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# Fisheries Gender and Youth Analysis of Four Major Lakes in Malawi

## *Fisheries Integration of Society and Habitats (FISH)*

*PREPARED FOR:*

*USAID*

*AWARD NUMBER:*

*AID-612-A-14-00004*

*PREPARED BY:*

*Pact Inc., and Partners.*

*DATE:*

*30<sup>th</sup> December, 2015*

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**Pact Partners:**

**Cover Page Photograph:** An 8 year old boy head lifts a fish basket to a processing site at Kadewere fish landing site in Lake Malombe. (Credit: Stanley Mvula/CEPA)

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

This study was undertaken by the Center for Environmental Policy Advocacy (CEPA) and was written by Stanley Mvula, FISH Program Manager for CEPA (stanley@cepa.org.mw/stanleymvula@gmail.com). The on-the-ground research was carried out from September 2015 by a team of researchers lead by Stanley Mvula, supported by Dr. Dick Kachilonda, Pact Governance and Capacity Development Specialist based in Mangochi, further assistance was provided by Mr. Richard Kachala, Program Manager, Community Initiative for Self Reliance (CISER) and the FISH Project Technicians from local partners based in different fish landing sites that were visited. We are indebted to them for the ground work that lead to this report and to the many participating parties who contributed through key informant interviews (KIIs), focus group discussions (FGDs) and who provided secondary sources. Special gratitude goes to Dr Daniel Jamu FISH Deputy Chief of Party (DCOP) and Dr. Elin Torrell of University of Rhode Island-Coastal Resource Centre (CRC) for their patience and inputs to improve earlier drafts of this report.

**CITATION:**

FISH (2015). Fisheries Gender and Youth Analysis in Four Major Lakes in Malawi. USAID/FISH Project, Pact Publication, Lilongwe, Malawi: 32 p.

**DISCLAIMER:**

Prepared under USAID Cooperative Agreement No. AID-612-A-14-00004, awarded on September 9, 2014, entitled Malawi Fisheries Integration for Society and Habitat (FISH) Project.

This report is made possible by the generous support of the American People through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents are the sole responsibility of Pact, Inc. and FISH and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.

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## Executive Summary

As a prelude to developing a national gender strategy for fisheries, this study was carried out as part of the USAID funded Fisheries Integration for Society and Habitat (FISH) project. It entailed a literature review of the role of gender and youth in fisheries and conducted 16 focus group discussions across the four major lakes (Lakes Malawi, Malombe, Chilwa and Chiuta), and included 20 key informant interviews equally spread between men and women interviewees.

The outcome makes it clear that fishing, by its very nature of hardships, hazards and hard labour, is very much a male dominated livelihood, while women engage more in fish processing and fish trading either as the wives of fishers, or as independents. However, to secure fish, women often are enticed into “sex for fish”, which leads to a high level of promiscuity and vulnerability to HIV/AIDS, that earlier studies suggest HIV/AIDS prevalence amongst fishers and fish traders is three times the national average.

In conclusion, the study suggests for any national gender strategy in fisheries there is a need to consider:

- a. **Awareness raising:** Education and sensitization programs on gender and women empowerment and to reduce practices of “sex for fish” raising women’s profile in the fishing industry especially fishers spouses should have a representation and a say in FA and BVCs for any collapse in the sector will most certainly have implications for them and their household.
- b. **Women mobilization and empowerment:** Women need to be more organized into groups for them to be able to lobby and protect their vested business interests (e.g. processor groups as sub-sets of BVCs, FA or VSLA).
- c. **Mainstreaming gender in fisheries governance:** There is need for training of LFMAs like BVCs and FAs in gender mainstreaming and the value of engaging both men and women and respecting their roles in fisheries and related beach enterprises and value chain management.
- d. **Women Cooperatives:** To create a lobby force, women engaged in fish processing and trading should be encouraged to unite into cooperatives for grassroots advocacy, including nominating cooperative members to participate in BVCs.
- e. **Increasing women access to market:** Beach fish processing and traders groups need to access marketing information to secure more market services (e.g. information on lucrative markets) so that they are not bounded or held to ransom through “sex for fish habits”.
- f. **Training in postharvest fish loss management:** Train women and men in processing groups in efficient processing techniques to maximize on economies of scale, and more fuel-efficiency.
- g. **Institute gender quotas in training:** Ensure that training is not captured by men only, seats should be reserved for women when planning training workshops or meetings.
- h. **Provision of basic business related management skills:** Women processors should be equipped in business management skills to assist to meaningfully contribute to manage their affairs.
- i. **Development of a Fisheries Gender Strategy:** Assist the Department of Fisheries to develop a stand-alone fisheries sector gender strategy for gender mainstreaming bringing women and men into a position where they participate as equals in fisheries co-management and marketing.
- j. **Gender and CCA:** Women engage in lakeshore farming, especially vegetables, they need to also be targeted in Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) training so as to grow drought resistant crops, and be part of early warning system and have coping strategies for drought and flood periods.
- k. **VSLA and Gender:** VSLA offer both men and women opportunities to access capital to invest in gear, fishing and processing equipment and should be encouraged equally for both sexes as a means to escape poverty.
- l. **Sex for Fish:** Reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS amongst fishing communities by engaging in awareness programs of the risk, distribution of condoms at beach sites, increase HIV/AIDS counselling and propaganda campaigns, addressing the possible link between HIV/AIDS and bilharzia, by treating for bilharzia.

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## **ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

ADC	Area Development Committee
BVC	Beach Village Committee
CDCS	Country Development Cooperation Strategy
EPA	Extension Planning Area
EU	European Union
FISH	Fisheries Integration of Society and Habitats
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GBV	Gender-based Violence
GoM	Government of Malawi
KII	Key Informant Interview
LFMA	Local Fisheries Management Authority
NFAP	National Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy
PMEP	Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government
VDC	Village Development Committee
VNRMC	Village Natural Resources Management Committee



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## **A Fisheries Gender and Youth Analysis of the Four Major Lakes in Malawi**

### **1.0 Introduction**

#### **1.1 Background to the Study**

The Government of Malawi (GoM) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) strive to achieve gender equality within the natural resource and environment sector, so that all Malawians (men, women, boys, and girls) may partake in and benefit from the development of their country.

Fisheries Integration of Society and Habitats (FISH) Project is a partnership between the GoM and USAID, and implemented jointly under a Cooperation Agreement with Pact, University of Rhode Island (URI-CRC), Christian Aid and local partners Centre for Environmental Policy and Advocacy (CEPA), Community Initiative for Self Reliance (CISER), Emmanuel International (EI), Wildlife and Environmental Society (WESM), Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR) and WorldFish.

The premise of FISH is that if Malawian fisher folk and government are empowered to make informed co-management decisions about the fisheries, its governance and the sustainable use of the aquatic environment on which they depend, then the quality of life for Malawians will be improved. The general theory of change driving the FISH project is:

*“If decisions around fisheries management are based on shared, evidence-based objectives and learning, are grounded in inclusive and effective ecosystem-scaled governance structures, and strengthen the assets of communities, then Malawi’s complex and diverse freshwater lake ecosystems can be sustained.”*

FISH is therefore, aligned with the *Malawi Growth and Development Strategy*, promoting the more efficient, equitable, and sustainable use of Malawian fishery resources. As such, FISH is an essential component of environmental programming under USAID’s Development Objective Assistance Agreement with the GoM. This study examines gender and youth situation in the four main fisheries ecosystems of Malawi, (i.e. Lake Malawi, Malombe, Chilwa and Chiuta) and in so doing comes up with learning as the evidence base needed to make recommendations towards the objectives of strengthening a national equitable and fair gender strategy for the fisheries sector.

#### **1.2 Background to the Fisheries Sector**

In Malawi, the fisheries sector contributes approximately 4 % to national GDP, and is a significant source of job creation, directly employing about 60,000 fishers and crew, and indirectly about 500,000<sup>1</sup> people who are involved in the value chain of fish processing, fish marketing, fish transportation, net making, boat building and engine repair, fuel and spares supply and thousands more involved in allied services (eg beach markets, restaurants, bars, small and medium enterprises and the like). Fisheries play an important role in ensuring food security and animal protein for a balanced nutrition of the rural population. The poorest of the poor depending on fisheries resources for food and livelihood support. Some of these fishery resources are decreasing steadily (eg in Lakes Malombe, Chilwa and Chiuta) due to high, unsustainable exploitation rates and use of illegal gears, while poor forestry and agricultural practices in the catchment are affecting water quality, and climate

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<sup>1</sup> See annual frame survey 2013.

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change is affecting lake levels, altering production patterns. The limited economic choices for alternative livelihoods amongst lakeshore communities, and high population growth with ever increasing demand for resources is putting pressure on fish habitats. FISH seeks to help address these issues by focusing on effective fisheries co-management arrangements between state and user aimed at biodiversity conservation (BDC) and climate change adaptation (CCA) through capacity building; and integration within Malawi's development priorities, which includes a balanced gender engagement.

### **1.3 Gender and Fisheries in Malawi**

Gender disparities in fishing communities are among some of the major constraints affecting equity in fisheries livelihoods and productivity of the sector. A number of studies (Béné and Merten, 2008; Nagoli *et al.*, 2010; Chiwaula *et al.*, 2012), have highlighted that among the fisher folk; men are mostly involved in fishing activities while a majority of the women are involved in the secondary activities like processing and trading as well as in the service industries (i.e. small trading, restaurants, markets and the like). Women in fishing societies, especially those that engage in fish trade are considered vulnerable to what is commonly referred to as “fish-for-sex” (Béné and Merten, 2008). To compete with men for access to fish, fish products and transport, women are often expected to provide certain favors to secure supplies. Furthermore, women face challenges to access the fish for further processing and trading as well as lucrative markets for fish due to their low price negotiation skills a result of a combined effect of them being economically and socially disadvantaged as well as stiff competition between women who trade in fish. Also, women who are married to fishers have a vested interest in fish, as this economic stream safeguards their own livelihoods and the fate of their children. Should the fishery collapse, women would have to toil alongside their spouses to sustain their alternative livelihood options and their family's poverty coping strategies.

Additionally, the role of the youth in the fish value chain and child labour issues are also poorly understood. Youth often abandon school to take up the more lucrative options that the fishing industry offers. In addition access, control, insight, and use of income from fishery related enterprises have significant gender considerations; gender integration therefore an important dimension of the fisheries sector in Malawi.



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## 2.0 Methodology

### 2.1. Objectives of the Study

This section briefly describes the methodology used for this FISH Gender and Youth Analysis (GYA). The purpose of the analysis was to understand what are the gender and youth roles and status in the fish value chain to contribute towards producing a gender mainstreaming strategy for the national fisheries sector.

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Assess the roles and experience of different gender categories and youth in the fish value chain in the four major lakes of the FISH project target areas.
2. Identify the gender and youth issues among the fisher folk in these FISH project target areas.
3. Determine barriers and opportunities to equitable gender representation in local fisheries co-management authorities; and
4. Make recommendations towards a national fisheries gender strategy.

The analysis framework and field interview guide was informed by USAID's Domains of Gender Analysis (USAID 201sab\_032610) which are:

- Laws, Policies, Regulations, and Institutional Practices
- Cultural Norms and Beliefs
- Gender Roles, Responsibilities, and Time Used
- Access to and Control over Assets and Resources
- Patterns of Power and Decision-making

For purposes of this fisheries gender and youth analysis, the focus was on understanding gender and youth dynamics and differences related to access, control and usage of fishery resources and related income with particular focus along the fish value chain in Lakes Malawi, Malombe, Chiuta and Chilwa.



*Figure 1: Women participate in a focus group at Msaka fish landing site. (Credit: Stanley Mvula, CEPA)*

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## 2.2. Literature Review

A review of secondary literature informed this analysis as well as the design of the field interview guide. Further review was done to look at the relevant national legislation in support of gender. Some literature reviewed has been embedded as reference on discussion points.

The CEPA team conducted a literature review of gender and fisheries in Malawi, this included a number of studies that have been conducted on women involvement in the fisheries and fish value chain between 1990s and early 2000 in the four target lakes.

## 2.3 Description of fieldwork sites

The gender and youth analysis was conducted in September 2015 using Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) methods. Specifically, the Gender analysis questionnaire through focus group discussions (FGD) was employed (Annex 1).

- a. Primary data collection by FGD was organized by lake. Each of the following landing sites was specifically chosen because they are prominent and harbor more small scale fishing communities who mostly are the primary beneficiaries of the FISH project:
  - Lake Malawi (South East arm): Chiphoole and Lupetere
  - Lake Malawi (South West arm): Msaka and Malembo
  - Lake Malombe: Chimwala/Chapola and Kadewere
  - Lake Chiuta: Small Chiuta Island and N'thubula
  - Lake Chilwa: Mposa and Kachulu
- b. Interviewees for FGD, both men and women were clustered in 2 groups by occupation (e.g. fisher, processors and traders separately). Interviews with fishers, processors and traders were then conducted separately through focus groups using a checklist of questions (Annex 1) so as to generate the relevant data regarding gender and youth involvement.
- c. This was followed up by more probing, and focused discussions involving key informant interviews (Annex 2).

*Table 1: Focus Group Discussions and Key Informant Interviews conducted by Lake*

Lake or Sub-division	No. of Focus Group Discussions	No. of Key Informant Interviews	
		Male	Female
Southwest arm, Lake Malawi	2 <sup>2</sup>	2	2
Southeast arm, Lake Malawi	4	2	2
Lake Malombe	4	2	2
Lake Chiuta	4	2	2
Lake Chilwa	4	2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>

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<sup>2</sup> Malembo and Msaka landing sites had one FGD each due to the logistical hitch that was encountered and KIIs were done to both groups of people (fishers separately from processors and traders)

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## **2.4 Limitations of the Study**

The physical scope of the FISH impact areas (i.e., fishing communities within 10 km from the coastline in all the four target lakes of the FISH project) is vast; therefore, it was not practically possible to conduct FGDs on all sites of the target lakes. The study is based on a representative sample of 16 community group interviews, 4 per lake (Table 1) and is a qualitative assessment so that the findings reflect the diversity of practice in the decision-making authority between men and women within fisher folk, but may not reflect women's autonomy outside the home in areas that were not sampled.

## **2.5 Data Analysis**

Qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis (cultural norms and belief; gender roles and responsibilities; access to and control over assets and resources and patterns of power and decision making) by following contents of the focus group questionnaire and supported by the key informant interview notes. The data were substantiated by the preliminary visits to the landing sites and fish processing areas prior to conducting the focus group discussions. This was done to observe the behaviors and roles of men and women, and their children.

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## **3.0 Results of Literature Review**

### **3.1. Gender and Legislation**

This section presents results of literature review that was conducted on legislation related to gender in Malawi.

#### **3.1.1. National Gender Policy**

Malawi's policy and legislative framework is supportive of equality when it comes to gender. The Gender Equality Act (2012) classifies constitutional guarantees in key matters by prohibiting discrimination based on sex; prohibiting sexual harassment; and guaranteeing equal educational opportunities and sexual and reproductive health. At the same time, one of the goals of the *Malawi Growth and Development Strategy II* is "to reduce gender inequalities and enhance participation of all gender groups in socio-economic development". The National *Gender Policy 2005* which has since been revised and is awaiting cabinet approval envisions "[a] society where men, women, boys and girls equally and effectively participate in and benefit from development process". The goal of the *Policy* is "to mainstream gender in the national development process in order to enhance participation of women and men, girls and boys for sustainable and equitable development" (GoM 2008).

This therefore must also be the goal of any gender strategy in fisheries.

#### **3.1.2. Gender and the Environment**

Under Natural Resources and Environmental Management, the *Gender Policy* sets forth the goal of: "Equal and equitable participation of women, men, girls and boys and other vulnerable groups in the sound management, conservation and utilization of natural resources and the environment for sustainable development" (GOM 2005). One of the objectives of the policy is "to increase participation and involvement of women, men, girls, boys and vulnerable groups in planning, designing, implementation and evaluation of natural resources and the environment activities" (GOM 2005). This provides an enabling framework for gender mainstreaming in fisheries as one of the natural resources sectors. By implication, there is need for equitable participation and involvement of women, men, girls, boys and vulnerable groups in the fish value chain and fisheries co-management, without exploitation of women nor of child labour.

#### **3.1.3. Gender and Fisheries Policy**

While the overall gender policy framework promotes gender mainstreaming in natural resource management, there is limited consideration of gender in the national fisheries policy and legal framework. The current Participatory Fisheries Management sub-policy of the National Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy (NFAP) encourages 30% composition of leadership positions to be women in an effort to encourage more participation of women in local fisheries management authorities (LFMAs) (i.e. BVCs) affairs. However, neither the Fisheries Conservation and Management Act of 1997 nor the NFAP of 2001 provides explicitly guidance for mainstreaming gender in the fisheries sector. The mainstreaming of gender in a fisheries sector strategy should explicitly outline approaches for making women as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs.

The key of any fisheries sector policy on gender must recognize that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The NFAP has undergone revision and is currently awaiting cabinet approval, and so the gender content was not available to this study.

### 3.2. Gender and Fisheries in Malawi

Gender disparities in fisheries can result in lower labor productivity within the sector and inefficient allocation of labor at household and national levels. Customary beliefs, norms and laws and unfavorable regulatory structures of the state, reduce women’s access to fisheries resources, assets and decision-making (FAO, 2006; Porter, 2006; Okali and Holvoet, 2007), confining them to the lower end of supply chains within the so-called “informal” sector in Malawi and other many developing countries. As much as in agriculture, forestry and industry, women are likely to constitute a larger proportion of the poor within the fisheries sector and are often excluded in representation as a resource user group in fisheries governance and resource management. The differential impact of and contribution to ecological degradation and depletion of aquatic resources by women and men are often overlooked.

*Table 2: Gender Analysis of Fishing Beaches in Mangochi by Nagoli, Holvoet and Remme (2010)*

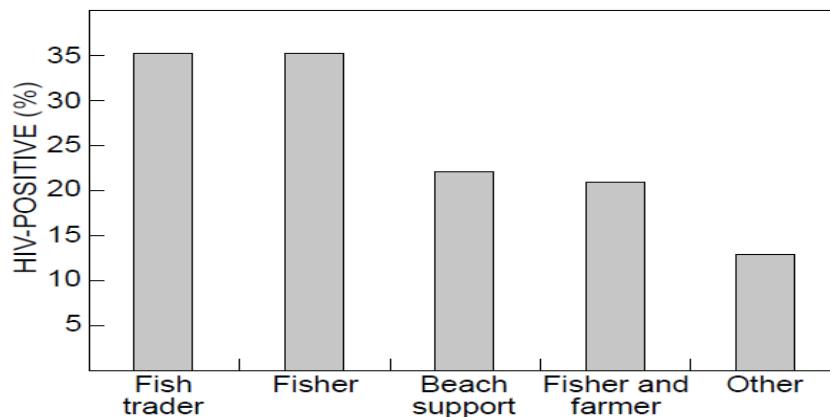
**Table 1:** HIV vulnerability profile built from the results of the diagnostic survey in Msaka and Kadango villages, Mangochi district, southern Lake Malawi (mobility = days away from home per month)

Occupational group	Group characteristics			Working conditions	Reasons for HIV vulnerability
	Sex	Mobility (days)	Age range (years)		
Fish processors	Females: 20–70%, depending on the landing site	3–14	14–50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Often work without enough capital and therefore may access fish on credit;</li> <li>Difficulties in accessing fish-processing facilities;</li> <li>Difficult working conditions: fish are landed early morning (e.g. <i>nkacha</i> seine lands at 3–4 am);</li> <li>Sleep at processing facility to guard fish.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exchanging sex for fish is common during low-catch seasons;</li> <li>No condoms available in remote beach communities;</li> <li>Have multiple male partners in order to access fish readily.</li> </ul>
	Males: 30–80%, for processing big fish	3–14	25–70	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mostly sleep on beaches to guard fish;</li> <li>Offer bribes to fishermen to access fish.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transactional sex with women traders, mostly without using condoms.</li> </ul>
Fish traders	Females: 20–80%, depending on the fish product.	2–7	11–50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Very mobile, looking for fish markets;</li> <li>Have high incidences of theft back at home while away;</li> <li>Competition for access to fish influences women to set up sexual relationships with fishermen;</li> <li>Difficult access to transport.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exchange of sex for services, such as security, transportation or accommodation, to maximise profits;</li> <li>Exchange of sex to access fish.</li> </ul>
	Males: 100% of those selling fresh fish; 30–80% of those selling processed fish	2–7	20–50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sleep in shelters or in rest houses, away from spouses and family;</li> <li>Male traders work on a larger scale.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multiple sexual partners.</li> </ul>
Gear and boat owners	Males: 100%	3–30	15–60	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Very mobile, looking for places of high catches;</li> <li>Sleep in rest houses or on the beach away from their spouse;</li> <li>Highly disposable income;</li> <li>Tendency for alcohol or drug abuse.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multiple partners and casual sex with sex workers who are attracted by high incomes, in some cases influenced by alcohol or drugs.</li> </ul>
Fishing crew	Males: 100%	3–30	12–50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Very young men dominate the occupation by having more access to cash;</li> <li>Tend to work overnight and spend the day inside, sometimes watching pornographic films or using alcohol or drugs;</li> <li>Have limited livelihood options apart from fishing, hence have more financial problems during times of low catches.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multiple partners and casual sex with sex workers who are attracted by high incomes, in some cases influenced by alcohol or drugs.</li> </ul>
Transporters	Males: 100%	1–2	18–25 for those with bicycles; 20–50 for those with motor vehicles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Difficulties of vehicle breakdowns because of poor state of motor vehicles/ bicycles on poor roads;</li> <li>Frequently stopped by police, with tendency towards bribery because of violations of traffic regulations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enticed by women who may try to get free transportation in exchange for sex.</li> </ul>

Gender differences are fundamentally underpinned by power inequalities in society and can result in the subordination of women and their interests in a manner that favours men. The fishing industry in Malawi, as in many other countries, is highly gender biased. In Southern Malawi, men almost exclusively carry out the fishing. They also own the fishing boats and nets, which are the most profitable part of the sector.

Men dominate the selling of larger, fresher and more profitable fish because they have better access to capital. Women on the other hand are dominant in the drying and processing of smaller fish, which requires smaller capital but also provides smaller profits. In this gendered division of labour, men are able to make larger profits and dominate the means of production and women have to negotiate access to fish through men. These power imbalances can increase both women and men’s vulnerability to HIV as sex is often traded for exclusive rights to fish and/or transport (MacPherson et al., 2012).

Gender studies in fisheries, such as “sex for fish” and HIV and AIDS vulnerability in fishing communities in Mangochi district, Malawi, by Nagoli, Holvoet and Remme (2010) suggest that women often trade sex to secure fish or transport and are thus more vulnerable to HIV/AIDS (Table 2). This is borne out by studies of vulnerability of fishers and female fish traders to HIV/AIDS along the fish market chain of the south-eastern Arm of Lake Malawi from a study by Kambewa, Nagoli and Hüsken (2009) (Figure 2). The HIV/AIDS prevalence amongst fishers and fish traders was an alarming 3 times the national level, suggesting this needs further attention.



**Figure 4:** Results of voluntary counselling and testing for HIV (VCT) at six health centres in Mangochi district, Malawi, January 2008 (n = 228 clients)

*Figure 2: HIV Prevalence amongst Fisher Communities (Adopted from Kambewa, Nagoli and Hüsken 2009)*

The participation of men and women in the fish value chain differs to a certain extent depending on economics, politics and culture. In Malawi fisheries women have customarily engaged the pre and post-harvest sector concentrating on financing the fleet, processing and marketing of the fish catch. Women are involved in many complex networks and alliances that enable them to negotiate access to fish and market them successfully. For example, Usipa marketing in Lake Malawi and many fisheries throughout the West African region are pre-financed by women who often control the processing and marketing sectors (Chiwaula et al., 2012).

There is, therefore, a symbiotic relationship between the women and men in the fishing industry: neither could survive without the other. Dialogues that focus on women in fisheries therefore need to be aware of the implications of relations between men and women and how these describe the position of women. In addition to these tasks, women also have to look after the household unit taking



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care of the family's educational, health and dietary needs. The reproductive and other domestic roles have been treated as separate activities rather than as complementary, just as in other natural resources sectors (Harrison, 2000).

This means that the labor intensity of the technology may not be the only reason for the male dominance in fishing. For Lakes Malawi, Malombe, Chiuta and Chilwa, the dominance of men can be attributed to tradition (culture). Fishing is normally done at night and with minimum clothing but also frequent occurrence of windy conditions on the lake also add an element of danger, making it a hazardous livelihood. As such women are not expected to be working in such conditions, as some of the women fish traders and processors described. Other reasons put forward included the hazards associated with fishing such as the risk of drowning in strong currents but also the physiologically demanding nature of hauling the heavy fishing gear. Plus the mixing of men and women on board ship in such intimate contact and in often scant clothing due to the wet conditions, is taboo in some cultures and can lead to arousal.

Women also have less time and their daily schedule is less flexible because of family responsibilities that women must look after the children (Elson, 1992). Although both men and women are engaged in fish processing (60 % male and 40 % female) overall it was noted (Chiasson and Pasani, 2007), that women are more involved in sun drying of smaller fish such as usipa (*Engraulicypris sardella*), Matemba (*Barbus spp*), and Utaka (*copadichromis spp*) while men are more involved in smoking of Utaka, Matemba and larger species such as tilapia and catfish. Fish smoking generally adds more value than only sun-drying.

Men are therefore involved in higher value adding processing activities than women. Selling of firewood for fish processing is mostly done by both men (Lakes Malawi, Malombe and Chiuta) and women (Lake Chilwa) while transportation of fish is mostly done by men who either drive vehicles to various destinations or paddle boats on behalf of fish buyers.

It has been established that, despite 30% seats on BVC sub-committees reserved for women, women are not equitably represented in these community fishing management committees. Based on the wealth of research on women's participation in agriculture, it is probable that women's weak participation in fisheries is a result of similar conditions, notably women's low status in decision making, poor access to training, credit, and other resources related to productive activities (Chiwaula et al., 2012).

As pointed out earlier the gender disparities pose a significant challenge to addressing issues of access, control, insight, and use of income from fishery related enterprises have significant gender considerations in the successful implementation of interventions under FISH project and in the development of a fisheries gender strategy.

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## 4.0 Findings of Field and Desk Studies

This section presents an account of the findings of FGD and KII. It relates the result to gender and youth considerations and associated constraints to achieving sustainable fisheries co-management. The findings are based on both desk and field investigation methods. The findings have been organized to flow based on the focus group questionnaire (Annex 1). Where necessary to elaborate, similar findings have been used as reference.

### 4.1 Socioeconomic context of the landing sites.

As shown in the Environmental Threats and Opportunity Assessment (ETOA) and Socio-Economic (SE) baselines conducted by the FISH project, fishing and fisheries related activities, such as fish processing and marketing are important sources of livelihood in lake side communities<sup>3</sup>. Agriculture is still the most important and widespread livelihood in lake communities, but overcrowding creates competition for land based economic activities. In addition, certain areas around Lake Malawi are also in a rain shadow and drought prone, making fishing an important alternative. There are, however, a few other, non-fish related, but linked petty trading businesses that are thriving in the landing sites like vegetable stalls, general supplies, trinket and clothing selling, soda stands, restaurants, bars, tea rooms and selling of doughnuts, which many fishers take with them for nourishment on the lake.

According to the FISH socio-economic baseline eight percent of the respondents were engaged in petty trading. These businesses are usually run by women. According to key informants, some farmers also bring agricultural produce like the local staple “maize”, rice and vegetables which are sold at the landing site for cash or sometimes exchanged for fish of equivalent value. Given that most people in these landing sites are not resident natives, they tend to be migrants who follow the fish stocks and set up temporary accommodation, and therefore do not own land to produce food; they rely on these local suppliers for food stuffs and other essentials. It is not uncommon to find vegetables being sold by women within the landing sites.

It is the cultural norm that the most influential senior chief (Group Village Headman or Traditional Authority (TA) or Village headman) oversees the fishing activities at a landing site (Hara et. al., 2002; Donda, 2001). Once a week every fisher gives homage, a small bucket “*locally known as mawe*” of fish to the village headman as a token or tribute of appreciation and respect for being allowed to fish and stay in the area. This applies both to the native and migrant fishers. This token of appreciation has been challenged by most fishers and BVCs as akin to corruption in that the TA by accepting, effectively allows migrant fishers from outside the area to use illegal gear to continue fishing at the site. The practice is often considered as bribing the chief with fish, and undermines the co-management principles and authority of BVCs. However, this token tribute, also suggests non-fishers, like the GVH and TA also engage in fish processing and trade (i.e. to dispose of the fish received), and this would also involve their wives and other family members.

Fish pricing fluctuates very much at a landing site because of auctioning supply. This was more especially the case in Lakes Malawi and Malombe. This is where the fisher sets the minimum price and it is left upon the buyers to compete for themselves depending on the quantity and quality of the fish as well. The fish monger/tout “*cheu cheu*” takes center stage to wait for the highest bidder to buy the fish after auctioning. Usually the fish monger/tout gets a portion of the selling price. Women and men traders competing to buy the fish, generally establish prior relations and ties with the fish monger to have an easy way of securing that they can buy the fish. Amongst women traders, this may lead to a trait of “sex for fish”, which is a type of transactional sex, where women fish buyers have sex with fishermen in exchange for the right to buy their fish (akin to a bounded relationship). Since men control the production of fish, the power dynamics in these

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<sup>3</sup> The FISH socio-economic baseline found that 37% of the surveyed households had fisheries, fish trading, and processing as their main livelihood.

exchanges favor men and make it difficult for women to negotiate safe sex (MacPherson et al, 2012). A feature compounded by the often lack of condoms to be purchased at remote fishing beaches (See Table 2).

In landing sites dominated by Muslim Yao's, especially in Lake Malombe and some parts of Lake Malawi, they do not usually fish on Fridays. However, focus group interviewees in Malembo, Chimwala and Lupetere fish landing sites were quick to point out that nowadays young fishers defy this rule and head out to fish nevertheless. This is because they are more lax at their religious beliefs and find it rewarding to fish and would rather make money on Fridays than adhere to the religious restrictions.

#### 4.2 Overview of men and women's role in the fisheries sector

In the Malawian fisheries sector, there exists an interdependent relationship between men and women. Figure 3 illustrates the study outcome of analysis of the division of labour between men and women in the fisheries sector.

STEP	LOCATION	ROLE IN THE SYSTEM	GENDER
LAKE	Fishing	Crew members deciding where to fish	Men
	Fishing unit owner	Gear Owner (finances, fuel and maintenance)	Mostly men and few women
	Landing Site	Fishing and maintenance of fishing gear Selling of fresh fish	Mostly Men Men
BEACH	Fish processing sites	Carriers Fish buyers Fish mongers ( <i>cheu cheu</i> )	Mostly women and children Men and women Mostly men
	Storage and packing in cartons	Fish processing (owner and assistants)	Mostly women and youth (boys and girls); few men
	Fish processing (beach, village)	Transportation to markets (owner and assistants)	Mostly women and youth Boys and girls); few men
MARKETING	Marketing towns	Transportation (drivers and Assistants/loaders)	Men and youth
	Fish markets	Fish trader and middlemen Wholesaler Retailer	Men and women Men and women Men and women
	Marketing points	Consumers	Men, women, youth
	Restaurants/tea Rooms	Offering cooked meals, tea, snacks to fishers, crew and traders	Women and youth (boys and girls)

Figure 3: Activities and roles of men and women in the fish value chain

Most men do the fishing exclusively, with the exception of a few women in Lake Chiuta. Otherwise most women are confined to processing and trading activities. There are differences, however, across the four lakes in terms of involvement (Table 3).

Table 3: Role by Gender across the Four Lakes

Water Body	% Men Fishers	% Men Processors	% Men Traders
SEA	99%	50-60%	50-60%
Malombe	99%	50-60%	50-60%
Chilwa	100%	99%	70-80%
Chiuta	100%	99%	80-90%

Sources: 2014 DoF Annual Frame survey and FISH socioeconomic baseline survey reports

According to key informants and focus group interviews, in Lake Malawi, there is more involvement of women in the processing and marketing of the fish unlike in Lakes Chiuta and Chilwa (Table 3). This is because in the latter two lakes, fishermen normally camp in the floating small huts (locally known as *zimbowera*, see Figure 4 below) built within the fishing grounds on the lakes, which are considered not to be favorable to women.

As such, fishers usually take young boys with them to help out with fish processing (gutting, sun drying and smoking) after which they sell the fish right at the camps to the buyers (usually men) who transport the processed fish to the mainland. Sometimes, a few women buyers send middlemen to buy for them from the fishing grounds.



Figure 4: Accommodation structures (*Zimbowera*) built on the water in Lake Chilwa.

A number of reasons were cited for the limited involvement of women in fishing. According to a majority of the respondents (both men and women) interviewed through the focus group discussions:

- Fishing is perceived to be a tough and demanding task that women, who are perceived to be physically less strong and energetic, cannot manage to do.
- Traditional myths and beliefs exclude women from fishing.
- While key informant interviews in Malembo and Msaka indicated women are involved in most of the steps in the fish value chain.

While women's involvement in the fish value chain is largely in processing and marketing, it was observed that some women are also involved in fishing itself with some owning fishing gears. These findings resonate

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with the 2014 Annual Frame Survey<sup>4</sup>, which records the numbers of fishing boats, fishers, and gear used per lake. According to the Frame Survey report 162 of 11,546 gear owners in Malawi are women, representing one percent (1%) of all gear owners. Most of the female gear owners were found in Lake Malawi (68.5%) followed by Lower Shire (19.8%), Lake Chilwa (5.6%), Mpoto lagoon (3.1%), Lake Malombe (2.5%) and Upper Shire with 0.6% was the lowest. This notwithstanding, fishing crew and transporters are 100% male was also previously observed by Nagoli *et al*, 2010. Given that fishing is generally perceived to be a man's undertaking, it is not surprising that only few women own fishing gear. This imbalance can also be explained by the fact that fishing units are capital intensive so much so that most women cannot afford to buy because cultural norms, especially patrilineal lineages, dictate that resources are mostly controlled by men at household level.

Female participants in focus group discussions conducted in Lupetere, Malembo, Chiphoole (Lake Malawi) and Chimwala (Lake Malombe) fish landing sites indicated that both men and women buy fish when at the landing sites. However, it was noted in most instances, men would send local women to buy fish from the fishermen because they easily negotiate with fishers to sell them fish. It is believed that fishers prefer to sell their fish to women with the hope to entice them to have sexual relationships to establish ties with them. This makes the women vulnerable to the risk of HIV/AIDS among other sexually transmitted infections, gender based violence and sexual assault (MacPherson *et al.*, 2012).

Fishers and processors usually engage youth in casual labour such as lifting and carrying the fish baskets from beach to processing sites and helping in processing, packing, placing fish on racks, smoking or cooking. Youth are then paid in kind or with cash. Some children aged as young as seven help out as water bailers in the boats that have docked at the landing site and get a plate of fish as their wage.

Most women and a few male fish processors and traders usually start as assistants or labourers to the fish traders who normally operate from cities like Lilongwe or Blantyre and surrounding districts. They start by buying small quantities and resell the processed fish to the traders from other districts or cities. This allows them to raise capital until they are able to buy large quantities to sell to outlet markets like Limbe in Blantyre, Lilongwe main market, and Bembeke market in Dedza.

### **4.3 Status of Women in Fishing Industry**

Women are the most disadvantaged in the fisheries economy especially when they do not have a husband who can provide them with support in form of start-up capital. In addition, most women who are in patrilineal households cannot inherit assets. Women born to poor families in the fishing community are the hardest hit by poverty as they perpetually rely on *ganyu* (casual work) to eke out a living throughout their entire productive age. However, others are able to defy the gender barriers and through their savings manage to own fishing units and improve their livelihoods.

#### **4.3.1 Gender roles at household level**

Resident families often work together in the fishing sector. Most fisher's wives are fish mongers who have the advantage of direct and easy access to a safe and easily accessible source of products. However, the fish catch sale dynamics are such that the one who financed the fishing trip, the gear owner, might have a say on who buys the fish, often linked to business or political ties.

The family usually pool resources together. Fishers with their wives who are often fish mongers, then buy fishing equipment together. In some instances, husbands and wives help one another, the husband fishes, with

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<sup>4</sup> Annual frame survey is an annual census of fishers and their fishing gears across the major water bodies in Malawi including Shire River conducted by Department of Fisheries.



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the wives (and children) help to process fish and mend broken parts of the nets. The youth also help their father in carrying the fish from the landing sites to the processing racks and with the processing. Although the entire family may be involved in the family processing activity, it is the women and girls that mostly get involved. The boys help in mending nets and sometimes fishing (Pasani and Chiasson, 2007). The participation of the children helps them to get involved in the fishing business and enables them takeover in the future. However, the temptation of an early income has contributed to higher rates of school drop outs along Lake Malawi.

#### 4.3.2 Gender roles at fishers level

Within the fisher's category, there exist two distinct groups: gear owners and crew members. The gear owners are usually the more capitalized fishers with sufficient wealth to manage the day to day running of the fishing operations while crew members are those that are paid, often "in kind" to do the actual fishing and bring in the catch. This is normally split in half between crew and owner after deducting the running costs for the day's fishing operation. Over time, some crew members, together with their wives, save enough to become gear owners.

There are a number of young fishers and traders involved in the fisheries sector. Most of these are found in Lakes Malawi and Malombe. In Lakes Chilwa and Chiuta, girls and boys as young as thirteen are encouraged to marry. Parents do this as a way of relieving themselves of the responsibility to continue raising them to adulthood. This consequently results in young boys dropping out of school to become fishers to support their wives and children.

#### 4.4 Migration and gender roles

Focus group discussions with fishers in Malembo, Msaka, Lupetere, N'thubula, Kachulu, Chimwala and Chiphoole fish landing sites indicated that fishers in the four lakes tend to move to areas where fish is abundant throughout the year. Fishers usually come with their fishing equipment or units and hire local members as crew to fish. Migration can be seasonal depending on the nature of the fish being sought after. Often they sleep in rest houses or in temporary improvised houses made of reeds located in the beach fishing camps.



*Figure 5: Migrant woman processing her fish on a drying rack where she sleeps, Kadewere fish landing site in Lake Malombe. (Credit: Stanley Mvula, CEPA)*



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Migrants often spend most of the year away from their home. They are often well received by the chiefs in the respective landing sites. After explaining to the chief where their original home is and where they come from they offer tokens of respect. This symbolizes they want to settle and operate in that particular landing site.

Migrants are told of the local norms and customs which must be obeyed during their stay in the area. Most fishers migrate as a family. The wives who are usually fish mongers get established and are assisted by the other local women to build a processing unit or drying racks or advised where to hire them. They operate their fish processing and trading business just like the local residents in the area (Figure 5).

Similar observations were reported in other studies (Hara 2006; Mvula, 2002; Kambewa, *et al.*, 2009). Some migrant fishermen leave their families and remarry as part of their integration in the new society. This increases food insecurity for women and children who are left without support while the men are away either at their native home or second home. Similarly single men who migrate to new areas to fish sometimes end up marrying local women, integrating into the local community.

#### **4.5 Youth involvement in the fisheries sector**

##### **4.5.1 Child labour**

Children's involvement in the sector especially in the participation of work after school is regarded as a positive and welcome development across the fish landing sites. Young girls assist with household chores and other day today activities in the beach households in preparation for their adulthoods. Sometimes they help to sell items as part of some family business, like hawkers or confectioneries. They do this for generating pocket money outside school hours. Meanwhile young boys normally help out as bailers, net menders, carry fish buckets and baskets.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) defines child labour as “*work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity and that is harmful to their physical and mental development*”. In Malawi, the fisheries sector has not been spared, although there has been no study to date that has established the extent of child labour in fisheries, observations made in the various landing sites and confirmations by key informants seem to suggest that this malpractice is well established. In some cases, children as young as ten years old are taken out to the lake to help out in water bailing on a fishing expedition. They are paid a portion of the catch, which they sell at an average price of MK 200 afterwards. They are also made to lift large baskets containing fish and carry them to processing sites for a small fee of MK100.

##### **4.5 Inheritance of Fisheries Assets**

Focus group discussions (FGD) and key informant interviews (KII) conducted with processors and traders in most landing sites across the four lakes indicated that fishing communities were matrilineal except in Msaka landing site in Lake Malawi where they indicated both matrilineal and patrilineal lineages. This matrilineal lineage description refers to the transfer and inheritance of fishing gear from parent to child along the female blood line. Focus group interviewees indicated that under the matrilineal set-up, the oldest nephew of the deceased fishers mother (i.e. the son of the fisher's maternal uncle) gets the inheritance. In some cases, such nephews assume responsibility without necessarily depriving access and benefits from the assets by the wife and children of the deceased. However, some nephews knowing they own the property can dispose or move away with it leaving the wife and children of the deceased destitute. Given that many fishers migrate, the landing sites become melting pots of individuals from different tribes. During focus group discussions, respondents in Msaka were quick to point out that each tribe follows its own cultural demands on inheritance issues and hence, even if a village is matrilineal, there may be migrants who follow patrilineal inheritance rules.

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#### **4.6 Women and Men's Control Over Fisheries Income and Inputs**

Key informant interviews and focus group discussions conducted in all of the four lakes revealed that men mostly have the control over decisions when and where to fish (inputs boats, nets etc.), while women control postharvest processed fish in terms of how to process it and where to sell. Given that few women are becoming more involved in fishing through gear ownership, it follows that they should also influence decisions of where to fish to maximize catch and therefore revenue. However, the gear owner groups encountered at Malembo landing site have not recognized the status of female gear owners. Hence, it is important to make deliberate efforts to include female gear owners so they can participate in management of affairs of the group. However, when it comes to BVC, at least three of the ten committee positions are reserved from women in acknowledgement of their status in the fish processing and trade and allied beach industries.

Men control the income from fisheries and as conveyed through a focus group discussion in Lupetere (SEA Lake Malawi) "Some men restrict their wives from doing business in fear of the wives becoming emancipated once economically empowered". Even though it was found that income from fisheries is totally controlled by men in the four lakes, Chimwala fish landing site is an exception as women have total control over fisheries income based on a traditional practice that a wife is responsible for managing household income. This is an interesting finding worth drawing insights from. In other cases, men control income from sale of fish landed while women control income from sale of processed fish. However, further enquiry revealed that men still control the allocation of financial resources within the households. This confirms earlier reports by Pasani and Chiasson, 2007.

#### **4.7 Involvement of Men and Women in Fisheries Governance**

Focus group discussions with fishers, processors and traders across the four target lakes showed that fishing communities are organized into beach village committees (BVC). BVC are a local fisheries management authority (LFMA) that oversees fisheries management at the local level. The BVCs are responsible for monitoring and enforcing national as well as locally established fisheries bylaws. There are also Fisheries Associations (FA) which are higher order LFMAs, a cluster of BVCs, that oversee operations of several BVCs that share in common the same ecosystem which is water body based. These organizations are important players in participatory fisheries management as they represent the interests of local stakeholders and the FA and BVC sub-committees are supposed to include 30% women.

The study also found that small scale gear owners are organized into groups that aim to promote responsible fishing through use of appropriate fishing gear in some landing sites like Malembo in Lake Malawi. The gear owner's groups' goals are to bring about responsible fishing and expand into semi-commercial trawler operation to improve catch. They also aim to create uniformity in the pricing of different sized fish, but are mostly male dominated.

In this Malembo landing site, the fish processors have also organized themselves into some cooperatives whose aim is to market fish catch as a group and bargain for better prices and bulk up in-order to sell to more lucrative markets. A similar fish processing club has been established through support from the World Fish Center in Kachulu, Lake Chilwa. The processing associations provide women with leverage in fisheries management and they are another good practice that the national fisheries gender strategy and FISH project could build upon.

Other groups involving fish processors that were found through this study are the Village Savings Loans and Associations (VSLA). The VSLA groups, which were found in most of the communities visited around Lakes Malawi and Malombe typically aim to promote capital buildup of small scale businesses. This includes fish processing and trading, with the goal of uplifting economic lives of processors and their families. These

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groups are good because they increase access to capital and they help open doors to other opportunities to expand to other businesses during fish closed season when there is no fish to process. However, they do not necessarily help women in terms of cooperative marketing and bargaining for higher prices. These groups involve mostly women. Most of these organizations have sprouted as a result of several projects providing support to the fishing communities, i.e. Mchengawowala Cooperative in Malembo supported by Local Development Fund (LDF); VSLA groups supported by Njira project in Lake Chiuta; Women processing groups in Lake Chilwa supported by Lake Chilwa Basin Climate Change Adaptation Programme.

#### **4.8 Gender Implications for fisheries co-management**

The various roles played by men and women are quite distinct in the Malawian fisheries sector, with women engaged in the postharvest handling (processing and marketing) while men are preoccupied with capture of fish and to a lesser degree in processing and marketing of fish. However, boat crews and labourers in the fishing industry are poorly organized and lack a voice in fisheries governance.

There are no defined barriers cultural or otherwise for women not to engage in fisheries management, but as conveyed during a focus group discussion at N'thubula fish landing site (Lake Chiuta) "Men do not involve women in fisheries management and women accept and see it as a normal not to show any interest in fisheries as a livelihood". This is mostly due to the hard labour and physically demanding nature and the risk associated with the sector that precludes women from going to sea, for open water fishing.

Given that most women in fishing communities depend on fisheries as a source of their income and livelihood, either directly in processing and trade, but also indirectly in allied industries, or as spouses, it would be imperative to also consider women's role in fisheries co-management in the face of their vested interest in sustaining the economic environment that surrounds the fishing ecosystem. Women therefore should have a say in sustaining fisheries production, and should be actively engaged in co-management practices. The different gender roles in pre-harvesting and post-harvesting fisheries activities need to establish equity in participatory decision making and in rights of access to resources and should therefore be considered when designing fisheries co-management programs. The 30% representation by women on BVCs needs to be in line with their vested interest both as family members who depend on sustaining their husbands fishing livelihood, as well as protecting their own industries and investments. Should the fishery collapse, women, more so than men would be affected, as their husbands would leave to seek opportunities elsewhere.

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## **5.0 Barriers and Opportunities to Equitable Gender Representation in Fisheries Co-Management.**

### **5.1 Gender Barriers in Fisheries**

There are social barriers within the fisheries sector, which makes capture fisheries and management a male domain. Women only engage in fisheries processing and marketing, but they do not engage in a status equal to men. In some areas, such as Lake Chiuta, due to remoteness, fisheries processing and marketing is completely managed by men, whereas in Lake Malawi and Malombe, women are also involved.

Women's participation in capture fisheries is restricted by cultural rules. The focus group discussions showed that there is a widespread perception that women have to be confined to household chores, thus limiting their exposure and opportunities to become economically empowered. The belief that women should stay within the family compound presents a significant barrier to women empowerment and has religious connotations, given the predominant Muslim society around Lake Malawi and Malombe.

Local cultural belief that women are not able to think for themselves and are incapable of running their own businesses only makes matters worse. The lack of self-confidence and belief expressed by some women in Lakes Chilwa and Chiuta that due to the nature and remoteness of the fishery, they are unable to participate in fish marketing. Thus limits women participation and restricts their opportunities in fisheries related livelihoods. Related to this is the lack of trust within married couples and the perception, due to the "sex for fish" syndrome that female fish processors and marketers are promiscuous. These are challenges to increasing equitable representation of women in the fisheries sector and co-management structures.

The absence of policy framework in terms of a fisheries gender oriented strategy poses a challenge to strategic mainstreaming of gender in fishery related interventions. This makes empowerment and other related interventions gender blind.

The most marginalized of fishing community groups are:

- a. The youth labour,
- b. the male crew members who are "hired hands" and have no say, and
- c. Women who do not own fisheries-related assets, such as boats, engines, nets, or even processing equipment.
- d. The labourers in the fishing industry are poorly organized and lack voice in fisheries co-management.

Organizing boat crew, or youth or women groups are positive examples that can help empower marginalized sectors. When linked to savings and loans schemes (i.e. VSLA), these groups they have the potential to find a means to access capital and to finance fisheries-related assets and processing equipment.

Many men and women are lacking access to savings and micro-credit. This reduces their opportunities to move into other livelihoods during lean fishing periods and might indirectly contribute to the use of unsustainable fishing methods as they have no economic buffer to ride the low catches, or closed seasons.

### **5.2 Gender Opportunities in Fisheries**

The gender analysis shows that there are distinct roles played by men, women, old, young, rich and poor in the fishing industry. Gender relationships are determined by social structures and shaped by social relations such as age, class, tribe, cultural beliefs and religion. Gender relationships are dynamic and vary between lake, religion and tribes. Despite the significant barriers to women's engagement in the fisheries sector and

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management, there are opportunities that the FISH project can build upon. The presence of women gear owners provides an opportunity for women to realize new opportunities as investors in fishing industry, a common feature in West Africa. In this way, women gear owners, could grow to influence fisheries co-management directly by dictating sustainable rules for their own fishing units and indirectly through participating in the gear owner groups and local BVCs and Fisheries Associations.

There is an opportunity to use the BVCs as an entry point for gender mainstreaming in fisheries management. BVCs were the only consistent fisheries sector related groups that were present in all of the communities visited during the gender analysis. Even though BVCs are largely dominated by men in terms of composition, the few women that are part of the structures, if empowered can influence decision making in fisheries management.

Other natural entry points for strengthening women's engagement in fisheries management include women-centered groups, such as VSLAs and processor's cooperatives. Bringing them to the table could improve women's status and participation in the fishing industry, because they can gather information and promote the needs and interests of women fish processors and traders.

Finally, there is an opportunity to work with youth to improve their equity in the fisheries sector. The gender analysis showed that youth are less conservative, and engage in using illegal gear as their objective is to make money for today to have a good time. Although youth in most communities are hardly involved in fisheries management structures, they will grow up to become future decision makers and leaders. By identifying potential motivation or drivers for positive change and supporting positive examples and role models, to educate, to change bad behavior, it may be possible to create a new generation of fisheries leaders that are more youth and gender sensitive.

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## 6.0 Recommendations for a National Gender Strategy in Fisheries

The following recommendations are drawn from this study as a framework for a national gender strategy to increase the productivity and empowerment of women who are engaged in fisheries;

- 1) **Awareness raising:** there is need for more education and sensitization programs on gender and women empowerment through the development of good communication strategies targeting both men and women. As part of raising awareness, special behavior change communication interventions are required to reduce practices of “sex for fish” and to raise women’s profile in the fishing industry. Attention needs to be given that women represent fishers spouses and as such have a say in the industry for any collapse in the sector will have implications for them and their household.
- 2) **Women mobilization and empowerment:** There is need to assist women to become more organized into groups for them to be able to lobby for themselves and protect their vested business interests (e.g. processor groups as sub-sets of BVCs, FA or VSLA). This will enable them to address representation issues in BVC, have a say in sustainable fisheries co-management so as to ensure a regular supply of fish. This needs accompaniment with literacy and leadership training in an effort to improve their understanding and therefore engagement in fisheries biodiversity conservation and climate adaptation.

As part of empowerment, women gear owners should be encouraged to join the male gear owners groups so they can have a voice to meaningfully contribute to the development of the fishing sub-sector dominated by men and overall fisheries management. However, it is essential not to forget the men. It is important to be proactive about getting men involved in gender training and focus on making them realize the important role that women play in household economics and allowing the building of more equitable societies. It is also important to ensure that training sessions that are organized for local structures are conducted at favorable times for women such that they do not conflict with their involvement in economic activities or household chores.

- 3) **Mainstreaming gender in fisheries governance:** There is need for training of LFMAs like BVCs and FAs in gender mainstreaming and the value of engaging both men and women and respecting their roles in fisheries and related beach enterprises and value chain management.

At the same time, there is need to engage fish processing and trading cooperatives in fisheries grassroots advocacy, including nominating cooperative members to participate in BVCs. One possibility is to strengthen the current BVC and FA gender focal point to empower them with tools and training that as the voice piece, so they can help push forward the gender agenda.

- 4) **Increasing women access to market:** There is need to develop and strengthen beach and district women fish processing and traders groups to secure more market services (e.g. information on lucrative markets (prices/supply etc.)).
- 5) **Training in postharvest fish loss management:** There is need to train women and men processing groups in efficient processing techniques to maximize on economies of scale, use of ice in fish handling, and more fuel-efficient cookers, smokers and solar driers.
- 6) **Institute gender quotas in training** in all fish related processes (business management, fisheries management, and postharvest fish loss management) to ensure that training is not captured by men only, seats should be reserved for women. When planning training workshops or meetings, it is important to ensure that women are considered.



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- 7) **Provision of basic business related management skills:** Women processors should be equipped in business management skills to assist to meaningfully contribute to manage their affairs and the household income.
  - 8) **Development of a Fisheries Gender Strategy:** There is need for the Department of Fisheries to develop a stand-alone fisheries sector gender strategy. Although efforts have been made to integrate some of fishery related activities into the Gender and HIV/AIDS strategy for the agriculture sector as a whole. A gender mainstreaming strategy can help in bringing women and men into a position where they participate as equals in fisheries management. It would ease the mainstreaming process of gender and youth related activities in the fisheries sector.
  - 9) **Gender and CCA:** Noting that women engage in lakeshore farming, especially vegetables, they need to also be targeted in Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) training so as to grow drought resistant crops, and have coping strategies for drought and flood periods.
  - 10) **VSLA and Gender:** VSLA offer both men and women opportunities to access capital to invest in gear and fishing and processing equipment and should be encouraged equally for both sexes as a means to escape poverty etc.
  - 11) **Sex for Fish:** This is an age old practice, and whereas it may not be regulated, it could be addressed to be made safer to reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS amongst fishing communities by engaging in awareness programs of the risk. Encourage distribution of condoms at beach sites, increase HIV/AIDS counselling and other propaganda campaigns, and addressing the possible link between the increased risk of contracting HIV/AIDS a risk potentially enhanced by bilharzia lesions in the urino-genital area, and treatable by treating for bilharzia.

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## Annex 1: Focus Group Discussion questionnaire

### Fish processors and traders

#### (Focus group and key informant interview questions for gender analysis in FISH project target fishing communities (Mangochi, Zomba, Balaka and Machinga))

How are women and men engaged in the fisheries sector? ( <i>Who does what and why</i> )	
How do families work together in fisheries? ( <i>How do people work together?</i> )	
Is this village matrilineal or patrilineal? ( <i>How does ownership transfer from one generation to the next?</i> )	
How do migrants connect to the fishing industry when they fish in a new place? ( <i>Do families migrate as a unit?</i> )	
How do women's and men's power and influence depend on age, socio-economic level, etc. ( <i>Who are strong and who are weak</i> )	
Who makes decisions in the fisheries sector? ( <i>When to fish, how to sell and process fish, and how to manage fisheries</i> )	
Who controls fisheries inputs (boats, nets) and processing equipment (smokers, drying racks)	
Who controls the income from fisheries?	
Are there any social norms, customs, and barriers for women in the fisheries sector and fisheries management?	
How are men and women organized in the fishing sector? <i>Include associations if any</i>	
What are the goals of associations and other women's and men's groups that exist within the fishing sector? <i>How strong are the groups?</i> <i>What can we do to strengthen the groups?</i>	
Do children help out in the fisheries industry? If so, do you pay them? <i>Average age of children?</i>	

#### Policy and gender integration questions

How should we integrate gender into the project implementation?	
How can women become more involved in fisheries management?	

### Fishers

#### Focus group and key informant interview questions for gender analysis in FISH project target communities (Mangochi, Zomba, Balaka and Machinga)

How are women and men engaged in the fisheries sector? ( <i>Who does what and why</i> )	
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How do families work together in fisheries? ( <i>How do people work together?</i> )	
Is this village matrilineal or patrilineal? ( <i>How does ownership transfer from one generation to the next?</i> )	
How do migrants connect to the fishing industry when they fish in a new place? ( <i>Do families migrate as a unit?</i> )	
How do women's and men's power and influence depend on age, socio-economic level, etc. ( <i>Who are strong and who are weak</i> )	
Who makes decisions in the fisheries sector? ( <i>When to fish, how to sell and process fish, and how to manage fisheries</i> )	
Who controls fisheries inputs (boats, nets) and processing equipment (smokers, drying racks)	
Who control the income from fisheries?	
Are there any social norms, customs, and barriers for women in the fisheries sector and fisheries management?	
How are men and women organized in the fishing sector? <i>Include associations if any</i>	
What are the goals of associations and other women's and men's groups that exist within the fishing sector? <i>How strong are the groups?</i> <i>What can we do to strengthen the groups?</i>	
Do children help out in the fisheries industry? If so, do you pay them?	

### **Policy and gender integration questions**

How should we integrate gender into the project implementation?	
How can women become more involved in fisheries management?	

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## **Annex 2: Key informant checklist**

### **Objective of the study:**

#### **To undertake gender analysis in the fishing communities under FISH project**

##### **Activity: Assess the key gender issues in fisheries**

1. What different activities are carried out by girls and women and by men and boys in fish catching and processing, aquaculture, and marketing? Do women catch or buy fish for processing, or process the catch of male household members?
2. What activities are performed jointly by women and men?
3. Are there differences in time spent, or seasonal differences for separate or joint activities?
4. Do women work in the fish processing activities as wage laborers or are they self-employed (buy fish to process and market)?
5. Is marketing of fish a regular activity or an extra source of income for the women?
6. What roles do the men and the women play in the fisheries sector?
7. What other do you think women/men can participate in?
8. How do men perceive women contribution in the fisheries related activities?
9. What are the advantages of integrating women in the fisheries activities?
10. Are you a member of any group in the community? (BVC etc.)
11. How helpful is it to participate in the activities of the group
12. Do you feel that women have a role to play in fisheries management? If yes/no why?

##### **Activity: Assess the constraints facing women / men in the fishing communities**

1. What the constraints do you face in your occupation?
2. What are the causes of the constraints?
3. What are the barriers of integrating women in the fisheries activities?
4. What are the options for improving the status of women in the fishing communities?
5. Have you ever had any access to loans before? If yes what was the experience how did you benefit from it? What were the disadvantages? Was training provided for managing the loan?
6. What is your perception of accessing the loans? Is it beneficial?