

Research report on *Amplifying Loss and Damage Community Voice through Art in Climate Action:*

Case studies of Nsanje and Zomba

Submitted by

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Abbreviations

ArtGLO	Art and Global Health Centre Africa
C4D	Communication for Development
CADECOM	Catholic Development Commission in Malawi
CARD	Churches Action in Relief and Development
CISONECC	Civil society Network on Climate Change
GVH	Group Village Headman
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
NELD	Non-Economic Loss and Damage
PRCA	Participatory Rural Communication Appraisal
TFD	Theatre for Development
VCPC	Village Civil Protection Committee

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Climate change has had various impacts that have caused numerous loss and damage both economic and non-economic among vulnerable populations across the globe. Despite extensive research on the economic costs of climate change, non-economic loss and damage (NELD) remains an under-researched and poorly understood area. This paper aims to address this gap by documenting and analysing the different forms of non-economic losses and damages (NELDs) experienced by communities in the context of climate change. The research utilized participatory arts performances, photojournalism, and Umunthu circles to capture the communities' experiences of NELD.

The study highlights the diversity of NELD beyond the loss of cultural heritage, displacement, social and psychological impacts, and loss of biodiversity. The research also discusses the beliefs, values and means of addressing NELD and argues for the need to incorporate NELD into climate change policy and planning. The findings of this research provide essential insights into the human costs of climate change and the urgent need for action to address NELD. The study also highlights the role of participatory approaches in capturing the lived experiences of NELD, which could aid in developing targeted policies and programs for NELD financing. The study was conducted in Nsanje and Zomba districts in Malawi. In Zomba the study was done in five Group Village Heads (GVHs) of TA Mwambo in Zomba, namely Chaweza, Mbalu, Makawa, Magoli, and Kathebwe. In Nsanje the study was done in TA Mbenje (GVHs Ngabu, Mbagu and Mbenje), and TA Malemia (GVHs Mambundugu, and Mtemangawa)

The findings reveal that climate change has led to moral decay, gender-based violence, social disruption, loss of hope, loss of respect and dignity, loss of historical sites, loss of cultural values, increased mental and physical health, climate-induced migration, loss of human assets, loss of biodiversity and increased literacy level. These findings provide critical insights into the human costs of climate change and the urgent need for action to address NELDs.

The research recommends the urgent need to address the devastating impacts of climate change on vulnerable communities. The research learned that combining scientific knowledge with indigenous knowledge can provide effective solutions to mitigate the effects of NELD. It is crucial to embrace participatory approaches and provide psychosocial support to those affected, promote climate-smart agriculture, and protect cultural heritage to prevent future loss and damage. By doing so, we can foster resilience, readiness, responsiveness and sustainability. The research encourages the establishment of

community farms ¹headed by VCPC committee to support affected families during disasters as an element of Umunthu in efforts to respond to the shocks and stress of extreme events due to climate change.

The paper concludes by emphasizing the importance of addressing NELD in climate change policies, programs, and financing mechanisms, thus creating a more resilient and sustainable future for all.

¹ Community farms are community owned farming fields that will be headed by VCPC with support from the community forum to grow and produce different crops for the benefit of the community. The community farm concept is centered on idea that the yield will be stored and some be sold to strengthen the capacity of community structures to meet different needs of the community specifically during and after disaster

1. INTRODUCTION

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) sixth Assessment highlight that, the current socioeconomic systems are based on high-carbon economic growth and resource use and systematic reviews confirm that economic growth is tightly coupled with increasing CO2 emissions (Creutzig, et al., 2022). According to scientific evidence, due to the delays in implementing mitigation measures over the past 25 years and the slow start in addressing adaptation, it is clear that there are limits to adaptation. This means that losses and damages from climate change in both human and natural systems are inevitable (Roberts, Warner, & Andrei, 2014).

While there is no universally agreed definition to date, the term 'loss and damage' may be used to describe the adverse effects of climate change that cannot be avoided through mitigation measures or managed through adaptation. Research on loss and damage has had a long genealogy, but in terms of governance efforts to respond to loss and damage in practice, there has been a tendency to focus on loss and damage that is easily quantified and monetised (Chandra, McNamara, Clissold, Tabe, & Westoby, 2023). A more recent concept is that of non-economic loss and damage (NELD). NELD is part of an emerging debate on loss and damage under the UNFCCC. It takes into focus the unavowed or unavoidable impacts of climate change that defy quantification and monetisation, but that are still deemed to be negative by those affected (Serdeczny, Waters, & Chan, 2016). It can include the loss of cultural heritage, displacement of communities, and the destruction of biodiversity, among other things.

In 2015, the Paris Agreement recognized the importance of NELD and called for enhanced action and support to address its adverse effects. Malawi is one of the countries that has experienced numerous extreme weather events, including floods and droughts, which have caused significant economic and non-economic loss and damage. Sadly, research on NELD in Malawi is limited, and little is known about the associated issues.

To address this knowledge gap, the study used GVH Chaweza, Kathebwé, Mbalu, Makawa communities in Zomba under T/A Mwambo and GVH Mambundungu, Mbenje, Mbangu and Ngabu in Nsanje under T/A Malemia as case study areas to enhance understanding of NELD issues in Malawi. The research relied on communities' definitions of NELD and historical events as a point of reference to understand the occurrence of loss and damage. We found that extreme weather events had a devastating impact on the community, leading to economic and non-economic loss and damage, disrupting human

functions, and exacerbating the inequality gap. This paper will unpack some of the key non-economic losses and damages that were unpacked during the research. It also shares how the community has been coping with the non-economic losses and damages. The researchers used the coping mechanism to come with recommendations in terms of programming and further study.

2. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The exercise amplified and documented community voices on non-economic losses and damages through the use of integrated participatory art approaches in the 10 GVHs of Zomba and Nsanje districts of Malawi. The assignment also helped to identify indigenous knowledge and solutions for loss and damage programming. Thus, contributing to the discussion and negotiation of L&D financing.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

The study utilized four research methods to gather both qualitative and quantitative data. These are Umunthu circles, Theatre for Development, Participatory Rural Communication Appraisal and Photojournalism.

3.1. Research areas

The research was conducted across ten Group Village Heads in Zomba and Nsanje districts in the southern part of Malawi as case study areas. In Zomba the assignment targeted Kathebwe, Magoli, Mbalu, Makawa and Chaweza in TA Mwambo, while in Nsanje GVH Mtemangawa, Mbangu, Mambundungu, Mbenje and Ngabu in T/A's Malemia and Ngabu were selected. During the historical mapping that was done with the participants, the study learnt that, since 2000 these GVHs have experienced slow-onset and extreme weather events such as floods, tropical storms, strong winds, drought and dry spells which are examples of climatic factors triggering non-economic loss and damage.

3.2. Sampling Criteria

A total of 135 community members in Zomba and Nsanje were sampled for this study. Using purposive sampling criteria 29 participants were selected for the Umunthu circles; 32 for Participatory Rural Communication Appraisal (PRCA) and Theatre for Development (TfD) training; and 19 participants for the photojournalism training process. In addition, 53 respondents (community members present during TfD performances and two Group Village Headman in both districts) were selected for interviews through random sampling. The study was conducted within the time frame of one month where data

collection was done between 6th February and 4th March 2023. Sampling for this study integrated a gender-sensitive approach. Participants were informed about the research objectives and their informed consent was obtained for data collection and analysis.

3.3. Design and Data Collection

NELD is understood to be a contextualised concept that is attached to the beliefs, values, and experiences of the communities being studied. Hence this study recognized that a standard research approach would not be sufficient to unearth such issues, so it opted for a more participatory qualitative approach that would allow for deep exploration. Using various participatory methods such as Theatre for Development (TFD), Participatory Rural Communication Appraisal (PRCA), photojournalism, and Umunthu circle, ArtGlo sought to gain a comprehensive understanding of the research area's contexts.

To identify new ways to engage the community on NELD issues, ArtGlo used a semi-quantitative method. They conducted feedback surveys, post-TfD interviews, and interviews with key informants in both Zomba and Nsanje. By doing this, they were also able to identify NELD issues and understand the suitability of the different participatory approaches.

Finally, ArtGlo conducted a group discussion and feedback survey to understand the use of photojournalism and umunthu circle techniques in amplifying community voices on non-economic loss and damage. They also used a combination of feedback surveys, interviews, case studies, desk reviews, and observations to understand community lived experiences and synthesize the main themes of NELD identified in the two districts. Through these efforts, the study was able to gain a comprehensive understanding of the communities they were studying and amplify their voices on NELD issues.

3.3.1. Participatory Rural Communication Appraisal and Participatory Arts Performances

The PRCA is an approach that allows community members to engage in various data collection methods such as historical timelines, seasonal calendars, and semi structured interviews. Participatory Rural Communication Appraisal was applied as a participatory method to encourage community members to share and reveal their lived experiences on NELD. Participants' lived experiences, beliefs and values were then expressed through a participatory art performance. The study used the Theatre for Development approach to allow participants showcase their main NELD issues revealed through the PRCA activities and promote community dialogue and engagement in coping with loss and damage. In

attendance during each PRCA and TfD Training were 8 community members who were identified to do the TfD performance from target GVHs, 2 stakeholders (VCPC and VDC or Police Forum) from a GVHs and ArtGlo facilitators.



Picture 1 Trained community members dancing to a traditional song during a TfD performance in Zomba GVH Kathebwe

3.3.2. Umunthu circles

The consultant utilized Umunthu circles² as a platform for survivors with lived experiences to share their fears, anxieties, hopes, and inspirations on NELDs. Umunthu circle being an eco-grief space allowed people to express their emotions, share their fears, and hope for the future. In Zomba, participants of the Umunthu circles included two survivors and one representative from the five GVH Village Civil Protection Committees (VCPCs). CISON ECC, CADECOM, and the District Social Protection Office. In Nsanje, ten survivors participated in the discussion, including five males and five females, two VCPC members, and two forum members.

During the three-hour discussion, survivors used hand-drawn pictures to express their anxieties and fears about floods, stormy winds, and heavy rains. This approach helped to deepen their understanding

² Umunthu Circles are specially curated dialogue platforms which create room for open, candid and critical conversation among communities and peers in a non-hierarchical, respectful and dignity-affirming manner. The dialogue spaces are built upon the philosophy of 'umunthu' – I am because you are – which emphasizes community, human dignity, mutual respect, tolerance and diversity

of NELD issues. Survivors then utilized the Umunthu philosophy to identify practical solutions for addressing and preventing existing and future losses and damages.



Picture 2 a community member with lived experience sharing his fears and anxiety about shocks and stresses due to climate change using the hand drawn picture

3.3.3. Photojournalism

The Photojournalism approach offered participants a hands-on experience in creating meaningful photographic essays, while developing an understanding on how to use photography as a voice. Recognising the importance of amplifying community voices on NELD, photojournalism was also used as a research method for young people to document and share stories of their community. A photo stories book was developed out of this methodology.



Picture 3 young person trained in photojournalism interviewing VH Mwaliwa to uncover some of community values on edge of collapsing due to climate change

3.4. Data analysis

The study employed a mixed method design to capture both qualitative and quantitative data. Quantitative data was analysed using Excel and Excel pivot tables, an advanced data analysis software. All interviews in the present study were coded to identify main themes of NELD.

3.5. Study limitations

Despite limited financial resources and a one-month timeframe, our research team conducted a comprehensive study of the community. However, we acknowledge that the sample size may not provide a full representation of the community studied due to these limitations. Adding to the challenge, the research took place during the rainy season, which made it difficult for our team to access some communities, including Kathebwe, Magoli, Mbalu, and Makawa in Zomba. Despite these difficulties, our team persisted, ensuring we reached the study sites and conducted our activities in a timely manner.

Unfortunately, the rainy season also negatively impacted attendance at TfD performances in GVH Kathebwe and Makawa, limiting the number of community members able to express their feelings and experiences of loss and damage. Moreover, language proved to be a significant barrier in Nsanje district, where most people speak Sena. We recognized the importance of allowing community members to express their sensitive thoughts and feelings in their own language and provided the opportunity for



participants to do so in Sena. However, this prolonged the data collection process, as our enumerators had to take the time to listen and gather relevant data. Due to the language barrier, we also extended the PRCA and TfD performance training activity by one day.

4. MAIN FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study are clear - slow on-set and rapid-onset extreme weather events lead to non-economic loss and damage in the districts of Zomba and Nsanje. The study identified significant NELD issues in all project communities. The participants shared their experiences on common NELD issues, which range from anxiety, loss of life and land for settlement to loss of biodiversity, culture, and sacred sites, along with an increase in child marriages, disruption of health and education services, and trauma.

The findings revealed that loss of historical sites was a specific NELD element identified in Zomba district, while complete loss of settlement land was a specific NELD element for communities in Nsanje district.

These findings highlight the dire need for action to address the adverse impacts of climate change and NELD. The stories of individuals who have suffered the consequences of climate change-related NELD bring the problem into sharp focus, making it all the more urgent to take action to prevent further damage. It is clear that immediate and significant action is necessary to address NELD and ensure that vulnerable and marginalized communities are protected and supported.

4.1. Demographics

54% of the 135 respondents of the research study were male while 46% were female. Their age ranged from 14 to 60 years old. Figure 1 below represents demographics for the participants of the research study.

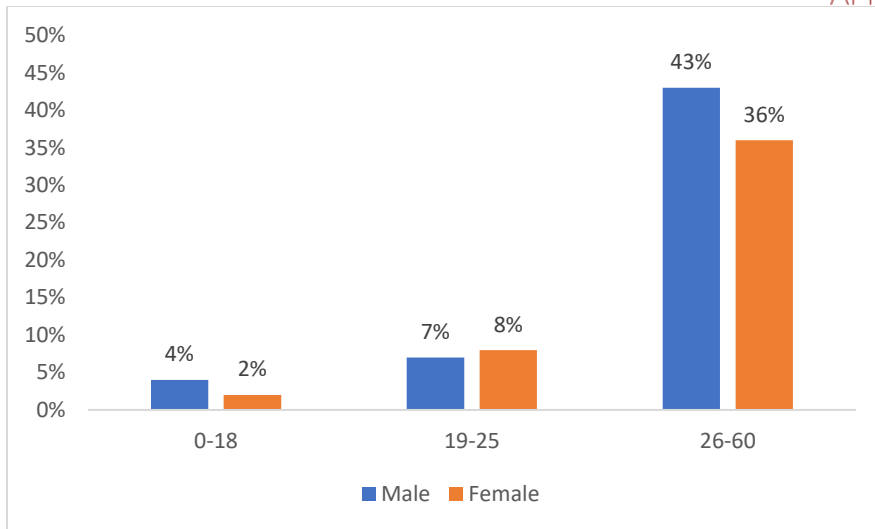


Figure 1 chart of respondents

4.2. RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.2.1. Forms of NELDs identified through the PRCA and TfD approaches

While a diverse number of losses and damages were identified in all target areas, it was revealed that anxiety and loss of productive land are key in communities in Zomba and Nsanje respectively. 46% of the TfD participants³ in Zomba mentioned to have experienced anxiety while 40% of the participants in Nsanje mentioned loss of productive land as their main NELD. Figure 2 and 3 below represents Individual NELD elements identified during participatory research sessions in Zomba and Nsanje respectively.

³ Community members who take part in the process of developing storyline for the performances are often referred to as TFD participants

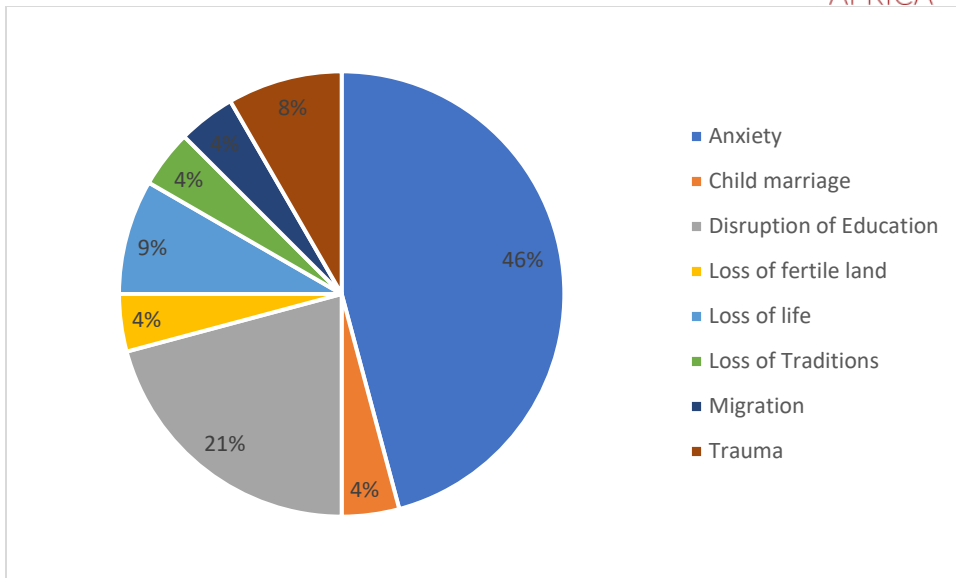


Figure 2 NELD issues in Zomba

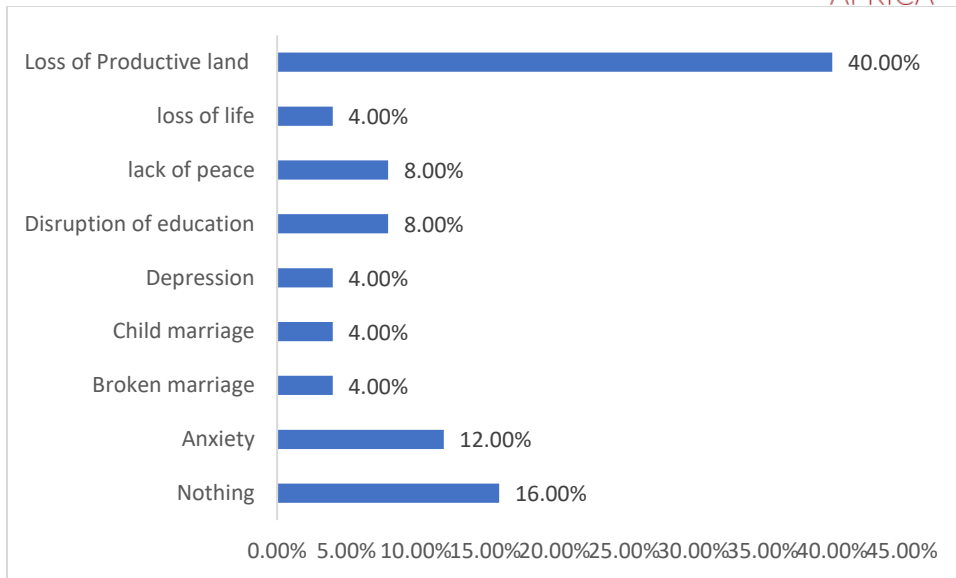


Figure 3 NELD issues in Nsanje

Complementing the findings during the performances were interviews of the sampled community members. The interviewees resonated with the TfD participants. The communities found it hard to cope with losses and damages caused by floods.

Figure 4 and 5 below shows NELDs identified during post-TfD interviews in Zomba and Nsanje respectively.

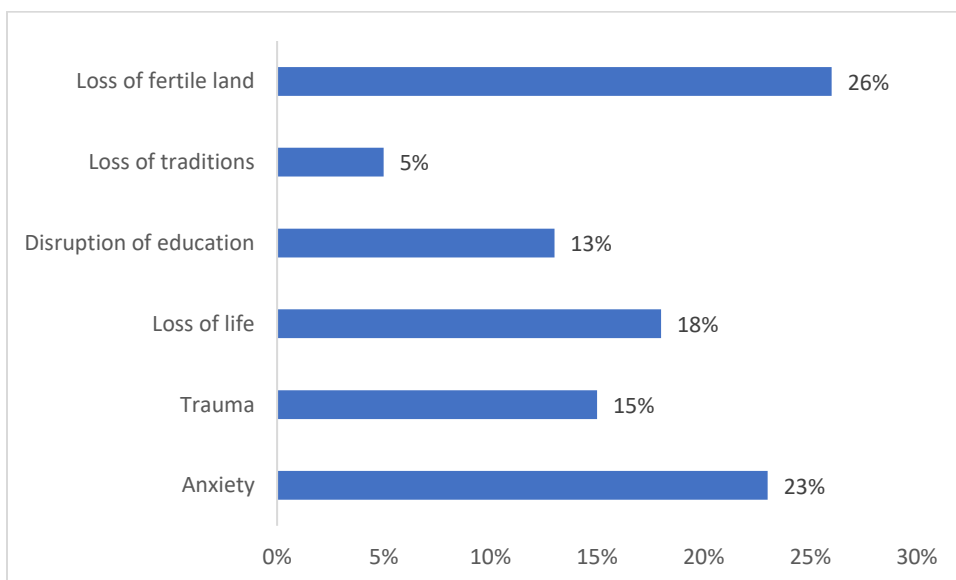


Figure 4 : Post TFD performance NELDS in Zomba

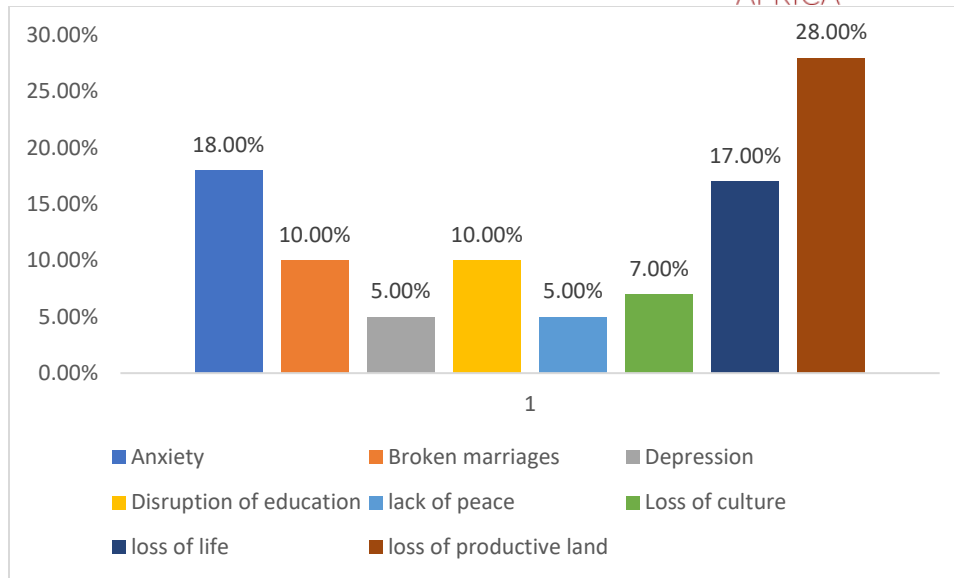


Figure 5 NELD identified during post TFD interviews in Nsanje

4.2.2. Photojournalism

The Photojournalism approach offered participants a hands-on experience in creating meaningful photographic essays, while developing an understanding on how to use photography as a voice. Below are some of pictures depicting elements of NELD. For more detailed description refer to the photo stories (Insert link)



Picture 4 This is a graveyard on the verge of being washed away only 5m away from Phalombe river in GVH Chaweza, Zomba.



Picture 5 Loss of historical site, this a football ground that has existed for over 50 years in GVH Chaweza, Zomba



Picture 6 Social ties, the picture depicts a women who have no social connections as most of the people she knew migrated to new areas

4.2.3. Forms of NELD identified through UMUNTHU circles

During the Umunthu circles, participants mentioned various cross cutting NELDs issues experienced in their communities. 38% of the participants mentioned loss of life as the most common NELD people cope with in the five communities of Zomba, while only 8% of the participants in Nsanje mentioned loss of life as a NELD issue. 38% of the Umunthu circle participants in Nsanje mentioned trauma while 23% of the participants confirmed that loss of productive land are other NELD issues prevalent in the communities.

Participants revealed:

“I lost one of my relative who used to help my parents now they do not have food to eat”, Umunthu circle, Zomba

“When floods came one of my cousin's drowned, and because of delays with assistance he passed away on our way to the hospital. Each time I see floods his thought pesters my mind. It still haunts me.”, Umunthu circle, Nsanje

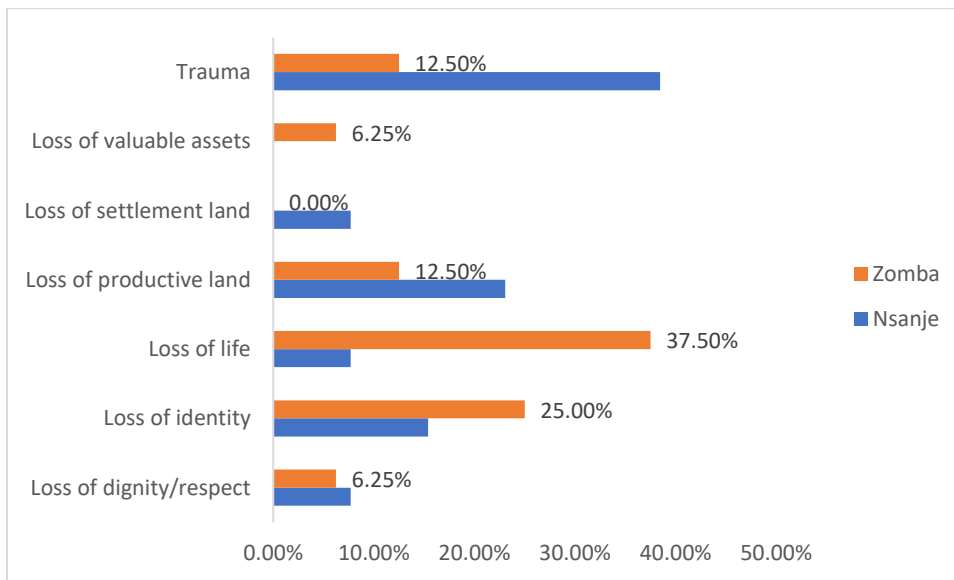


Figure 6 shows common NELD issues identified during the Umunthu circle in Zomba and Nsanje

4.3. DISCUSSIONS

4.4. CASES OF NON- ECONOMIC LOSS AND DAMAGE IN ZOMBA

4.4.1. Research areas and context

Zomba is one of the 28 districts of Malawi located in the southern region of the country. The study was conducted in GVH Kathebwe, Magoli, Mbalu, Chaweza and Makawa. These communities are separated by the Likangala and Phalombe rivers which are the main source of water for domestic use and irrigation. Lake Chirwa borders is also passing through these communities and it is the main source of water for fishing. People of Kathebwe, Magoli, Mbalu, Chaweza and Makawa depend on farming activities. They grow growing different crops such as maize, rice, pigeon peas and sweet potato. The communities face food shortage every year due to heavy rains which causes floods and washes away crops. Even the dykes in Magoli village erected to control water from these rivers can no longer prevent it. The landscape for these communities is composed of rugged terrain with ungraded road which does not have drainage ditches on the sides to drain off rainwater. This leads to greater waterlogging and during the rainy season the roads are impassable.

4.4.2. Non-Economic Loss and Damage in Zomba

In summary, the main non-economic losses and damages from Zomba include anxiety, loss of lives, trauma, and loss of biodiversity, loss of culture as well as poor physical and mental health (psychological well-being). Early child marriages, increase in theft were, additionally, identified as an indirect impact of non-economic loss and damage while migration was mentioned both as a direct and indirect impact. According to participants, the loss of historical sites was a specific form of NELD to Zomba district. The section below explains common NELD issues, with specific examples, from GVHs in Zomba; and human interest stories from communities in Zomba. Followed by common NELD issues with specific examples to GVHs in Zomba.

Anxiety

This non- economic loss and damage was mentioned in almost every discussion with community members in Zomba. It was the main topic of the TFD performance in Kathebwe and Magoli villages in Zomba. The research findings revealed that the lack of food at household level and chronic poverty causes anxiety in every community. Most community members are usually worried and anxious about

the predicament of every rainy season. They struggle with anxiety because they know that heavy rains can cause floods and destroy homes, livestock, crops and claim lives. People live in uncertainty and cannot make long-term plans for their livelihoods of instance, farming has become a risky activity and farmers are not confident anymore to grow crops. Anxiety towards farming leads to even more hunger in the communities. Unfortunately, poverty fuels them to make often harmful decisions, including marrying off their children early and/or migration.

Loss of historical sites

Due to the floods historical and sacred places in GVH Chaweza are at a risk of being washed away and/or lost. These include graveyard, playground, and schools. According to village head Mwaliwa under their graveyard has been used since 11 November 1818 and he is concerned that this sacred site could be lost as it's now flooded when it rains?

"This graveyard is the place where are forefathers are sleeping and we hold it so dear to our hearts. However, the annual flooding is posing a threat to us losing it completely one day."

There is also a school close to the graveyard which might be lost if flooding is to continue in the area. In addition, the community playground from 1955 and usually used by the youth from the village to play soccer is also now at risk of being destroyed by floods.

"The playground that has been in my village for years even before I was born is on the verge of going for good. This playground is beacon of hope to young people in this community because it has produced a number of professional players at national level", said VH Mwaliwa.

Physical Health

The physical health situation of community members in Zomba has been compromised. In times of natural disasters such as floods and drought, people of Kathebwwe, Makawa, Mbalu, Chaweza and Magoli consume "Mbelewele" a grass which does not have any nutritional value. Lack of food has contributed to malnutrition especially among children. It was further revealed that community members experience disruption in access to health services due to damaged roads and bridges. This challenge has led to loss of lives and worsened health conditions in the community.

It is also worth noting that Magoli has a newly constructed health centre, but health service providers have not yet started providing health services because of prevailing floods in the area. Pregnant women in GVH Chaweza, GVH Kathebwe and GVH Magoli are even more at risk due to the condition of the road during the delivery period. A number of women have had to deliver on their way to the hospital thanks to “azamba” traditional birth attendants⁴.

“Over the past 3 years I have managed to support more than six women, some even in the camps during floods like these, sometimes I have to say no because I am not allowed to do this and I do not want to be arrested” explains one of the traditional birth attendants.

The researchers find out that, more women have had health complications and some have even lost their babies as they could not access health facilities in good time.

Mental Health

Climate change doesn't just take a physical toll on communities, it also inflicts lasting damage on mental health. People find themselves trapped in a high-stress situation, with increasing uncertainty and poverty.

In Chaweza, a community prone to flooding, the effects of climate change have taken a serious toll on people's mental health. Climate change-induced flooding has destroyed livelihoods, leaving men unable to provide for their families. The strain has led to marriages falling apart and wives leaving their husbands, forcing men to confront the daunting prospect of raising a family alone. Tragically, some men have succumbed to suicidal thoughts and taken their own lives. There was one man in Magoli who after losing his farm produce to floods, became mentally unstable. *“He always moves around talking to himself,”* shared one participant.

But it's not just men who are affected. Women, too, face enormous pressures as they bear the responsibility of providing for their families alone. The weight of these responsibilities can be overwhelming and takes a heavy toll on their mental health.

⁴ Traditional birth attendants are normally old women who have inherited indigenous knowledge and have experience on providing counseling and natural medicine to pregnant women. However, they are strained from practice by the Malawi government.

"Abandoned with three children after our land and crops were washed away by a cyclone in 2023, my husband left to find economic opportunities in Songani. Devastatingly, he remarried and left me to bear the burden alone" expresses a woman during TFD performance in GVH Kathebwe

Increase in literacy level

The findings of the research conducted in Zomba paint a distressing picture of the losses suffered by communities, including the impact on education. The study reveals that the disruption of children's education is a pervasive issue, and the level of illiteracy is high in TA Mwambo.

One of the primary reasons for the high illiteracy rate is the frequent flooding that disrupts school activities, causing children to miss classes for extended periods, sometimes for the entire term. When schools resume, it's almost impossible for these children to catch up, leading to many dropouts.

The village of Chaweza is no stranger to such disasters, having experienced severe floods back in 1994, with further floods and storms hitting the village since 2015 to date. The Education sector has been hit hard by these events, with families and children forced to relocate to camps where attending school is not an option. With the confounding impacts of COVID-19 on education, the number of students selected to secondary school have drastically lowered. With less than 15 students being selected to a government school in the past two years.

Adding to the difficulties, poor road conditions make it challenging for students and teachers to travel to school, further compounding the situation. The disruption of education not only affects children's immediate learning but also has long-term consequences for their future prospects and opportunities, and overall community development.

Loss of life

The communities in Zomba district face continuous threats caused by floods and heavy wind. According to study participants, floods have become more intense in recent years due to climate change. Another NELD element the research identified was loss of life. For example in 2015 two boys from GVH

Kathebwe and GVH Magoli lost their lives due to flooding. One boy met his fate as he was crossing the Phalombe River while the other one went fishing and was swept away by water.

"We lost a member of our community, a man who had poured his heart and soul into cultivating his field of beans. When he learned that his entire crop had been washed away by the floods, he was devastated. The shock and grief were too much for him to bear, and he fainted on the spot. Sadly, he never regained consciousness, and we lost him that day." Shared TFD participant in Kathebwe

Loss of Culture

It is not only lives and psychological well-being of the people of Kathebwe, Magoli, Mbalu and Makawa that are at risk through effects of climate change and natural disasters. Traditions and customs that are pillars of these communities have also been threatened. Recurrent floods are preventing children of the communities from going for initiation ceremonies (*Simba*). Magoli and Kathebwe villages used to have annual initiation ceremonies for boys and girls transitioning into puberty. This stopped in 2015 when the villages were hit by floods as they lacked food to support the ceremonies. In addition, migration and settling in camps have made them emulate the culture of other communities leading to the deterioration of their social values.

Trauma

During discussions with participants in the TFD program, researchers learnt about some incredibly traumatic events that have affected them deeply. They shared stories of experiences that have left them with emotional scars that are difficult to heal.

One story that stood out was about a man from Kathebwe village who was escorting his pregnant wife to the nearest health centre in Chaweza village. Unfortunately, the bad road made their journey extremely difficult, and what should have taken 30 minutes ended up taking over 2.5 hours. The wife ended up delivering their baby on the way, and the man, without training in childbirth, was forced to attend to his wife. This experience left the man traumatized, as according to their cultural traditions, husbands are not supposed to see childbirth. It's tough for them to go against their cultural norms, but sometimes it's the only way to save the lives of their wives and children. They stressed the crucial role traditional birth attendants "*azamba*" play during these times.

Another example of traumatic events occurred in the communities of Kathebwé, Chaweza, and Magoli. These communities have experienced heavy rains and floods that washed away their graveyard. As a result, coffins and human skeletons came floating into the communities, which was a traumatic experience for everyone including children. The memories of these events stay with them, and as one participant said, *"Sometimes when I sleep, I see the faces of dead people."*

"It is a very disturbing thought to see that we have no place we can point at to remember our deceased loved ones and on top of that seeing all this washed away really worries us" said, one of the photojournalism participants from Chaweza village.

Loss of land

In the case of Kathebwé, Magoli, Mbalu and Makawa the loss of land is another NELD issue identified. The Phalombe River keeps on widening, and lack of stringent means to control the river over the past years has led to loss of productive land. The loss of land is also being triggered by human related activities such as farming along the river banks and deforestation.

Loss of biodiversity

The participants reported non-economic loss and damage in terms of loss of trees and fish species. Lake Chilwa used to have so many fish species including Ntchentchena, Chikunguni and Mazi mayera. The communities of Makawa and Mbalu in Zomba used to have species of highland trees, such as mbawa, mtangatanga, Nsenjere, Msambe and khunguni. This biodiversity has been lost but due to climate change especially floods and heavy winds.

Loss of Social-ties

People of Kathebwé, Magoli, Mbalu and Makawa lamented that their social relations in the communities are disintegrating and disrupted due to the disparities in social conditions. Because of floods people are migrating to other communities within Zomba even away from Malawi to other countries such as Mozambique. Migration has increased individuality as every single household needs to work hard to fend for themselves. This has also led to divisions and reduced community development.

Early Pregnancies and Child marriages

35% of the respondents from Mbalu and Makawa reported an increase of child marriages as a NELD element in their communities. This was also a theme that fed into the TFD performance conducted at Mbalu and Makawa village. Because of the floods, people of GVH Mbalu and Makawa face poverty and shortage of basic necessities which forces them to make decisions such as marrying off their children, especially girls. Sometimes children want to get married to escape from poverty. There is a growing expectation that the husband shoulders the responsibility of providing for the wife and her relatives. However, these expectations are rarely met as most girls encounter adverse effects. One of these adverse effects is that women face an increasing level of gender-based violence and sexual harassment. Another effect of early child marriage is that girls are at a risk of suffering pregnancy related complications. Some have died from childbirth and those who survived have sustained health conditions such as fistula. As reported by a participant,

“There was a teenage girl in GVH Makawa who got pregnant. She had difficulties in giving birth and now has fistula to live with.” TFD participant Makawa.

Broken Marriages

Extreme weather events such as floods, droughts, and stormy winds can cause stress and displacement, leading to family breakdowns. The participants of TFD, Umunthu circle and photojournalism shared how prolonged stay in the camp has led to broken communication among partners. This is also associated with denial of conjugal rights, which forces one partner to fulfil sexual desires outside marriages. This is attributed to loss of homes and the realisation that the camps do not provide exclusive rooms or spaces.

Broken marriages resulting from climate-induced NELD can have a profound impact on individuals and communities. It can lead to emotional and psychological distress, financial hardship, and social stigma. Children may also suffer from the loss of a stable family environment, which can affect their emotional well-being and future prospects.

Climate-Induced migration

Community members, especially men including boys as young as 12 years migrate, to other communities and the neighbouring Mozambique in search of greener pastures. Study participants confirmed that some of these men never come back home, which has also led to broken families, loss of productive

population and affecting the development of the community in the long run. During TFD training, it was learnt that children that migrate end up being herdsmen and are subjected to child labour and human trafficking. They are usually underpaid and don't own anything except the bicycle they use to come back home with.

Dignity

The study conducted on further shed light on the devastating impact it has on the community's sense of dignity. One striking observation during photojournalism and PRCA was the prevalence of floods that usually occur at night. As a result, people are forced to walk long distances either naked or half-naked, which is a deeply shameful experience that leaves a lasting scar on their psyche. Women, in particular, are disproportionately affected, especially in the camps and temporary shelters where they lack access to proper washroom facilities and menstrual hygiene services. This forces them to manage their monthly periods in open spaces, which is an incredibly undignified experience.

Furthermore, the loss of property, land, and livestock is another factor that strips the people of TA Mwambo of their sense of dignity. For them, having a home, land, and yields to feed their families and livestock gives them a sense of wealth and dignity. However, when manifestations of climate change takes all that away, rendering them to feel worthless and dehumanised.

Increased cases of GBV and sexual exploitation

The world is still thriving to achieve gender equality, unfortunately, one of the consequences of climate change is increase in gender-based violence (GBV) and sexual exploitation thus increasing the inequality gap further. When people lose their homes, their land, and their means of livelihood, it can create an environment where GBV and sexual exploitation become more prevalent. The study identified that women living in temporary shelters or camps are particularly vulnerable, as they often lack access to basic necessities such as food, clean water, and sanitation facilities. This, coupled with the loss of social networks and support systems, exposes women and girls to the risk of GBV and sexual exploitation. It was noted that authorities and leaders within the camps use their power as a leverage to exploit women in exchange for food and other services.

On the other hand, women and girls experience GBV from their spouses and guardians as they take advantage of disrupted social protection services. It was learnt, girls normally are victims of rape as they have to walk long distances and sleep in unprotected spaces.

4.4.3. Zomba Human Interest Stories

Against all Odds: How a Disabled Man's Resilience Helped Him Survive the Devastating Floods in Chaweza



Picture 7 Macdonaldo, 47 at his home

As the rains continued to pour down on Chaweza village in Zomba, Phalombe river- that runs through the village began to rise- threatening the homes and lives of its residents. For most people, the solution was simple: grab their belongings and flee to higher ground. But for 47-year-old Macdonald Mlamba, who has a physical disability that made it difficult for him to move quickly, escaping the floods was a daunting task.

Mlamba was born with a condition that left him with weak legs, making it hard for him to walk long distances. He relies on help from others to get around, and his movements are slow and laboured. When

the floods came, he was quite asleep. He was woken up by the waters that made the mat he was sleeping on wet. He could not escape without the help of his wife, so he slept there waiting to be picked up.

“The floods came while I was still sleeping. When I woke up there was nothing much I could do as it was still raining so I moved to a corner where it was safer waiting for my wife who was helping our little boy first. She came and she had to put me on her back as we both struggled through the rain to go to the camp”, narrated Mlamba.

The journey was gruelling. Mlamba and his wife had to navigate through waist-deep waters, with him on the back of his wife and a little child in front of the mother, sinking into the mud with each step. He was cold, wet, and scared, but they kept pushing together with his wife, knowing that his life was at stake. They tried to move as quickly as they could, but the rough terrain made it a slow and painful journey.

Finally, after what felt like hours, Mlamba and his family reached safety which is a primary school in the area commonly called the camp. He collapsed onto the ground, exhausted and trembling with cold. But he was alive, and that was all that mattered. As he looked back at his village, now submerged in water, he felt a deep sense of sadness and loss. Many of his friends and neighbours had not been as lucky as he was. Their homes and livelihoods were now gone.

Despite the challenges he had faced, Mlamba remained determined to rebuild his life. He knew that he would need help, but he was not one to give up easily. With his family by his side, he began to plan his next steps, knowing that the road ahead would be long and difficult, but also knowing that he had the strength and resilience to face whatever came his way.

Mlamba started building his house again where he is currently living with fear as this rainy season has already destroyed a good percentage of the village. His only plea was if he could be assisted with a good house that can withstand floods and food as all his crops have been destroyed with the heavy rains this rainy season.

Vanishing Heritage: The Devastating Impact of Climate Change on GVH Chaweza's Historical Sites



Picture 8 Davie and Victor holding of the trophies they have won in the past 3 years

Heavy rains and flooding have become a regular occurrence in recent years in the Chaweza community in Zomba. The once-fertile fields are now waterlogged and unproductive, and the villagers' homes are frequently damaged or destroyed by the deluge. But the effects of climate change on this community go far beyond the loss of crops and property. As the water rises, it is eroding away the very fabric of Chaweza's history.

The local football ground that is 68 years old, is more than just a play field, it is a beacon of hope and potential in GVH Chaweza. It has produced remarkable players who went on to feature in big clubs

across the country including Mighty Wanderers, Kamuzu barracks and Nyasa Bullets. Some of the players have also served the nation through the Malawi Nation team. Unfortunately, the belief, the inspiration and the sense of pride that comes with the ground will soon be erased from the face of GVH Chaweza due to climate change.

"This football ground is always a special place for our families, and for the whole community, especially the youths. But now, it's worrisome as the river continues to expand. We might not have a football ground anymore." Says Dave Kalema, a footballer, captain for the village's football club and lifelong resident of Chaweza.

Kalema's sentiments are shared by many in Chaweza, who feel a deep sense of loss as their village is slowly being transformed by the forces of climate change. For them, the football ground is not just a place of recreation and remembrance, but a symbol of their identity and heritage.

"The football ground is part of our history and culture," expresses Victor Mundiwa, who is part of the village's football club that has won 5 football trophies. "If the ground disappears, it's like we're losing a part of ourselves. It also means even the next generation will not have the privilege to use the ground. This ground keeps the youth busy, we do not have time to go drinking, smoking, or stealing as we spend time playing football. This ground has produced big players who are playing for big football clubs in the country and we need to do something to protect it."

On their part, as community members they have planted reeds to prevent the flooding, but it is not helping. They hope that NGOs and government agencies will take notice of their plight and aid in the form of flood prevention measures and infrastructure improvements. For now, the people of Chaweza are doing what they can to cope with the changing climate. They have formed a community group to monitor the floods and help each other in times of need.

But even as they adapt to the new reality, the loss of their historic places remains a bitter pill to swallow. *"It's hard to see the football ground disappear," Mundiwa says. "And even if they build another ground it will not have the historic elements that this one has but we have to keep fighting, for ourselves and for the next generation."*

As ill luck would have it, the football ground is not the only thing that will be lost in the next two years, the village cemetery that is over 200 years old, where ancestors have been laid to rest for centuries, is now at risk of being washed away by the floods as it is now only 5 meters away from the flooding Phalombe river.

One of the village headman for the area, Village Head Mwaliwa fears that the loss of the cemetery could have a lasting impact on the community.

"The cemetery is the only place where our ancestors are buried," he says. "If it's destroyed, we lose a connection to our past. We won't be able to honour our ancestors or pass on their stories to future generations."

Mwaliwa further narrates that there is nothing that can really be done in this case as the water is too close to the cemetery now than before.

"We tried to plant reeds and trees the previous rainy season but they are all gone and the water is now just 5 meters away from the cemetery. This is a cemetery that has been there since 1818, and we cannot even talk about moving it because that is almost impossible. The loss cannot be replaced", he narrated.

Apart from the heritage that is being wiped out due to the floods in the area, there is fear that these people will eventually be displaced if the Phalombe river continues to flood in the next rainy season.

Determination; A story about a woman who lost everything but was left with determination

2019 was one of the worst years Charity had to endure. She had lost everything she and her husband had ever worked for including their house to the floods. As if that was not unfortunate enough, her husband left her to fend for herself and their 3 kids. It was a hard situation to accept.

Charity hails from GVH Kathebwé. She was living happily with her family. Charity never saw the need for her to engage in income generating activities. She had a capable husband who fend for the family relentlessly. She was a happy housewife and life was an easy sail. Her paradise was short-lived the day Cyclone Idai struck her community causing floods. 652 houses including Charity's were affected by the floods. They had to go to the camp. Together with her husband and kids they made it to the camp but with nothing other than the clothes they were wearing as everything had been swept away by the floods. Life was hard. Days turned to weeks and weeks to months. The husband left her abruptly with

no communication whatsoever. That was the time Charity realised that things will get to worse if she doesn't act to save herself and her kids.

With empowerment from CADECOM, Charity's spirit was charged and determined to make her life work. Still at the camp, Charity farmed rice that year. After selling the produce she was able to rebuild their house and they finally moved out of the camp. She was able to finance the purchase of her house belongings as well and the kids were able to continue with their education.

2 years later, Charity became a VCPC committee member. She encourages people to always be alert and take heed to weather reports. She also encourages other women to be economically independent, so they do not go through what she went through.

She was happy to share that out of her 3 kids, 2 are in secondary schools as the last one is yet to finalize her studies at primary school level.

Judith's persistent agony

After the March 2019 floods, Judith Gosteni of Namatapa Village, GVH Makawa in T/A Mwambo, went to Mitole displacement camp where she found fellow villagers whose houses were destroyed as a result of washing away of the dyke fortifying their community from Likangala River. Life at the camp was extremely hard for her and her family because they lost everything.

"What we wore was the only clothing that we had and finding what to eat was a daunting task since everything that we planted got washed away. My son received mockery for escaping without clothes during the floods," explains Gosteni.

She later built a temporary shelter at her house using materials that the Malawi Red Cross distributed. After some time, she rebuilt her house which did not last any long because the 2020 floods swept her new house. A few days ago, the house which she also built was also surrounded by water and is very anxious of reliving the experience. She fears for her children whose education is yet to be disrupted again.

TA Mwambo is a low lying area where three major rivers, Likangala, Thondwe and Phalombe that fed Lake Chilwa end their course. This makes the area prone to floods and some communities build ridges along the river to serve as dykes to prevent it from overflowing into their houses and fields. These dykes

are unable to withstand flooding waters because they use weak materials and there are barely made of any cement.

We make this call to partners in climate change action and interest groups to devise long lasting efforts to ensure a sustainable change in livelihoods facing similar circumstances.

4.5. CASES OF NON-ECONOMIC LOSS AND DAMAGE IN NSANJE

4.5.1. RESEARCH AREA AND CONTEXT

Nsanje is the southernmost district in Malawi and lies in the Lower Shire River Valley. It straddles the Shire River in the north (the river forms most of Nsanje's eastern boundary). The district is characterised by two main seasons: dry and wet/rainy season. These GVHs strongly depends on rainfed agriculture and livestock production for household and commercial use. They grow crops such as rice, sweet potato, sorghum and maize. The recurring tropical cyclones, storm winds and heavy rains have led to the loss of biodiversity, loss of territory and disruption of culture and traditions.

4.5.2. Non-Economic Loss and Damage from Nsanje District

The findings from this research present loss of fertile and settlement land, loss of life, loss of biodiversity, increase of school dropouts, child marriages, compromised health as non-economic losses and damages in GVH Mtemangawa, Mambundungu, Mbangu, Ngabu and Mbenje. Loss of productive land due to soil erosion was the main NELD featured on TFD performances conducted in GVH Mtemangawa, Mambundungu and Mbangu whereas loss of culture one of the NELDs specified in GVH Ngabu and Mbenje. This section discusses NELD identified in the five project GVHs in Nsanje, which will be followed by human interest stories.

Loss of territory

Some of the people living along M1 road from GVH Mambundungu were displaced by floods and are currently living in a campsite, as they have no other land to live on. Part of that Village is rendered uninhabitable every wet season due to flooding. Four years ago, part of Mambundungu community relocated to village head Mbeta, where a new site was allocated to the members. Unfortunately, this new location has also been severely affected by floods, forcing the community to relocate once again. As a result, they have lost their sense of identity and belonging.

During the TFD performance and photojournalism, it was revealed that many people have lost hope of constructing new houses as they have had to move three times already. Limited resources have also been exhausted along the way, leaving the GVH Mambundungu community with no way out.

Health

Climate-driven loss and damage have threatened the physical health of community members mainly associated with mal- and undernourishment, water scarcity, and new diseases. Agricultural food systems are disrupted due to prolonged droughts and flooding. This affects the quality and quantity of farm produce, leading to under nutrition and food shortages. In the communities of Ngabu and Mbenje, extreme weather events such as flooding, heavy winds, droughts, and heat waves have become more frequent and intense. Most households do not have food and depend on collecting *Nyika*, the aquatic plant well known as "water lily tubers", a plant found in the Shire River, to cook and grind it into a small meal. However, *Nyika*, as the only source of their food, does not provide sufficient energy. Due to a lack of nutritious food, children are malnourished, and the lack of food has caused the death of several people, particularly children, in these communities. People in Mtemangawa, Mbangu, and Mambundungu reported how they survive during times of hunger caused by prolonged droughts and floods.

"We are forced to eat a plant meant for hippos called 'Nyika,' which provides us with no nutritional value. It is heart breaking that we have no other choice, but to watch our children suffer from malnutrition and hunger. We feel helpless and devastated by the harsh reality of our circumstances," said TFD participants.

The research also revealed that the most significant diseases experienced among the sampled participants were cholera, diarrhoea, and bilharzia. Furthermore, participants indicated that overcrowding in evacuation camps caused the outbreak of other diseases, such as scabies and bed bug infestations. Due to unprotected sexual activities that take place in evacuation camps, sexually transmitted diseases are also common.

In addition, the floods that hit Mbangu in 2015 and 2022 represent traumatic events for people in this community. Displacement from one's land and house, loss of loved ones, property and livestock has caused permanent stress and long-lasting psychological effects. Disruption of the community's traditional way of living has also left people in grief during and after flooding. For example, during funeral

ceremonies in Mbangu, people did not get the opportunity to pay their last respects or bury loved ones in a respectful way. Because of heavy rainfall, the ground was filled with water. Graves were dug very shallow, and coffins could be seen lowered in water. This situation left family members and other community members traumatised.

Loss of life

Loss of lives was one pertinent issue in Mambundungu, Mbenje, Ngabu, Mtemangawa and Mbangu. Lives were lost due to floods and prolonged drought which brought hunger in the community. As People of Mtemangawa, Mbangu and Mambundungu search for food “Nyika”, they could be attacked by crocodiles and snakes. After experiencing a snake or crocodile attack, people may become temporarily or permanently disabled or lose their lives. In addition, Trauma and health related conditions such as heart disease has claimed lives in the communities.

“One man who had borrowed money to finance his beans farming that season. However, when the floods came the crop submerged in water. Upon seeing this, the owner fainted at the field and was pronounced dead upon arrival at the hospital,” TFD Participants from Mtemangawa

Loss of religious values

Traditions, social values, identity, and emotional attachment to special places in the community have been impacted. This was mentioned during Participatory Rural Communication Appraisal and Participatory Arts Performances training in Nsanje. Participants indicated how the community has been losing its identity. The people of Ngabu and Mbenje have a long history of practising traditional knowledge and praying to ancestors for their needs. Nsanje is well known to be the home of a god called M'bona. A historical tale records him as a rain god and also the one responsible for alleviating problems in their communities. Traditionally, they would offer sacrifices to M'bona on specific trees and if there was a drought, M'bona would make it rain and even if there was a disease in the community, the pandemic would disappear. However, the floods have taken away most of the trees where sacrifices were offered. It has been years now since they last offered a sacrifice and most of them believe that the floods and many other bodily and social ailments are M'bona's way of expressing his anger towards his people.

Loss of productive land

In Mtemangawa, Mambundungu, Ngabu, Mbenje and Mbangu non-economic loss and damage are observed in land, homes, crop fields and livestock. The research revealed that most of the people in the communities lost homes and farmland during floods. Only a Very few households still have access to the inherited land from their forefathers. Because of the floods, the village of Mbangu was moved from its previous location to a camp where people are still residing till today. When the floods came, it destroyed people's homes rendering them homeless but also it eroded the topsoil resulting into loss of fertile soil. Floods deposited sand and stones onto farm fields, affecting the quality of farmland. Loss of land for farming and housing greatly affects community members leaving many people distressed and depressed.

Loss of biodiversity

The participants mentioned loss of biodiversity as non-economic loss and damage the communities of Ngabu and Mbenje experienced. While, the communities' water bodies such as rivers and streams used to have fish species such as Dambulu and Mkupe but participants were in the opinion that these species disappeared due to effects of climate change.

Loss of Culture

The predominant issue in GVH Ngabu and Mbenje was the loss of cultural identity, which formed the basis of the TfD performance. Through PRCA sessions and the TfD performance, it was revealed that during floods, households are forced to move to camps as their homes are washed away. In the camps, men and women are separated into different tents, causing married couples to be deprived of intimacy for months. This often results in couples losing control and engaging in sexual activity in public spaces. The community members expressed their concern about such acts during the PRCA sessions, stating that in their Sena culture, sex and even a hug are considered private, and doing them publicly is taboo.

The TfD performance validated the community's concern, with mostly women in the audience confirming that this issue has contributed significantly to the loss of cultural values and identity in the community.

Another important aspect that is lost over the years are some of the traditional dances especially from TA Mambundungu. Since their community was moved, the community has failed to keep on with their

traditional dances such as Mulimba, Chikuzile and Chiswayi. This has raised a concern among young people as they feel like they will never be able to fully experience their cultural music and dance.

Climate-induced migration

Due to floods most people have moved to other villages within Nsanje while others have moved to Mozambique. Some do come back while others choose to stay away for good. Unfortunately, the large population that is forced to migrate is the youthful and productive population. This threatens the future of the communities in terms of social-economic development.

Moral decay

Linked to what has been discussed under the loss of cultural values and identity, community members also pointed out that sometimes children also get to see the sex acts. As a result, most of such children end up experiencing what they saw leading to school dropout, early pregnancies, early marriages and sexual transmitted diseases such as HIV and AIDS. There is also rise in robbery and prostitution. For lack of profitable economic activities during and after the floods, prostitution has become the fastest way for other women to earn a living. This has come with a health price as more and more women continue to be infected and affect others with sexually transmitted infections. Some men have opted for robbery. Some have fortified their robbery with traditional medicine, so they do not get caught. This has made the villages resort to burning the thieves once caught so they deter would-be offenders. While there, the team learnt and had a chance of seeing a man that was burnt to death for stealing.

Broken marriages

All the communities expressed the rise in numbers of people whose marriages have been broken due to climate change losses. The study learnt that most families do not stay together while at the camp as they are forced to sleep separately. So, this separation extends to their personal relationships as well such that it is difficult to pick up where they left off before the floods occurred. There is usually little love to share between the two of them. When this escalates some marriages end as other metamorphosis into something completely different. Other marriages also end when the other parent, mostly men, feel that they cannot manage to feed their families after losing everything to the floods. They opt to marry a younger wife with no kids just so they do not strain themselves in trying to provide for the family. Women are doing the same as well. One Man shared how his wife left him and remarried



somewhere else after the floods. *“As I am speaking now, she left me with 2 kids to look after by myself knowing very well that I am not economically stable at the moment,”* he said.

4.5.3. Human Interest stories

Mambundungu community laments loss of culture.

In 2015, villages under GVH Mambundungu reached a point where they would not bare any more loss to devastating floods which has been disrupting livelihoods as years pass. The intensity of damage during this fateful year pulled government, local and international organizations to query the traditional leaders of this area whether they maintain their stand not to leave the only place they call home.

“I noticed that my feet were slowly sinking into my rice field as I was transplanting the crop during that afternoon. I immediately decided to run home where I found the whole village submerged in water,” explains Sofia Mzungwapezi.

The place Sofia, 42, a mother of four children, and fellow community members termed good fertile land, was all gone and everyone lost their houses and fields. No single vessel was available to ferry people upland and rescuers found Sofia in a tree at 13:00 in the afternoon after staying in there for 6 hours.

The community nodded to the government's proposal to move them to higher ground after 12 March 2015. They were also permitted to still use their old home for winter cropping and irrigation farming. Nevertheless, life has gotten worse in this new land that they were squeezed into. Their culture is gradually fading away as they no longer do initiation ceremonies for young girls including their local dances

“We had instruments such as Mulimba, Chikuzile, Chiswayi which were safeguarding our culture as the Sena through music and dance. Now our young girls are entering marriage after they have already lost their virginity

and some have had children before marriage, 'a taboo', because they have not undergone initiation ceremonies," laments Sofia.

She further said that surrounding communities view them as refugees, barely take on board their concerns and advice, and bypass them in area decision-making processes. Sofia stays in her grandparent's house since she is failing to rebuild her temporary house.

Living a life of doubt

Identification of beneficiaries of relief items is most of the time not done with the honesty it deserves. Some traditional leaders as well as entrusted individuals manipulate the beneficiary list with names of people that were not in any way afflicted with loss and damage due to climatic shocks. This is the predicament that 56-year-old Nyamikiya Mzonda, a widow from Kaitano Village, GVH Mbenje, had to go through which has also traumatized her 13-year-old daughter who has dropped out of school.

"Ever since I was left behind in the 2015 beneficiaries list due to manipulations made by our local leaders who included dubious names, I do not fully participate in development initiatives that come in my area because they only benefit a few," explains Mzonda

The 2015 floods saw Mzonda and her two children lose their house, property and school materials without anyone coming to their rescue. She however stood firm together with her son, 16, and daughter, 13, who braved the rainy weather moulding bricks to build a temporary home struggling. The family still struggles to make ends meet after they accepted that no amount of their loss would receive recognition and support.

"My daughter has dropped out of school because she sees that no one is going to come to help her meet her numerous needs as a secondary school student. Every time she thinks of reaching out to well-wishers, she relives the fate we underwent in 2015," laments Mzonda.

The very little sales she makes in her mandasi business is not enough to feed the family as well as cater for the needs of her children. As a result, Mzonda's daughter is fed up with having to supplement her needs with piece works, as her brother does, which are exhausting and time consuming.

Perennial stress

Nsanje is one of the districts in Malawi that experiences perennial dry spells and drought which drives people closer to the Shire River for irrigation farming. Nevertheless, these farms are prone to floods due to tropical cyclones and heavy rains that are experienced in the Shire Highlands. Emmanuel Mpomba (40), a father of 4, from GVH Ngabu, TA Ngabu, lives a life of fear and stress each and every year as he has no other place to cultivate his orchard which serves as a backbone for his family's well-being.

Mpomba started his orchard farm in 2019 after quitting his job at a similar farm to develop his own replica of the same. Apart from cultivating paw paws, bananas, red pepper and mangoes, he also plants cabbages and sugarcane. Last year, his farm was submerged in water when the two cyclones, Gombe and Anna, ravaged the area.

"Flooding waters found me in my field around past 1pm and I rapidly tried to uproot my red pepper and pick a few pawpaws from the trees with the help of my wife because once these crops meet excess water, they die instantly," narrates Mpomba

To make matters worse, the few red pepper trees that he saved met a dry spell which forced him to cover longer distances to fetch water to irrigate his small farm upland. Only a few of these survived as well which resulted in very low yield which affected his family's well-being and children's performance at school.

"Apart from struggling to feed my family, the performance of my children drastically dropped from being the top 5 and 10 in their classes, down to the top 30 due to stress and anxiety as a result of the change we went through," laments Mpomba.

He further attributes his inability to spend time with his children to encourage them not to be stressed with their current conditions since he was up and down searching for piece works to support their school needs. Mpomba believes that drilling a deep well using machinery, is the only way that he can be able to expand his upland field and relieve his family from reliving the loss and damage of his orchard but lacks the capacity.

Before the two cyclones, Mpomba was rearing pigs which he was able to purchase from the profits he got from his orchard but got washed away together with his house last year. He also practices small-

scale cultivation of tomatoes as a consolation. He prays that his field close to the river is spared from floods this year.

6 COPING MECHANISMS

6.1 Collective efforts in supporting victims

The targeted communities both in Zomba and Nsanje have found solace in one another. Victims of extreme weather events usually have no food and some lack even shelter. It takes longer before they can get back on their feet leaving them susceptible to hunger and homelessness. The community members support those in need by providing them with food and shelter until they are able to get back on their feet. One participant from Umunthu circle discussions shared how they were able to provide shelter to one victim. *“The person was not even my friend but I was compelled to help them.”* This is just one of the numerous ways in which they support one another when Climate induced tragedy strikes.

6.2 Peer to Peer support

Anxiety was an overarching theme experienced by community members across the two districts. Realising how such events have a huge impact on one's mental health, most community members employ peer to peer support. This is done so that the victims realise that they are not alone and the whole village is by their side.

6.3 Establishment of women and girls support groups

There is usually violation of rights against women and girls during such tragic events. The prominent ones are sexual exploitation and rape. In light of this, there is such a support committee in Ngabu and Mbenje whose mandate is to raise awareness of such violations but also enlighten them on reporting procedures should any woman or girl be violated whilst in the camp.

6.4 Camp based early childhood and primary education

Due to loss of clothes, study books and money to finance a child's education, there have been establishments to overcome that. Some teachers volunteer themselves to be teaching the children whilst at the camp. This has helped the children to be following the education calendar and enable a smooth transition once they go back to school when the dust settles.

6.5 Alternative foods

In Nsanje, people rely on Nyika when there is famine in the land. As for Zomba, they rely on Mbelewele and they have also started to rely on cassava flour, a northern staple food commonly known as Kondoole.

6.6 Inclusive camps

Lack of conjugal activities was highlighted the most in the 2 districts. Camp rules do not allow that as men and women are disaggregated. Seeing that there were high levels of infidelity and broken marriages due to these barriers, GVH Mbenje and Ngabu have a standalone house where couples are allowed to utilise while at the camp.

7 RECOMMENDED PROGRAMME AREAS

7.1 Establishment of emergency community funds

The VCPC committee ensures safety of the people during the tragedies but it does not go as far as providing one of the important necessities to its people, food. In trying to overcome this, it was recommended that they establish an emergency community fund. This will include farming of maize, beans and groundnuts of which some would be sold upon harvesting and the money to be kept until when it's needed. Some of the produce is to be stored so that it provides relief to victims at the camp. All this is to make the GVH self-sufficient and ready to respond instead of solely relying on donors and NGOs.

7.2 Establishment of community one stop centres for psycho social support and vocational skills

Due to the rise in anxiety and mental instability cases of victims, a one stop centre was suggested where professional psycho social support will be sought and offered. During the Umunthu circles, the participants were quick to mention that the peer to peer and other social support being offered are nearly enough and does so little in overcoming the anxiety. The one stop centres are also expected to have tutors who will be able to teach the young people in the community's vocational skills such as carpentry, bakery, mechanics etc. This will provide an alternative sources of livelihood as most people depend on agriculture and fishing.

7.3 Sustainable Agriculture

It was quite evident that the community members do not want to relent in farming because that is their main source of income. They farm beans, groundnuts, pawpaw, rice and maize as well. However, the challenge lies in choosing the right seeds that are compatible with their soil and farming timeline. The study also learnt that most of their farming is done in winter after the floods are gone. Hence, they recommended that they be taught. Sustainable Agriculture approaches such agro ecology that they should employ for better yields.

7.4 Community cultural days

Loss of cultural identity is another effect that was highlighted both in Zomba and Nsanje. Culture is lost through socialising with other cultures, migration and other reasons beyond their control. It was suggested that there be cultural days in their communities so that the upcoming generation should get

to know, understand and live their identity. This is to sustain their culture so that whether they migrate and socialise with others, they should carry that identity with them.

7.5 Capacity building of VCPC's, ADC's and VDC's

The study learnt that most of the committee members in these forums lack capacity in their day to day running of their committees. They mentioned that if they are to have comprehensive training and outlining of the mandate of their committee, it will enable them to put in place structural, technical and social strategies that will respond to the needs of their communities. As it is now, they were just selected by the community to run the committees without proper technical support.

8 FEEDBACK ON RESEARCH TOOLS

“Umunthu circle is very helpful which needs to be happening regularly and we need to visit various locations in order to learn more about Umunthu,” Participant, Zomba. 94% of the participants strongly agreed that the Umunthu philosophy is relevant to their lives while 88% strongly agreed that the Umunthu circle discussion was helpful to them. They mentioned having learnt what good culture and personality is and how to stop discriminating against each other when dealing with non-economic loss and damage. Furthermore, 81% of the participants mentioned that the Umunthu circle offered them an adequate space to share experiences, feelings and thoughts regarding NELD issues while 87% of the participants reported that holding Umunthu circles was an effective approach to sharing experiences and discussing possible solutions for how to cope with NELD in their community.

Research findings from the photojournalism training conducted in Zomba and Nsanje indicate that every participant (100%) agreed that the objectives of the photojournalism training were clearly defined. 74% of the participants strongly agreed that the content of the training was easy to understand while 84% of participants mentioned that non-economic loss and damage topics covered during the training were relevant to their lives. Participants confirmed that the activities were engaging and participatory and the facilitators were equipped with necessary knowledge, and answered each question. 89% of the participants found the photojournalism process more effective in identifying non-economic loss and damage issues.

In addition, 95% of the 19 participants mentioned that after the training they will keep engaging in storytelling using photography and engage community members in NELD issues. *“Photojournalism allows us to express ourselves and the needs of our community in a meaningful and engaging way.”* Shared participants from Zomba. *“I want to use the skills I have gained to tell more photo stories of my community and teach others to do the same. I believe I am in a better position to share about loss and damages happening in this community”,* shared another photojournalism participant from Zomba



The interviews with community members, revealed that participants came to see the performance because they heard that there will be a drama and wanted to learn something new. Their responses showed how effective the TFD approach is to disseminate messages in the community. Respondents appreciated the participatory approach because it allowed them to actively engage and share their thoughts on issues relating to non-economic loss and damage. In addition, another strength of the approach was that it was more inclusive and represented realities on the ground as it allowed every participant independent from their gender or age to actively participate and voice their experience. It is evident that the TFD performance made an impact on the community members and facilitated learning on the research topic as per participants comments below, *“I have learnt different types of NELD such as loss of life, stress that comes as a result of floods in this community”* TFD audience, Kathebwé.

“TFD is a good approach, it allows us to understand NELD better than a mere explanation of the situation from an individual” TFD audience, Magoli.

“It's good approach because everyone including children take part and the approach is also true reflection of what is happening in the community” TFD audience, Mbangu

9 CONCLUSION

The research intended to explore contextualized climate-induced non-economic loss and damage in Zomba and Nsanje districts and amplify community voices with lived experience in this regard. The forms of NELD communities in Zomba and Nsanje experience are presented. Research findings show profound losses and damages and the impact on people in GVH Kathebwé, Magoli, Mbalu, Makawa, Chaweza in Zomba and Mbangu, Mbenje, Mambundungu, Mtemangawa and Ngabu in Nsanje during and after climatic events such as floods of 2019 due to cyclone Idai and Tropical storm Ana and cyclone Gombe in 2022. Human-driven climate change impacted people at social, community and environmental levels. People experienced the loss of loved ones, loss of productive land, loss of culture, traditional knowledge and disruption of health and education services. The study confirmed that NELDs are interrelated in the communities, meaning that various forms of losses have triggered other non-economic losses. One such example is the multiple effect of loss of life as the loss of loved ones usually causes post-traumatic stress and other mental health problems, and Loss of land and loss of fertile land for farming are also interrelated with anxiety and trauma.

The study has also found that Participatory Rural Communication Appraisal, Participatory Arts, Umunthu Circle and Photojournalism were effective approaches and research techniques in identifying and prioritizing key types of NELD caused by climate change in all the two districts. The aforementioned approaches successfully facilitated the sharing and learning of highly sensitive topics, probed deep and revealed insights from Zomba and Nsanje on non-economic losses and damages. These approaches offered an inclusive environment for exchange and discussion and effectively explored the realities on the ground. They are powerful tools in collecting voices of communities on non-economic loss and damage.

10 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Participatory art approaches such as Participatory Rural Communication Appraisal, participatory arts, Umunthu Circle and Photojournalism should be adopted as data collection and research techniques in amplifying voices for communities on loss and damage.
- People who have experience with NELD require longer-term tailored supports and recovery plans. Programmes and policies should pay adequate attention to non-economic losses and damages.
- Education in Emergencies should have a strong focus on psychosocial support to students and a further study should be conducted to explore innovative ways of keeping children in school and mentally focused beyond recovery
- Establishing connections among the communities through gatherings and discussion such as Umunthu circles promotes more effective coping and can reduce the risk of mental health issues after a natural disaster.
- The role of “*azamba*” or traditional midwives during crisis should be re-considered as they have proven to be vital in supporting pregnant women especially in Zomba
- A further study on “climate-induced migration and the use of natural resources using geo-spatial analysis” and “the exploration of indigenous knowledge and science to mitigate and avoid future loss and damages “

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