

# THE HIV/AIDS PANDEMIC IN MALAWI: WHAT FARMERS FACE, AND HOW THEY COPE WITH HIV/AIDS

Results from Focus Group Discussions in Rural Malawi

By  
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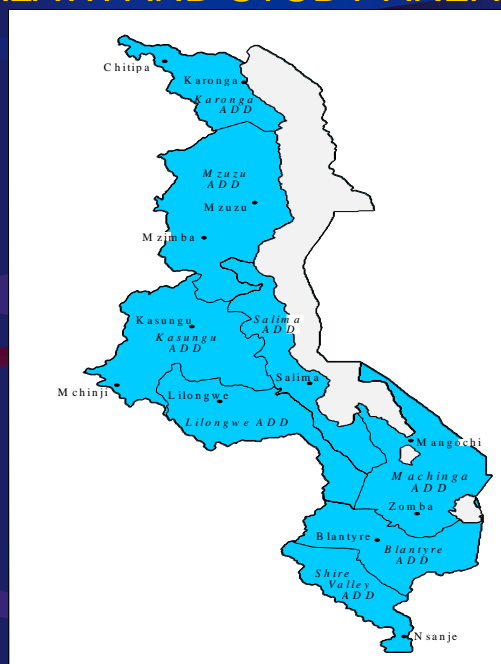
## THE HIV/AIDS PANDEMIC IN MALAWI

- 2.5 million living with AIDS
  - Prevalence Rate of 15%
  - 73,400 died in 2001 (UNAIDS/WHO 2002)
  - 70,000 new orphans each year
  - Main Transmission - Hetero. Sex
    - Mother to child
- 10 - 30% of rural-urban women visiting ante-natal clinic are HIV/Positive

## Objectives of the Focus Group Discussions

- Assess communities' openness toward HIV/AIDS issues
- Obtain a wider picture on the state of agric productivity, livelihoods, HIV/AIDS and adult Mortality in each region.
- Involve traditional leaders and other key informants
- Involve different age and gender groups

## MALAWI AND STUDY AREAS



## Methodology

- Two Enumeration Areas per Region
- 40 participants per FGD
- Discussant, Scribes, Interpreter
- Large Group – Small Groups – Large Group  
(Trust Building) (Sensitive Topic) (Wrap up)
- Use of a checklist

## MAJOR LESSONS

## HIV/AIDS Knowledge

- Young adults and middle aged people able to describe HIV and AIDS and its transmission
- The elderly were somewhat knowledgeable but felt they were out of harm's way
- Symptoms: weakness, anemic, very thin, chronic coughing, pale hair, persistent diarrhea, body swelling, very aggressive, required fried meat
- False Cure claims: Boiling cooking oil mixed & add raw egg.
  - Sex with a virgin young girl

## Sources of Information

- Aids awareness campaign
  - Sources of info:  
Radio, Drama, Clergy, Health Care Centers, the president, public transport ads, shop ads, billboards in towns
  - Politicians
  - Funerals

## Sources of Information (2)

**Know the NEW CHISHANGO**

- STRONG APPEAL TO YOUNGER MEN
- MORE PROFIT FOR TRADERS!
- MORE STYLISH
- IMPORTED QUALITY
- AVAILABLE SOON

\*New dispenser holds 12 packs of 3's

**CHISHANGO**  
Quality Imported Condoms

• New packaging • Info leaflet inside • Attractive new foil

Another quality product from **PSI/MALAWI** 18 Latiche Rd. P.O. Box 525, Blantyre

## Sources of Information (3)

- "Now we can breathe"



## Prevention (1)

- Prevention Measures: Abstinence, Be faithful to one partner, Condoms

### Men's views on Condom Use

- Young adults: Good, it will save you but ....
- Older man: - Laced Lubricants
  - No wrapped candy!!
- If women brought home condoms from Clinic
  - Insult leading to divorce
  - Didn't pay lobola to shower with a raincoat.

## Prevention (2)

### Women's view on condom use

- Younger women: Its OK when there is trust
- Older women:
  - Condoms bursts
  - Men cut the tips off
  - False comfort / promote promiscuity
  - Few understanding husbands will entertain the thought of wives suggesting condoms

## Potential Places and practices for Contracting HIV/AIDS (1)

- Cultural
  - Wife Inheritance (*Chokolo*)
  - Initiation Ceremony (*Hyna-fisi*)
- Economic
  - Rich men enticing young girls – Test Sex (*Kusasa fumbi*)
  - Market days – wealthy outsiders & rest houses
  - Small Scale Business (*Geni*) - product + sex

## Potential Places and practices for Contracting HIV/AIDS (2)

- Social
  - Trading centres, pubs , taverns
  - Foreigners
  - Urban dwellers
- Misconception
  - “Our local pool of commercial sex workers is clean, it’s being polluted by the urban men who have lots of money”

## ASSET LIST BY GENDER IN SOUTHERN REGION

- Asset list by Men
  - Food (maize)
  - Bicycle
  - Livestock
  - Clothes & bedding
  - Wife
  - Radio
  - Furniture
- Asset list by Women
  - Children
  - Kitchen utensils
  - Money
  - Clothes & bedding
  - Sanitation Facilities
  - Washing basket

## ASSET LIST BY GENDER IN THE NORTHERN REGION

- Asset List by men
  - Livestock
  - Ox-cart
  - Children
  - Furniture
  - Food
  - Housing
  - Bicycle
- Asset List by women
  - Food
  - Kitchen Utensils
  - Bedding & clothing
  - Land
  - Children
  - Furniture
  - Mat & pail



## Assets Depletion & Post Funeral Security

- Liquidation of asset for the sick based on the gender of the decision maker not who is sick
- Funeral Customs – burial livestock, utensil loss
- Asset disposal after funeral
  - The will – not accepted
  - Overseers (*ankhoswe*)
  - Asset abuse
- No recovery of asset base after death

## Post-Funeral Security Following Wife Death

### Patrilineal Society

- Assets kept intact
- Women's assets redistributed
- Husband remarries
- Children stay

### Matrilineal Society

- Husband take "his" assets and leaves
- No claim to land
- Goes elsewhere to start over
- Children left w/ uncles

## Post-Funeral Security Following Death of a Husband

### Patrilineal Society

- Assets kept intact
- Wife can keep land as long as she remains unmarried
- Wife can opt to be inherited
- Leaves assets if wife remarries

### Matrilineal Society

- Husband's relative take husband's assets
- Land belongs to wife
- No inheritance

## Recourse to Justice

- Overseers (*Ankhoswe*)
- Village Chiefs (*Afumu*)
- The Will – skepticism
- The Living will by NGOs – Taboo challenge

## Frequency of Funerals

- 3 – 4 Funeral per week in a community of four to five villages
- Communal Funeral Contributions
- Lost days farming
- Funeral Fatigue



## VICTIMS

- Who are the victims?
- Everyone - Infected, Affected
- The most at risk
  - young people, drinkers
  - sons working in RSA, and Cities

## Emerging Types of Farmers

- Child headed household
  - Early marriage
  - Commercial prostitution
- Elderly farmers coming out of retirement to provide for orphans
- Households now farming part-time due to care-giving to an ailing spouse or child
- Poor farmers who lost remittances that provided working capital for inputs

## Emerging Farmer Group



## Conclusion

- awareness improved but challenge remains toward achieving behavior change
- Asset liquidation for medical care of the sick based on who the decision maker is and not gender of the sick
- Recourse to Justice within the cultural institutions in asset abuse still remains a challenge
- Emerging clientele calls for more targeted interventions and mitigation strategies

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