners should embed gender and disability considerations into every stage of AA interventions, from planning and design to implementation and evaluation. WFP should:

   • ensure at least 30% representation of women, youth, and people with disabilities in AA planning at all levels, community, district and national;

   • develop accessible training programmes such as sign language interpreters and Braille materials to ensure people with disabilities receive critical information;

   • use community gender champions to encourage female participation and address social norms preventing women from engaging in disaster planning; and

   • schedule planning meetings at accessible locations and at times that consider women's household responsibilities.

2. **Enhance community engagement and capacity building:** WFP and its partners should strengthen community-led resilience efforts by establishing inclusive, community-based structures that actively involve local leaders, women, youth, persons with disabilities (PWD), and other marginalized

groups in hazard preparedness and response. Tailored capacity-building programmes should be developed for different groups:

- Local leaders should receive training on equitable resource distribution and inclusivity. They should also receive guidelines on transparent aid distribution and obtaining feedback from community.

- Women should receive training in hazard management, and financial literacy to equip them with skills to lead community resilience initiatives. Women-led savings groups and livelihood programmes should be established to enhance post hazard recovery.

- Youth should receive climate risk education in schools and peer-led disaster preparedness clubs to train them as future response leaders. They should also be involved in early warning information dissemination using social media, community radio and door-to-door outreach.

- PWD should receive specialized training on tools and self-protection strategies for hazards and ensure they are represented in resilience committees and evacuation planning teams.

Additionally, technical village champions and community gender champions should be trained in gender and disability sensitive communication methods such as using sign language interpreters, visual alerts for accessible warning systems. They should also receive training in community-based early warning dissemination such as SMS alerts, door-to-door messaging, and radio broadcasts.

Furthermore, to enhance capacity, it is crucial to bridge the gap between national-level, district and community stakeholders. This should involve conducting joint workshops between national policymakers and local-level

implementers to align AA strategies, developing community friendly materials such as posters and radio broadcasts explaining how AA differs from general disaster preparedness. This will assist in increasing awareness and adoption, facilitating district-level coordination meetings every six months to improve the flow of information between national actors and community leaders, and implementing community feedback loops for community members to evaluate effectiveness of preparedness activities.

3. **Strengthen early warning systems and ensure accessibility:** WFP should collaborate with local partners to revamp early warning systems by ensuring they are inclusive and tailored to the needs of diverse groups, particularly persons with disabilities (PWD), the older adults, women, and those in remote communities:

- The early warning channels to include SMS alerts, community radio with sign language interpreters, and door-to-door information dissemination by trained volunteers.

- Develop visual and audio-friendly materials such as posters with images for illiterate populations.

- Engage local leaders and gender champions to ensure women and marginalized groups receive early warning messages.

4. **Promote economic diversification and financial support for vulnerable groups:** WFP and its partners should collaborate with local stakeholders to promote tailored economic diversification strategies that address the specific needs of women, men, PWD, and youth:

- Establish a climate resilience loan fund that offers low-interest microloans for women-led businesses and small-scale traders, start-up capital grants for youth entrepreneurs and PWD-run businesses,

and flexible repayment options for disaster-affected households to reduce financial strain.

- Develop community-managed savings and loan groups, ensuring women, PWDs, and youth have access to rotating credit for income diversification projects.

- Train women annually in agro-processing, poultry farming, and value addition to increase profitability in agricultural supply chains.

- Provide business management training covering budgeting, pricing, and marketing to enhance the success rate of women-owned enterprises.

- Train men and women in construction and carpentry to support disaster recovery projects, mobile and digital repairs to tap into the growing tech market, and sustainable fishing and aquaculture to create alternative income streams.

- Establish vocational training centres offering PWD-friendly courses, such as IT skills (data entry, digital marketing), tailoring, beadwork, and handicrafts for income generation, and livestock rearing and poultry farming for those in rural areas.

- Provide assistive devices and workplace adaptations to enable PWD participation in economic activities.

- Launch youth apprenticeships with construction firms, agribusinesses, and renewable energy companies.

- Develop business incubators in each district that offers startup funding for youth-led enterprises, and mentorship programmes with successful business leaders.

- Upgrade rural roads and transportation systems to connect businesses with urban markets.

5. **Harmonization of triggers and strengthening forecasting and monitoring systems for climate-related issues.** To enhance the effectiveness of AA and disaster response in Malawi, it is critical to harmonize triggers and strengthen forecasting and monitoring systems for climate-related issues:

- Establish a technical working group (TWG) with WFP, Red Cross, FAO, DoDMA, and key humanitarian partners to coordinate trigger harmonization efforts.

- Define standardized trigger thresholds based on meteorological data, hydrological conditions, and vulnerability indicators.

- Investing in advanced meteorological tools, capacity building for staff, and improved data collection and sharing mechanisms. Monitoring systems must be enhanced to ensure real-time tracking of hazards and effective communication of forecasts to all relevant stakeholders, including local communities.

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5. Appendix

TABLE 2: LIST OF ENUMERATED VILLAGES

DISTRICT	T/A	GVH	VILLAGES
Chikwawa	Katunga	Kabudula	Kantefa Kabudula Chapondaminga Kakowa Maduminga Julius Sadulo Lauji 2
Chikwawa	Makhwira	Champhanda	Champhanda
Chikwawa	Maseya	Ngombe	Ngombe1 Ngombe2 Chanzawo Mtsakama
Chikwawa	Ngabu	Mphungu	Ndaluza Khukhuma Chitsoka Chaphata Henele James Sokili Mphungu Tsanzayani
Nsanje	Ndamera	Mapulango	Chinagana Mapulango1 Mapulango2 Kandyera
Nsanje	Tengani	Chazuka	Banshaw Chituwi
Nsanje	Mbenje	Chithumba	Chithumba Mulukwa
Nsanje	Mbenje	Kadyamba	Lazalo Kadyamba Botoman Batison

TABLE 3: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RESPONDENTS

CHARACTERISTICS	GENDER OF THE RESPONDENTS		
	FEMALE	**MALE**	
District			
Chikwawa	53.1	46.9	
Nsanje	48.3	51.7	
Disability			
Yes	6.3	9.4	**7.9**
No	**93.7**	**90.6**	**92.1**
Location			
Peri-urban	9.0	5.0	**7.1**
Rural	89.3	94.8	**91.9**
Urban	1.7	0.3	**1.0**
Age group			
18-34	52.2	49.1	**50.7**
35-54	28.1	32.4	**30.1**
Above 54	19.7	18.5	**19.2**
Marital status			
Married	56.3	74.4	**65.1**
Divorced/separated	17.6	2.6	**15.1**
Single	9.3	21.4	**10.3**
Widowed	16.8	1.6	**9.5**
Occupation			
Student	3.4	6.0	**4.7**
Unemployed	40.7	13.4	**27.5**
Employed	1.2	5.5	**3.3**
Self employed	27.3	35.1	**31.1**
Others	0.2	0.3	**0.3**
Education level			
No education	22.2	6.0	**14.4**
non-formal education (e.g. literacy and Qur'anic)	0.5	0.0	**0.3**
Primary education	55.9	61.4	**58.5**
Secondary/vocational education	30.0	31.3	**26.0**
Higher education	0.2	1.3	**0.8**
other form of education	0.2	0.0	**0.1**
Religion			
Christianity	98.3	95.3	**96.8**
Islam	1.2	2.6	**1.9**
No religion	0.5	1.8	**1.1**
Other religion	0.0	0.3	**0.1**

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Norway