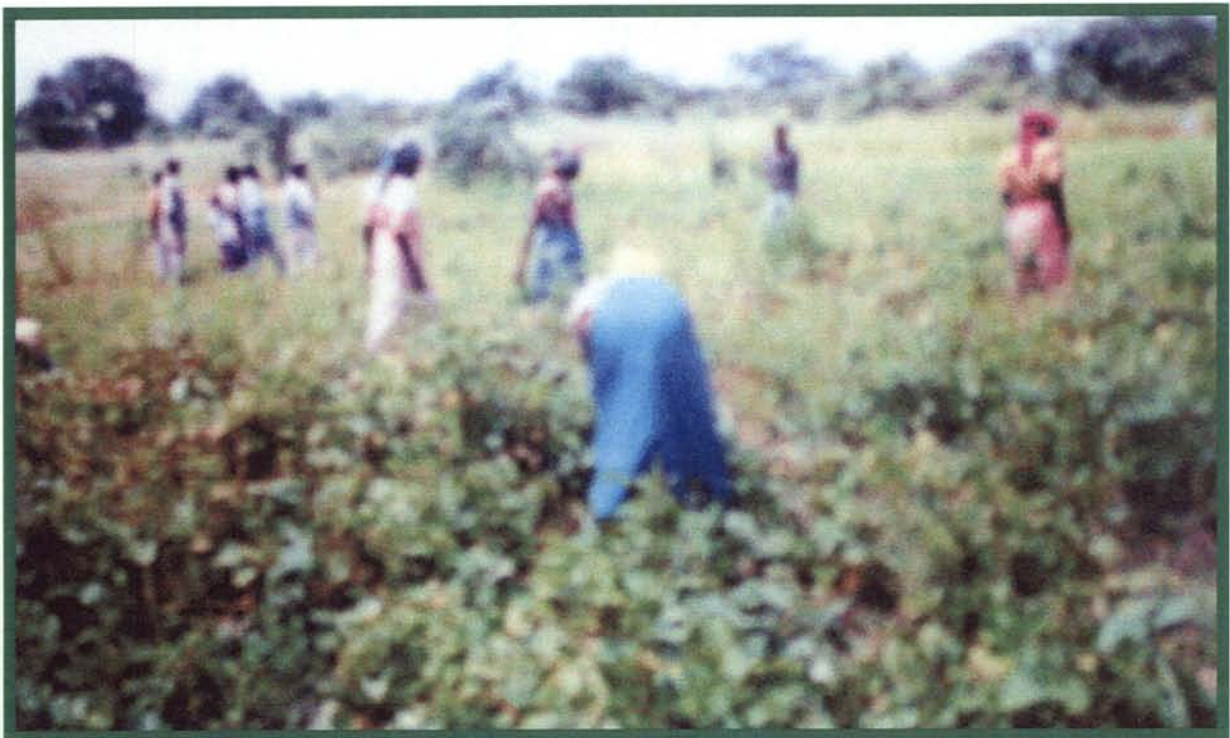


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GENDER AND AGROBIODIVERSITY ACTIVITIES IN MALAWI

Final Report and Recommendations



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GENDER AND AGROBIODIVERSITY ACTIVITIES IN MALAWI

Final Report and Recommendations

Project Leader: Dr. K.K. Nkongolo
Laurentian University

Gender Adviser: Ms. M. Malusi

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LAURENTIAN UNIVERSITY

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1. PROJECT SUMMARY

1.1 Project History

The Gender, Agrobiodiversity and Indigenous Knowledge Project started in March 2000 with funding from the Canadian International Development Agency. The project implementation was conducted until January 2003. The project has documented the relevance of gender factors in accounting for rural community agrobiodiversity management and conservation. The project evolved as an interdisciplinary endeavour with gender issues being integrated into participatory plant breeding and seed development as well inclusion of gender perspectives in wild species plant research. Other project activities involved farmer managed gardens, open days and cooking demonstrations, seed displays, household visits and interviews which focused on household composition and size, decision making patterns, resource distribution, division of tasks and workloads and time allocation.

1.2 Purpose of Project

The project on Gender and Agrobiodiversity had six objectives:

- 1) to analyse the past, present and future factors impacting on women's agricultural working conditions and access to and control over resources;
- 2) to analyse women's roles in the decision making process within the household and in the community as they use, preserve and manage agrobiodiversity;
- 3) to identify the socio-economic and agronomic factors influencing women's and men's selection of specific plant resources;
- 4) to assess the roles and contributions of women and men in participatory plant breeding and variety selection;
- 5) to identify specific incentives that would encourage women farmers to conserve biodiversity, through analysis of public policies;
- 6) to develop strategies for sensitization of policy makers and dissemination of project results.

In order to achieve the above objectives, four basic principles guided the gender analysis process. First, the research had to be simple and straight forward. Second, the gender analysis had to be as participatory as possible, which meant sharing responsibility for the analysis, action planning and implementation of results with the local community people. Third, the gender analysis process had to be carried out within a larger framework that featured two levels of analysis. At the national - policy level and at the community - grassroots level. Fourth, a decentralized gender analysis process enabled local communities to participate in identifying their own priorities and strategies for gender awareness and sensitization.

1.3 Scope of Project

Due to the complexity of the gender analysis processes and in recognition of the overlap between the different components of the Gender and Agrobiodiversity Project, a few selected areas were addressed. These included:

- ◆ Review of national policies to identify gender gaps,
- ◆ Integration of gender into participatory plant breeding of sorghum and cowpeas,
- ◆ Ensuring longer term sustainability of project activities through co-option of field extension workers in the Ministries of Agriculture and Gender,
- ◆ Involvement of local communities in all stages of gender analysis activities,
- ◆ Strengthening the capacities of rural people and policy makers to interpret and apply gender in their day-to-day activities.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Project Sites

Project activities took place in 47 sites located in different districts. Forty two sites involved Participatory Plant breeding (PPB) sorghum and were located in Karonga, Salima, Golomoti, Machinga and Chikwawa. Five sites involved participatory plant breeding (PPB) cowpeas and were located in Machinga, Balaka, Thyolo, Mulanje and Phalombe. Table 1 shows the level of community participation in project activities.

TABLE 1: Extent of Community Participation

Study site	Size of group	Men	Women
Karonga	12	6	6
Chinguluwe	13	5	8
Golomoti	12	6	6
Chikwawa	20	10	10
Magochi	12	5	7
Phalula	27	10	17
Thyolo	12	5	7
Thuchila	12	4	8
Phalombe	26	9	17

2.2 Methods used

The general approach was participatory because it enabled farmers (men and women) to directly be involved in project activities. A combination of techniques were used to gather both qualitative and quantitative data in different sites. The following are some of the techniques used:

- ✧ Historical profiles relating to availability of various foods
- ✧ Seasonal calendars which included activities associated with agricultural production
- ✧ Household time allocation diaries
- ✧ Ranking and scoring exercises
- ✧ Mapping including village resource maps

3. MAJOR ISSUES AND RESULTS

3.1 Identification of Gender “gaps” in National Policies

To be productive, gender analysis must be connected to what happens at the national policy level. In the context of the Gender and Agrobiodiversity Project, policy documents from the Ministries of Gender and Agriculture were reviewed to determine the status of gender issues. The questions addressed in relation to the policies were:

- a) What was the Ministry’s concept of gender?
- b) To what extent did the policy integrate gender issues?
- c) What was the best fit between policies and strategies which would produce the most effective gender balance at the community and national levels?

For the sake of the analysis, the policies were summarized into relevant themes and key elements (see Box 1 and 2). The abbreviated lists showed areas that call for action within the two Ministries. The lists showed that both the Ministries Gender and Agriculture had given priority to gender issues by adopting the goal of main streaming gender in programs and projects.

The review of the Agriculture and Gender policies showed that:

- * in both policies, gender is treated in isolation from all other sectors,
- * none of the Ministries have attempted to define the concept of gender and/or the indicators by which it can be assessed,

Box 1: Provisions of the Ministry of Gender Policy in brief

Goal: Mainstream gender in development process

Relevant themes:

- Food and nutrition
- Natural resources and environmental management

Key elements of the policy

- promote collection of gender disaggregated data
- redress imbalances arising from existing gender inequality including traditional attitudes
- encourage gender awareness and sensitization training
- focus on gender issues in agricultural sector

Box 2: Provisions of the Ministry of Agriculture Policy in brief

Goal: Main streaming of gender perspectives in programs and projects

Relevant themes:

- Improving agricultural technology
- Preventing land degradation and deforestation
- Promoting agricultural diversification

Key elements of the policy

- build capacity for gender main streaming through training and sensitization of staff at all levels
- ensuring that women and men participate in agricultural sector activities and that they benefit from their participation
- analyze institutional requirements for strengthening gender issues
- influence design of gender sensitive technologies

3.2 Gender and Participatory Plant Breeding (PPB) Sorghum

The field activities were undertaken in Salima and Chikwawa Districts. Table 2 shows the distribution of farmers involved. The main activities included evaluation of sorghum varieties grown in different community plots.

TABLE 2: Gender Distribution of Farmers in PPB Sorghum

EPA	Men	Women
Lupembe (Karonga)	3	3
Chinguluwe (Salima)	3	3
Golomoti (Salima)	4	2
Mpilisi (Machinga)	1	1
Rivirivi (Machinga)	2	0
Mitole (Chikwawa)	2	2
Mbewe (Chikwawa)	3	0
Dolo (Chikwawa)	3	3

3.2.1 Farmer Sorghum Variety Selection

Farmers (men and women) were asked to separately rank sorghum varieties based on a list of nine favoured characteristic for each variety.



Farmers evaluating sorghum varieties

Tables 3 and 4 show men's and women's preference ranking of sorghum varieties at harvest in two separate communities in Salima.

TABLE 3 : Male and Female Preference Ranking of Sorghum Varieties at Harvest

Salima - Nkhwali Community Plot		Preference Ranking (based on height)		
Variety	Male farmers (n=10)	Female farmers (n=18)	Overall average	
1	5	4	4.5	
2	5	5	5	
3	4	5	5	
4	3	3	3	
5	2	2	2	
6	1	1	1	
7	3	4	3.5	
8	2	4	3	
9	3	4	3.5	
10	5	5	5	
11	3	1	2	
12	2	3	2.5	
13	5	5	5	
14	3	5	4	
15	5	4	4.5	
16	1	1	1	
17	3	2	5	
18	4	5	4.5	
19	5	5	5	
20	3	4	3.5	

Preference ranking on a scale from 5 (Best) to 1 (worst)

Table 3 shows there were close agreement between the evaluation scores of male and female farmers in Nkhwali community plot. It can also be observed that in Nachidze community plot, there were similar close agreement between the evaluation scores of male and female farmers (see Table 4). For both male and female farmers, the most preferred traits were found to be high yields, resistance to birds, early maturing and grain size.

TABLE 4 : Male and Female Preference Ranking of Sorghum Varieties at Harvest

Salima - Nachidze Community Plot		Preference Ranking (based on height)		
Variety	Male farmers (n=10)	Female farmers (n=18)	Overall average	
1	3	2	2.5	
2	4	5	4.5	
3	4	5	4.5	
4	3	3	3	
5	4	4	4	
6	4	5	4.5	
7	4	4	4	
8	4	3	3.5	
9	5	5	5	
10	5	4	4.5	
11	4	5	4.5	
12	3	4	3.5	
13	4	5	4.5	
14	4	3	3.5	
15	5	5	5	
16	4	5	4.5	
17	5	4	4.5	
18	3	3	3	
19	5	5	5	
20	5	5	5	

Preference ranking on a scale from 5 (Best) to 1 (worst)

3.2.2 Sorghum Recipes

In addition to evaluating crop varieties based on farm related characteristics, the evaluation involved cooking and tasting. Some of the sorghum recipes developed included:

a) Sorghum Nsima

- pound sorghum and winnow to remove husks
- clean sorghum with water
- dry it in the sun
- bring it to the mill for grinding into flour
- make nsima using the flour

b) Boiled Sorghum (Mtakula)

- sorghum is pounded and winnowed to remove husks
- clean sorghum with water
- cook it until soft
- add groundnut powder and let boil a short time
- remove from fire and serve

c) Roasted Sorghum

- put sorghum with husks in a frying pan
- roast until it pops
- remove from fire and serve warm

d) Sweet Beer

- soak sorghum in water until it starts to germinate
- remove and dry in the sun
- grind into flour for making beer

It was found that for both men and women the most preferred traits when cooking and eating sorghum varieties were: pleasant flavour, appearance of polished grain, pleasant smell and colour.

3.3 Gender and Wild Species Plants

The activities were carried out in Nkhotakota and Mzimba Districts. The focus was on tubers which are collected from the wild and on which little research has been done. The two main tubers were Dioscorea (Mpama) found in Nkhotakota and orchids (Chinaka) found in Mzimba. These two tubers are considered as hunger food plants which people especially women resort to when regular food supplies are exhausted. Some of the issues addressed were: the different varieties of the tubers and how to identify them, plants that are similar to the chinaka tubers, when people started eating the chinaka tubers and who collects the tubers men or women

In Nkhotakota, the availability of Mpama was found to be declining due to clearance of trees and other natural vegetation. Mpama could only be found and collected from Ntchisi Forest Reserve.



A fresh Mpama tuber after digging

A fully mature tuber can measure up to 3 meters or longer. The digging takes several hours and is labour intensive.



A Mpama tuber hole

Gender aspects in digging Mpama

- the digging can be done by both men and women;
- in households where there is a man and woman, both will help each other in the digging;
- in households where there is only a woman, she has to go and dig the mpama and this can take the whole day;
- during periods of hunger, it is the women who have to worry most about feeding the family and therefore the ones who make decisions concerning the digging of mpama.

The cooking of Mpama takes between two to three hours. The cooked tuber has a very sweet pleasant aroma but it has a slightly bitter taste. The cooked mpama as seen below resembles yams, sweet potatoes or cassava.



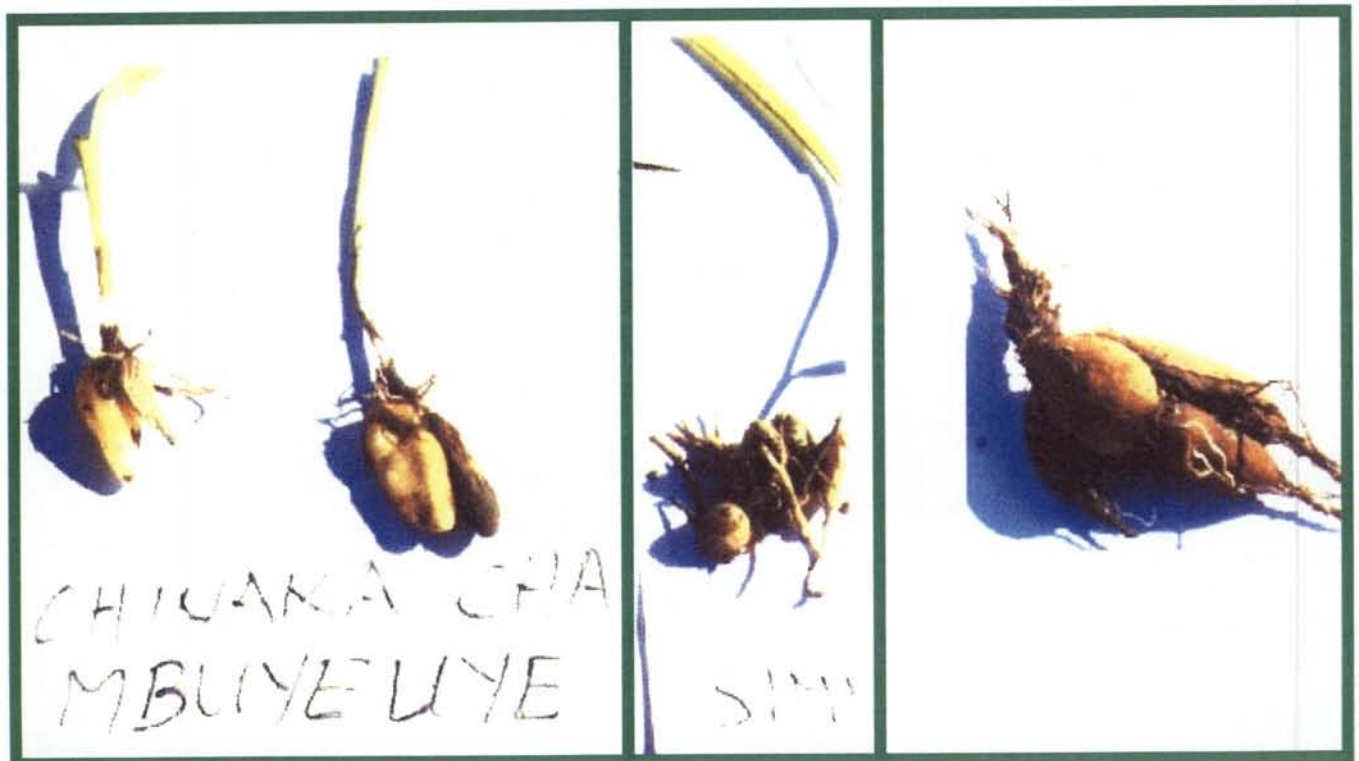
Cooked Mpama

In Mzimba, four main types of Chinaka “Orchids” were identified as being collected and eaten in the villages: (a) Kauteka (b) Kajibatike (c) Nkhanga (d) Buyeuye. Kauteka, Kajibatike and Nkhanga were mainly found in upland areas along the river/stream banks while Buyeuye was mainly found in marshy areas.



Mixed tubers of Chinaka "orchid" varieties

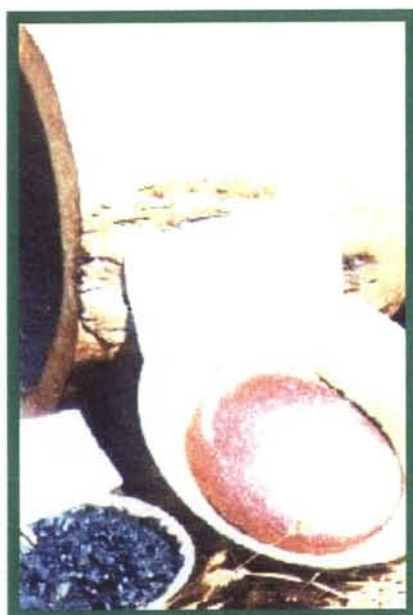
The field activities included visits to the actual sites where people collected the Chinaka, it was found that while Buyeuye was readily available, the other species were more scarce and people spent more time hunting for them. Even when found, the numbers were not as many as the Buyeuye.



Sample of Mbuyeuye Chinaka

Tubers similar to Chinaka but not edible

Since cooking was part of field activities, three recipes were developed. The first dish involved cooking Chinaka with plain water. The second dish was Chinaka cooked with local soda and the third dish was Chinaka cooked with groundnuts. The cooked dishes were tasted and ranked by colour, aroma and taste. The highest rank went to the dish cooked with groundnut. This had a rich red colour similar to beef liver (see cooked dish below). The dish was also tastier and had greater consistency when being served and after cooling down. The plain Chinaka was not as colourful, its taste was not very pleasant and the consistency was relaxed. The dish with local soda was dark brown in colour, its consistency was firm but not as smooth as the groundnut dish.



3.4 PARTICIPATORY PLANT BREEDING (PPB) COWPEAS

Field activities were undertaken in the districts of Balaka, Mulanje, Thyolo, Phalombe and Magochi. Table 5 shows the gender distribution of farmers involved in PPB cowpea.

TABLE 5: Gender Distribution of Farmers in PPB Cowpea

EPA	Men	Women
Phalula (Balaka)	9	17
Tuchila (Blantyre)	6	10
Nansenga (Magochi)	12	13
Lomola (Thyolo)	12	12
Waruma (Phalombe)	8	15

3.4.1 Farmer selection of cowpea varieties

Farmers were asked men and women separately to rank individual cowpea varieties based on different on-farm characteristics such as yield, seed size, maturing time, pest resistance etc.



Farmers evaluating cowpea varieties

In addition to evaluating cowpea varieties using on-farm characteristics, open days were organized to provide an opportunity for farmers to evaluate the cowpea varieties on the basis of cooking, taste, smell, colour of broth etc. A variety of dishes were cooked from both fresh and dry cowpeas. The most common dish for fresh cowpeas was leaves mixed with pods. The most unique dishes for fresh cowpea were makata cooked in Gunda village (Thyolo) and Mitu (cowpea heads) cooked in Kachinga village (Phalombe). For the dry cowpeas, the most common dish was the whole seed cooked and adding groundnuts and tomatoes. The most unique dishes were Ngongomwa prepared in Gunda village (Thyolo) and Chipere prepared in both Nyanyala village (Phalula) and Kachinga village (Phalombe).

3.4.2 Cowpea Recipes

a) Dry Cooked and Pounded Cowpea (Ngongomwa)

- Prepare fire
- clean pot and cowpeas
- boil water and put cowpeas
- keep adding water until fully cooked
- add salt
- clean mortar and pestle
- put cooked cowpea in mortar and pound until it forms a hard paste
- remove and serve

b) Dry Cooked and Mashed Cowpea (Chipere)

- sort cowpea to remove spoiled ones
- start fire
- clean pot and put on fire with some water
- leave water to boil
- clean cowpeas and put in the pot with boiling water
- reduce fire to allow slow cooking
- keep adding water until fully cooked
- when cooked, use a special wooden stick (Pukusa) to stir the cowpeas into a thick liquid

Farmers were asked men and women separately to rank individual cowpea dishes on a scale from 1 (worst) to 10 (best). Farmers were also asked to give reasons for their ranking. The preference ranking among female and male farmers did not differ much. Tables 6 and 7 show men's and women's ranking of cowpea dishes in two separate villages.

TABLE 6: Gunda Village Male and Female Preference Ranking of Cowpea Varieties

VARIETY	DISH	T/G	T/C	N/T	MALE	FEMALE	O/A
107-215-301	Whole Seed	✓	-	-	N=5 9	N=5 9	9
119-210-303	Whole Seed	-	-	✓	N=5 6	N=5 5	5.1
102-201-309	Whole Seed	✓	-	-	N=5 6	N=5 5	5
204-313	Whole Seed	✓	-	-	N=5 7	N=5 4	5.1
109-220-307	Whole Seed	✓	-	-	N=5 6	N=5 5	6
113-211-318	Whole Seed	✓	-	-	N=5 7	N=5 7	7
101-304	Whole Seed	-	-	✓	N=5 6	N=5 4	5
114-207-319	Whole Seed	✓	-	-	N=5 8	N=5 8	8
115-310	Whole Seed	-	-	✓	N=5 5	N=5 5	6.5
118-202-311	Whole Seed	✓	-	-	N=5 7	N=5 6	6
116-201-317	Whole Seed	-	-	✓	N=5 5	N=5 4	4.5
104-305-215	Whole Seed	-	-	✓	N=5 6	N=5 2	4
117-205	Whole Seed	-	-	✓	N=5 3	N=5 1	2
108-214-306	Whole Seed	-	-	✓	N=5 3	N=5 5	4
105-209-315	Whole Seed	-	-	✓	N=5 2	N=5 1	1.5
312-206-111	Ngongomwa	-	-	✓	N=5 9.2	N=5 9.4	9.3
103-212-308	Whole Seed	-	-	✓	N=5 4	N=5 5	4.5

* T/G - Treated with groundnuts, T/C - Treated with chidulo (local soda), N/T - Not treated

Table 6 shows that varieties 107, 113, 114 and 312 received the highest ranking by both men and women. The reasons for high scores were that the dishes cook well and had good taste. Farmers said dishes like Ngongomwa (variety 312), brought back memories of their ancestors. Reasons for low scores were that some varieties did not cook well, some had unpleasant smell and some were still hard even after being on the fire for a long time.

TABLE 7: Nyanyala Village Male and Female Preference Ranking of Cowpea Varieties

VARIETY	DISH	T/G	T/C	N/T	MALE	FEMALE	O/A
107-215-301	Whole Seed	√	-	-	N=5 8	N=5 6	7
211-318	Whole Seed	√	-	-	N=5 7	N=5 7	7
101-304	Whole Seed	-	-	√	N=5 7	N=5 4	5.1
114-207-319	Whole Seed	T	-	-	N=5 7	N=5 7	7
115-310	Whole Seed	-	-	T	N=5 9	N=5 6	7.1
118-202-311	Whole Seed		-	-	N=6 7	N=5 4	5.1
116-201-317	Whole Seed	-	-	T	N=5 8	N=5 6	7
104-305-215	Whole Seed	-	-	T	N=5 7	N=5 5	6.1
117-205	Whole Seed	-	-	T	N=5 9	N=5 10	9.1
208-214-306	Whole Seed	-	-	T	N=5 6	N=5 6	6
105-209	Whole Seed	-	-	T	N=5 9	N=5 10	9.1
312-206-111	Chipere	-	-	T	N=6 6	N=6 6	6
103-212-308	Whole Seed	-	-	T	N=5 4	N=5 5	4.5
119-210-303	Whole Seed		-	T	N=5 6	N=5 5	5.1
102-218-309	Whole Seed		-	T	N=5 9	N=5 10	6
110-204-313	Whole Seed	T	-		N=5 9	N=5 10	9.1
109-220-307	Whole Seed		-	T	N=5 9	N=6 7	8

* T/G - Treated with groundnuts, T/C - Treated with chidulo (local soda), N/T - Not treated

4. OBSERVATIONS ON EFFECTIVENESS OF GENDER ANALYSIS IN MALAWI

Knowing whether research efforts have been useful (e.g. in benefitting the target groups, or for justifying continued funding) is valuable. It is also important to monitor and evaluate what has happened with implementation of the project.

4.1 The Challenges of Introducing Gender in Malawi

One of the challenges of introducing and promoting gender in Malawi is building capacity at different levels - the grassroots (community) and the national (policy) - in order to respond to the changes implied by the gender perspectives. The challenge has been manifested by the lack of rural community awareness and knowledge of gender issues in general. At the policy level, many policy makers are not familiar with the concept of gender especially its interpretation and how to apply the gender perspective in their work. The current challenge is aggravated by the general lack of gender materials which can provide basic information and illustrations about the functioning of gender.

At the community level,

4.2 Assessing the Gender Impact

In assessing the question of impact of gender on target groups, it is important to see what the people themselves are saying and how they perceived the gender project. During discussions in the villages, several people commented that the introduction of the gender project was a very good initiative. When asked how the project has benefitted them, men and women responded as follows:

“Before men were saying cooking is a job for women but through the project we were all able to cook and do other things together” Alice Magalasi, Kachinga village

“Men learnt the importance of helping their wives with household activities. Women also learnt to work together with men” Frank Mvula, Kachinga village

“ Working jointly men and women, was very difficult before gender was introduced in our area” Willy Saizi, Gunda village

“I will let my friend sit down together with his wife and tell him that the old way of living was not good. But this gender issue is good because we have learnt to share responsibilities between men and women” Peter Ligomeka, Gunda village

“Gender has simplified the workload on women. I have trained my family on gender and how to help each other as wife and husband” Ellina Mwangalika, Gunda village

“It has helped me to be distributing work and responsibilities to my children” Belita Kamshsi, Scheme 1, Chinguluwe

“We have learnt about helping one another in activities which previously were thought to be men’s job and vice versa” Esnart Chauma, Kankhwani, Golomoti

“There is no separation of work - men and women work equally - no work belongs to a man or woman” Willy Gama, Nachidze, Chinguluwe

As the above reactions show, people in rural areas have begun to appreciate the importance of gender in their lives. It is also worthwhile to note how people at the local level are able to define their own priorities and needs in relation to gender. Individual men and women have realized they can become the “gender” agents of change in their own households, with their friends and in their villages.

4.3 Skill development

The experience of the project illustrates the benefits of learning about gender analysis through practical involvement. During the first phase, scientists undertaking research in project activities as well as field extension workers were introduced and exposed to gender analysis experiences and skill development strategies. Skill development required learning processes by "doing". Part of this participatory approach involved application of gender analysis as an interdisciplinary effort. Scientists working on the project had to work together with gender team members in day-to-day planning and implementation of field activities. The learning processes also required sufficient gender awareness and knowledge by field extension staff to be involved in logistical planning and implementation of the field activities.

The project was successful in meeting not only the skill development of scientists working on the project but also changing their attitudes toward gender. At the completion of phase I, all the breeders for example, did not have their initial misgivings about gender. They had become more assertive in talking about gender and had acquired the capabilities to interpret and incorporate gender dimensions in their reporting and public presentations. The field staff had gained skills in conducting gender related interviews and discussions with farmers. They had also acquired more knowledge and awareness on gender issues.

4.4 Sharing project results

In efforts to share information with other groups and agencies interested in gender issues, two main events were implemented. One was a workshop and the other was development of a calendar.

4.4.1 Workshop on Agrobiodiversity and Gender

The Agrobiodiversity and Gender Workshop was held in Lilongwe in August 2001. The objectives of the workshop were:

- To present findings of the gender analysis activities
- To evaluate the impact and benefits of the project on target populations/communities
- To obtain feedback from farmers and policy makers as beneficiaries of the project
- To determine strategies for sharing and disseminating project results

The workshop generated a great deal of discussion and there was a high level of participation. This was an important experience particularly for the farmers not only because it was the first time they

had been invited to such a meeting, but also because they had the chance to be in a learning situation together with the researchers involved in the project.

The farmers as beneficiaries of the project were able to assess and evaluate the results of the project as presented at the workshop. By letting the farmers' speak for themselves, a traditionally "voiceless" group was empowered and enabled to assess expected project benefits and how these would help them.

The following themes provide an example of some of the processes discussed during the workshop.

**THEME: INTEGRATION OF GENDER ISSUES IN PPB
SORGHUM AND PPB COWPEA**

Issues Discussed

Open days were organized in the villages to provide an opportunity for farmers to cook and taste varieties of sorghum and cowpeas. The aim was to select the most preferred varieties based on cooking and taste qualities. Different dishes for both sorghum and cowpeas were prepared using different methods.

The farmer selection of varieties was done through ranking and scoring male and female farmers separately. Although the scores between male and female farmers were very close, the slight difference was an indication that male and female farmers have particular preferences for certain traits. For sorghum dishes, the traits liked were the quality of flour as well as smell and taste of cooked nsima. For cowpeas, the most important traits were cooking faster, mashing well to make a thick broth and creamy colour when fully cooked.

**THEME: FARMER EVALUATION OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES,
RESULTS AND ANTICIPATED BENEFITS**

Issues Discussed

Farmers became interested in the project in order to find the best seeds for sorghum and cowpeas. They particularly wanted varieties that grow fast and free from diseases. For sorghum they also wanted varieties which are not attacked by birds.

Another reason for becoming involved in the project was that local varieties for cowpea were becoming scarce and the project offered an opportunity for renewed cultivation of cowpeas as well as introduction of cowpea dishes which the farmer's remembered from their ancestors.

One main outcome of the project is farmer's discovery that sorghum can easily be grown in large quantities just like maize and the food products from sorghum are equally good. Farmers also found that in addition to growing cowpeas for food, it can be grown for sale.

A second major outcome of the project was the introduction of gender issues. Most farmers were happy for the opportunity to learn more about gender. The groups involved in the project became

“gender models” for others in the villages. As more and more people in the villages saw the benefits and advantages of practicing gender, they became curious and started asking how they could also learn about gender. There is therefore, a need to hold gender awareness meetings in the villages to enable more people gain knowledge on what gender is and how it functions.

4.4.2 Gender and Agrobiodiversity Calendar

The Gender and Agrobiodiversity Calendar was developed to disseminate project activities and share information on some of the results. The main highlights of the calendar were

- an attractive bright cover featuring the flag and emblem of Malawi as well as emblem and of Laurentian University
- pictures of different communities involved in the project
- pictures of various project activities carried out at different sites such as gender and participatory Plant breeding (PPB) of sorghum and cowpeas, wild tubers and indigenous fruits.

The calendar was distributed to farmers, policy makers, scientists undertaking the project research and other groups. A simple evaluation was later undertaken to assess reactions toward the calendar from different recipients. The evaluation was also intended to determine the **effectiveness** of the calendar as a **tool** for disseminating and sharing project results. The evaluation was undertaken through a simple comments form distributed to a sample of recipients. The following are some reactions obtained regarding the calendar.

Box 1: General appearance and content

"It is generally a well printed calendar that is carrying/conveying very important messages about gender and agrobiodiversity in Malawi. The following are suggestions for the future:

- (i) it should have a metal strip to make it easier to hang on the wall
- (ii) you may consider printing desk top calendar formats"

Researcher

Box 2: Improvements - enlarged date numbers and full pages

"The calendar is generally good, however I suggest the following improvements:

- (i) the numbers for the dates be enlarged to make easier to read from a distance
- (ii) the pages for the calendar for each month should be full pages without folding in the middle. This will make it easy to hang on the wall"

Policy Maker

Box 3: More than a Calendar - A story about men and women working together

“The first thing that caught my eye when I saw the calendar was the picture of men and women, with men carrying firewood. As such, I wanted to find out what the calendar was all about. I decided to look through all the pages and in so doing, I discovered that this was not just a calendar, but rather it was telling a story about gender and agrobiodiversity. A story of men and women working together to find alternative foods from indigenous foods. This calendar can be understood by every one by just looking at it even if they cannot read. I strongly feel that this calendar should be produced again as it is one way of giving out messages about gender and agrobiodiversity. I liked the calendar very much.”

Policy Maker

Box 4: Messages and representations

“The calendar is very good, it has beautiful and meaningful photographs, and it is artistically done. I am pleased to see farmers from different parts of the country who are involved in the project ”

Farmer

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

As presented throughout this report, gender analysis was used in different ways. It was used to examine gender issues in national policies. It was used as a basic tool to integrate gender into participatory plant breeding. It was used as method to empower men and women in rural communities. It was used as a framework for understanding rural households and individuals who live in them.

The following are some recommendations to be considered in future plans for gender related activities in Malawi.

5.1 Strengthening Ministry Capacities for Gender Analysis

To begin addressing the issue of capacity-building at the national policy level, it is recommended that individual Ministries and in particular, Agriculture, Gender and Natural Resources be assisted to undertake internal detailed surveys on status of gender issues among staff members. Based on results of the survey, each Ministry can then be helped to develop mechanism for integration of gender analysis frameworks into their existing policies and programs as well as skill development strategies to equip staff members to implement the gender-sensitive policies and programs.

5.2 Training Policy Makers on Gender

Currently there are national policies in Malawi which address gender issues. But, having a good policy is not enough on its own. Policy implementers need relevant knowledge and skills to put the policies into effect. It is therefore recommended that policy makers be trained on gender to help them gain skills and knowledge needed to interpret and implement the gender policies.

5.3 Multi-purpose Resource Centers on Gender

One major problem facing policy makers in various Ministries is the limited access to relevant information on gender issues. The multi-purpose centers on gender were identified as important tools for helping policy makers learn more about gender and how gender perspectives function.

It is recommended that resource centers be established within the Ministries of Agriculture, Gender and Natural Resources. The resource centers on gender will provide the following:

- * A central reference and documentation library where all information on gender issues is readily available;
- * A computerized data base on gender research, project documents etc. The computerized data base may also include computer access to other similar data bases, for example, with other agencies working on gender issues.
- * As part of the reference/documentation library, up-to-date gender specific profiles and other required gender related data would be accessed easily.

5.4 Training Rural Communities on Gender

People in different villages identified the need to be trained in gender to help them understand the meaning of gender. The provision of training was seen by many rural people as an essential way of becoming more knowledgeable and skilled on gender and how to practice gender in their lives. The following list derived from the people in different villages gives an idea of the range of training needs that were identified as beneficial:

- ♠ training on what the term gender means
- ♠ training on why gender is needed
- ♠ training on differences between gender and the local customs
- ♠ training on where gender came from
- ♠ training on roles for men and women in a family
- ♠ training on traditional marriage patterns and gender