



Gender Equity and Resilience in Malawi: Insights from Titukulane RFSA Outcome Harvesting

Full Report

October 2024



Executive Summary

The 2024 Gender Outcome Harvesting conducted under the *Titukulane* Resilience Food Security Activity (RFSA) provides a comprehensive assessment of the progress made in addressing key gender-related challenges in the rural communities of Zomba and Mangochi districts. The study compares findings from *Titukulane's* 2022 Gender Outcome Mapping with the 2024 data, focusing on gender division of labor, intra-household decision-making, access and control of resources, participation in leadership, and gender-based violence (GBV) prevention and response.

Notable strides were observed in workload sharing, with an increasing number of men participating in household chores. This shift has allowed women more time to engage in income-generating activities and contribute more fully to household well-being. However, traditional norms continue to pose significant barriers, particularly in regions where gender roles remain deeply entrenched.

Intra-household decision-making shifted toward more collaborative practices, with women now playing a more active role in decisions concerning finances, family well-being, and asset management. However, men still hold considerable authority, especially over high-value assets like land and livestock, despite ongoing efforts to promote joint decision-making.

Access to and control over assets and resources has improved, particularly through the increased participation of women in VSLAs. These savings groups have enabled women to gain greater financial independence, although challenges persist in accessing formal financial services and controlling larger assets. Men's involvement in supporting their partners' economic activities has increased, but women's ability to make independent financial decisions remains constrained by cultural norms in certain areas.

Women's participation in leadership and public life has expanded, with more women taking on influential roles in village committees and local governance structures. The involvement of female youth in leadership roles, however, remains limited, with male youth showing a more significant increase in participation, threatening the continued female leadership gap. Continued efforts are needed to address the cultural and structural barriers that limit women and female youths from assuming positions of influence.

Gender-based violence prevention and response efforts have shown progress, with more community members, including men and youth, becoming involved in GBV initiatives. There has been an increase in the reporting of GBV cases, although women continue to face cultural and social barriers to reporting, particularly when the perpetrator is a husband or family member. Men, especially in matrilineal settings, have also begun to share their experiences of violence, highlighting the need for comprehensive GBV support systems that address all forms of violence.

The 2024 findings indicate that while *Titukulane's* interventions have resulted in significant improvements in gender equality and women's empowerment, there are still areas requiring further attention. Recommendations for future programs include strengthening gender dialogue sessions, promoting women's economic empowerment through vocational skills training, and ensuring sustained community-led initiatives. Addressing cultural barriers and ensuring equitable participation in leadership, decision-making, and economic activities are essential for achieving long-term gender equality and resilience in these communities.

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Acronyms

ADC	Area Development Committee
CVSU	Community Victim Support Unit
EV	Economic Violence
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GVH	Group Village Headman
IGA	Income Generating Activity
IDI	In-Depth Interview
KII	Key Informant Interview
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
OM	Outcome Mapping
RFSA	Resilience Food Security Activity
SBC	Social and Behavior Change
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
TA	Traditional Authority
TFD	Theatre for Development
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
VCPC	Village Civil Protection Committee
VDC	Village Development Committee
VDRMC	Village Disaster Risk Management Committee
VNRMC	Village Natural Resource Management Committee
VSLA	Village Savings and Loans Association

Introduction

Titukulane aims to build resilience and improve food security in rural Malawi through approaches that advance gender equality by addressing key constraints for women and girls. These constraints include the gender division of labor, intra-household decision-making, and access to productive resources. Gender equality is critical to achieving the broader objectives of *Titukulane*, as it directly affects agricultural productivity, economic empowerment, and the resilience of households and communities. By promoting women's and youth's active participation in leadership roles and community decision-making processes, *Titukulane* seeks to ensure more sustainable and equitable outcomes in resilience-building activities.

Gender equality is central to food security and economic development because women and youth are essential actors in agricultural production, household nutrition, and community governance. The project's gender equity interventions seek to shift social norms, break down structural barriers, and empower women to control resources, make decisions, and influence public life. This empowerment is crucial in creating resilient households capable of adapting to economic shocks and climatic stresses.

In 2022, the Gender Outcome Mapping (OM) provided a baseline for understanding how these interventions were shaping gender dynamics. The 2024 Gender Outcome Harvesting builds on this baseline, with the objective of qualitatively assessing and documenting the changes in gender dynamics by comparing the findings with the 2022 OM. Specifically, the focus is on evaluating changes in the gender division of labor, intra-household decision-making, access to and control over resources, participation in leadership and public life, and gender-based violence (GBV) prevention and response. This comparison helps identify both the progress made and areas that still require further efforts.

The relevance of this exercise lies in its ability to provide qualitative insights into the socio-cultural and economic shifts occurring within communities, particularly those affecting women, youth and marginalized groups. By employing participatory methods such as Photovoice and Transect Walks, the assessment deepens the understanding of the project's gender-focused interventions and their broader impacts on household resilience and community structures. These insights are invaluable for shaping future project strategies, refining approaches that advance gender equality, and enhancing the effectiveness of ongoing interventions.

Focus Areas

The 2024 outcome harvesting identified five key focus areas, from the 2022 gender outcome mapping, central to evaluating the impact of *Titukulane*'s gender equality interventions:

1. **Gender Division of Labor and Workload Sharing:**
 - The project has seen progress in women requesting assistance from men with household chores, which has allowed women more time to rest and care for their

families. Men are also increasingly involved in farming and domestic activities traditionally seen as women's work, such as child feeding and housekeeping.

2. Intra-household Decision-Making:

- Women have gained more control over nutritional decisions, particularly in food purchases and allocation within the household. However, cultural norms still limit women's authority over high-value assets like land and livestock, often requiring male consent for final decisions.

3. Access to and Control of Resources:

- Women's participation in Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs) has enhanced their access to financial resources, yet control over valuable assets like land remains varied, with many women still needing male approval for significant decisions.

4. Participation in Leadership and Public Life:

- There has been an increase in women taking up leadership roles within community structures, though these roles are often less influential compared to those held by men. Women's participation in public discourse has improved, but cultural barriers continue to limit their full engagement.

5. Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Response:

- Community attitudes towards GBV have gradually improved, with more cases being reported and discussed openly. Men and youth are increasingly involved in speaking out against GBV, though challenges remain in fully embedding these behaviors across communities.

These focus areas revealed substantial progress in reshaping gender dynamics, but they also highlighted the persistence of cultural and structural barriers that need to be addressed to achieve full gender equity.

Cultural Systems and Gender Dynamics in Malawi

Malawi's socio-cultural systems, traditional practices, and religious beliefs play a significant role in shaping gender relations and norms, influencing both individual behaviors and broader societal structures. These systems have a profound impact on gender-based violence (GBV) prevalence and efforts to promote gender equality. In Malawi, understanding the nuances of patrilineal, matrilineal, and *chitengwa* systems, as well as initiation ceremonies and religious practices, is essential to grasp how gender norms are constructed and perpetuated. Moreover, recent interventions aimed at shifting harmful social norms through community engagement, gender dialogue sessions, and the promotion of male champions have shown promise in advancing gender equality and reducing GBV.

The literature review below synthesizes recent research on cultural systems and social behavior change interventions in Malawi. It focuses on understanding how these systems shape gender dynamics and explores how efforts to promote gender equality and prevent GBV are being implemented. Drawing from academic studies and grey literature, including research on cultural practices, gender dialogue initiatives, and programs aimed at engaging men and boys in promoting gender equity, the review also examines how various actors, such as religious leaders and community-based organizations, are working to shift social norms that perpetuate GBV. These efforts are integral to *Titukulane's* broader mission of addressing gender constraints as a critical factor for achieving food and nutrition security, recognizing that equitable participation and access to resources are foundational for resilience and sustainable development in Malawian communities.

Social Norms, Cultural Systems, and Gender Dynamics in Malawi

Malawi's kinship systems are complex and vary between regions, significantly influencing gender dynamics. In southern and central Malawi, including the districts of Mangochi and Zomba, the matrilineal system dominates, where land and inheritance follow the maternal line. Under this system, women traditionally held significant authority, particularly in managing land resources. Daughters inherit land, while sons access land through their wives, creating a system that, in theory, empowers women (Peters, 2010). However, the outcome harvesting in Mangochi and Zomba demonstrates that while women formally own land, their control over resources has been undermined by patriarchal structures, often intensified by colonial influences. Colonial-era economic and political systems disrupted traditional power balances, with men increasingly assuming dominance in agriculture and land management. Studies by Davison (1993) and Mweela (2021) underscore how these colonial influences eroded women's decision-making power, despite their formal ownership of land. These findings confirm that patriarchal values and systems have taken root and continue to be practiced to this day, shaping resource management and decision-making in ways that limit women's autonomy within matrilineal frameworks.

In these regions, the *chitengwa* system also plays a role, blending matrilineal and patrilineal traditions. In this system, men relocate to live with their wives' families while retaining decision-making authority within the household. The outcome harvesting from these districts indicates that *chitengwa* brings certain complexities: men often experience frustration over their diminished authority within their wives' families, which has been linked to domestic violence (Mweela, 2021). These tensions highlight the intricate dynamics of gender relations in regions where matrilineal and *chitengwa* systems coexist.

In northern Malawi, the patrilineal system dominates, where land and property pass through the paternal line, and women typically join their husbands' families after marriage. This system limits women's access to land and economic resources, reinforcing male dominance and further entrenching gender inequality (Berge et al., 2014). Thus, Berge et al. (2014) shows that there are fewer opportunities for women to gain control over resources, as the patrilineal structure directly constrains their inheritance and decision-making roles.

Women's Participation in Leadership and Public Life

Cultural norms surrounding gender roles extend beyond kinship systems to influence women's participation in leadership and public life. Historically, women have faced barriers in becoming chiefs or assuming leadership positions within local governance structures. Recent studies highlight that while there are female chiefs in some regions, their decision-making power is often limited by male advisors and traditional authorities who hold significant sway over community governance (Chinsinga & Chirwa, 2018). Even when women attain formal leadership positions, patriarchal norms continue to undermine their authority, often relegating them to symbolic leadership roles or lower-tier governance structures (Ngwira, 2020). This reflects a broader pattern in which women's participation in leadership remains constrained by cultural expectations of male dominance in both formal and informal governance.

The Role of *Ankhoswe* in Marriages

The *Ankhoswe*, traditional marriage counselors in Malawi, play a significant role in mediating marital disputes and advising couples, particularly in matters involving gender-based violence (GBV). The *Ankhoswe* system is deeply rooted in Malawi's cultural framework and serves as a primary channel for conflict resolution. However, *Ankhoswe* often perpetuate patriarchal norms by advising wives to maintain submissiveness to their husbands, reinforcing gender inequality (Phiri, 1983). This dynamic discourages women from seeking formal legal help or leaving abusive marriages, thus perpetuating cycles of violence within the household. Understanding the role of *Ankhoswe* in perpetuating these harmful norms is essential for addressing GBV in marriage.

Community Victim Support Units (CVSUs) in Malawi

Community Victim Support Units (CVSUs) are key institutions in the fight against GBV in Malawi. They provide essential services, including counseling, legal advice, and protection for victims. However, the CVSUs face challenges such as underreporting of GBV cases, largely due to victims' fear of social stigma and economic dependence on their abusers. Msukwa & Keim-Lees (2014) highlight the crucial role of CVSUs in providing support but emphasize that greater community trust and clearer reporting mechanisms are needed to address GBV effectively. Without such trust and mechanisms, victims will continue to suffer in silence, which undermines the potential of CVSUs to combat GBV.

Initiation Ceremonies and Their Influence on Cultural Beliefs and Gender

Initiation ceremonies, such as chinamwali for girls and jando for boys, are significant cultural practices that mark the transition to adulthood in Malawi. These rites of passage play an important role in shaping traditional gender roles. Chinamwali, in particular, teaches girls to be submissive in marriage, emphasizing obedience to male authority. These teachings perpetuate patriarchal norms and limit women's agency in decision-making and economic participation. Peters (1997) and Hirschmann & Vaughan (1983) argue that these practices not only contribute to early marriage but also reduce girls' educational and economic opportunities.

Despite the deep-rooted nature of these practices, there is growing criticism of their role in reinforcing gender inequality. Programs like *Titukulane* engage communities in discussions about the harmful

effects of traditional initiation rites, promoting alternative ceremonies that emphasize gender equality and women's empowerment (LandLinks, 2021). Such reforms are essential for challenging deeply ingrained cultural norms that continue to hinder gender equality.

Religious Beliefs and Their Influence on Gender and GBV Prevention

Religion plays a dual role in shaping gender and social norms in Malawi. Christianity and Islam are the two predominant religions, each with significant influence over societal attitudes toward gender roles between women, men, girls and boys and GBV prevention. In some Christian denominations, traditional gender roles are emphasized, which can undermine efforts to promote gender equality. At the same time, many faith-based initiatives are actively working to challenge harmful gender norms and prevent GBV by engaging both men and women. Religious leaders, who hold considerable authority in their communities, have become key players in promoting gender equality and preventing GBV (Kaarhus, 2010).

Religious teachings have been used to justify male dominance, particularly in marriage and inheritance. However, there are religious leaders advocating for gender equality and supporting GBV prevention initiatives through community dialogues (Peters & Kambewa, 2007). The involvement of religious leaders in social behavior change is critical, given their influence over both individual behaviors and broader community norms.

Malawi's cultural systems and religious beliefs play a critical role in shaping gender dynamics across multiple areas—household decision-making, access to resources, leadership, and public life. While matrilineal systems offer women formal land ownership, their participation in decision-making is limited by patriarchal structures. In patrilineal systems, women's access to resources and leadership roles is even more constrained. Cultural practices such as the *ankhoswe* system and initiation ceremonies continue to reinforce gender hierarchies, limiting women's participation in leadership and public governance. Addressing these deeply ingrained social norms requires sustained community engagement and behavior change interventions, as empowering women in decision-making and resource control is essential for achieving equitable food security and resilience in Malawian households and communities.

Methodology

The Gender Outcome Harvesting process combined various participatory methods designed to capture both individual and collective experiences of gender dynamics. The data collection involved community members, project participants, gender champions, and other stakeholders, using structured and visual approaches such as Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), In-depth Interviews (IDIs), Transect Walks, and Photovoice documentation. These methods were employed to explore five key focus areas: gender division of labor, intra-household decision-making, access and

control of resources, participation in leadership and public life, and gender-based violence prevention and response.

Sampling and Participant Selection

The GOH workshops were designed to engage community members, project participants, and stakeholders in discussing observed changes based on the 2023 Gender Outcome Mapping (OM) findings. The workshops focused on the five key areas identified and gathered insights into how gender dynamics have evolved since the baseline.

In Zomba, 28 participants took part in the workshop, consisting of 8 females and 20 males. The male-dominated attendance was attributed to the inclusion of both gender and male champions, who played key roles in facilitating discussions on gender roles. Similarly, in Mangochi, the workshop had 26 participants, 4 of whom were female. Despite their smaller numbers, female participants contributed significantly, illustrating progress observed during the OM baseline.

- **Participants in the outcome harvesting:**
 - 10 Male and 19 Gender Champions from both districts
 - 5 CVSU representatives in each district
 - 4 Government Extension workers in each district: agriculture development officers, child protection officers, and community development assistants.
 - 10 *Titukulane* staff: Gender Team, the Strategic Learning Lead, M&E team, SBC Team, Youth Team, and Frontline staff. The role of *Titukulane* staff was to facilitate the workshop sessions.

Sampling aimed for inclusivity, drawing from both male and female participants across all targeted Traditional Authorities (TAs) in Mangochi and Zomba. In total, the research team conducted 48 interviews across 10 TAs, 5 TAs in each district, where all *Titukulane* interventions are implemented. In each TA, except for TA Chiunda, 5 interviews were conducted: a Focus Group Discussion (FGDs), a Key Informant Interviews (KII), In-depth Interviews (IDIs) with either a GBV/EV survivors and a model couple, and a Transect Walk.

Participatory Methods

A variety of participatory techniques were used during the workshops, which included:

- **Vignettes Discussions:** Real-life scenarios were presented to stimulate discussion and reflection. These vignettes were particularly helpful in enabling participants to relate to the themes and openly articulate changes they have observed in their communities.
- **Participatory Mapping and Resource Mapping:** These exercises helped participants visually document key resources within their community and changes in access or availability over time, emphasizing resource control and gender equity.

- **Ranking Exercises:** Participants were asked to prioritize significant changes and challenges, allowing the team to identify the most critical areas of progress and concern.
- **Seasonal Calendars:** These tracked variations in gender roles and workload sharing over different seasons, providing insights into how gender dynamics shift based on the time of year and agricultural cycles.

Fieldwork for Outcome Validation

After the workshops, the fieldwork aimed to validate the outcomes identified. The research assistants compiled field notes and organized them according to the five focus areas. During the validation phase, additional qualitative data was collected using:

- **Focus Group Discussions (FGDs):** FGDs provided space for further exploration of themes discussed during the workshops. They allowed participants from various demographics (men, women, youth) to voice their experiences and contribute to a deeper understanding of gender dynamics in their communities.
- **Key Informant Interviews (KIIs):** KIIs with traditional leaders, specifically Group Village Headmen (GVH), allowed for deeper contextual insights into the changes observed. These interviews highlighted the role of community leadership in influencing and supporting gender-related shifts. A total of 9 male and 1 female traditional leaders were interviewed as key informants from the 10 TAs in Zomba and Mangochi.
- **In-depth Interviews (IDIs):** Personal interviews were conducted to capture the experiences of individuals. These included model couples who shared their stories of change. This approach was especially effective for documenting the personal stories of gender-based violence (GBV) and economic violence (EV) survivors, allowing them to narrate their journeys without excessive probing that might cause retraumatization.

The focus on EV was informed by observations from *Titukulane's* frontline staff, who noted that economic violence was one of the most prevalent forms of GBV, particularly intimate partner violence (IPV). Since EV directly affects the impact of Income-Generating Activities (IGA) supported by *Titukulane*, it was essential to examine this issue closely to understand its influence on household economic resilience and gender relations.

- **Transect Walks:** These systematic walks through communities provided an opportunity for direct observation of physical and social changes. The walks lasted a maximum of 2 hours, and were the first scheduled interviews in the morning to avoid midday heat. During these walks, participants highlighted specific areas, such as improved sanitation, community assets, and gender-based behavioral changes, contributing rich visual data for analysis. It emerged as one of the most effective data collection methods, especially when tracking changes in workload sharing and intra-household decision-making.

- Photovoice Documentation:** Participants, including both survivors of GBV/EV and model couples, were encouraged to capture images that reflected their lived experiences. Survivors documented their experiences of violence and the support they received from CVSU, gender champions, traditional leaders, or family members. Model couples, on the other hand, highlighted changes observed in their households and communities following gender equity interventions implemented through *Titukulane*. All participants were issued a tablet and received basic training on photography techniques to help them capture meaningful images. They were then given a day to document their experiences and the changes they noticed. This visual method amplified voices that might otherwise struggle to articulate their stories, offering a powerful medium for documenting change.

All in all, 239 individuals participated in the study, with 162 males and 191 females, as shown below.

Table 1 Summary of Participant Demographics by Data Collection Method, Including Youth Participation

Data Collection Method	Participant Type	Male Participants	Female Participants	Youth Participants (Male)	Youth Participants (Female)	Total Youth Participants	Total Participants
Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)	Various demographics (men, women, youth)	51	63	20	24	44	114
Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)	Traditional leaders (Group Village Headmen)	9	1	0	0	0	10
In-depth Interviews (IDIs)	Model couples, GBV/EV survivors	2	8	3	8	11	19
Transect Walks	Community members	38	39	14	15	29	77
Photovoice Documentation	GBV/EV survivors, model couples	2	8	1	8	9	10

Analysis and Sense-making

Following data collection, the research assistants used a pre-designed template (see Annex 2) to organize their notes against the five focus areas. Right after the notes were finalized, an analysis and sense-making workshop was held. During the sense-making workshop, the data was visually mapped to highlight which focus areas had the most significant changes, whether positive or negative, and to assess the magnitude of the issues. This process enabled the team to link the findings back to the Outcome Mapping (OM) from 2023, providing a comprehensive comparison of the changes observed since the project's baseline.

The interview recording transcripts, and the field notes were analyzed through thematic analysis. Data from FGDs, Transect Walks, KIIs, IDIs, and Photovoice were integrated to identify overarching themes, patterns, and significant changes. The research team mapped the findings visually (as shown in the figure below), allowing the team to see which focus areas had the most significant changes—whether positive or negative—and the magnitude of the issues raised.

Thematic Analysis Process

During the analysis, the following major themes emerged:

1. Roles and Responsibilities
2. Gender Roles and Dynamics
3. Health and Family Planning
4. Community Development and Participation
5. Barriers and Challenges

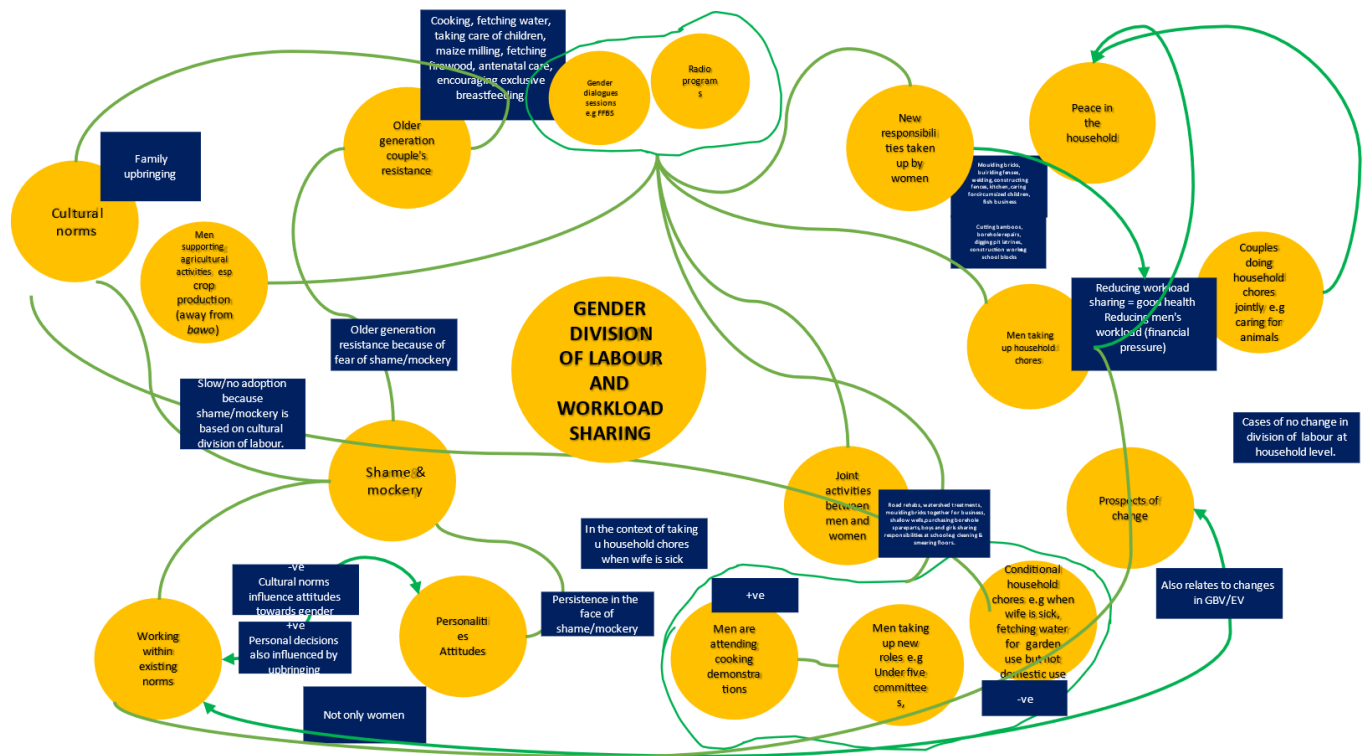


Figure 1 Illustration of the Analysis Process of Gender Division of Labor and Workload Sharing data

This visual representation captures key issues that emerged from the data collected during the Gender Outcome Harvesting process. The yellow circles highlight the primary themes related to gender division of labor, including changes in household roles and workload sharing. The blue boxes provide explanations and insights into these issues, offering deeper understanding of how gender dynamics have shifted within the communities.

In addition to mapping the findings from interviews, Photovoice data were integrated into each thematic area to provide visual validation of changes, particularly in areas where verbal communication might have been limited. For example, GBV survivors were encouraged to use Photovoice to capture moments of change or support in their communities. In some cases, survivors were unable to articulate their experiences fully, but their photos and captions provided significant insight into the changes they observed and the support they received. These experiences were linked back to support mechanisms provided by the CVSU, gender champions, or family members.

The example from the figure below shows the process of identifying changes in the 'Gender Division of Labor and Workload Sharing' theme. By combining Photovoice and thematic analysis, the team could trace changes in household dynamics, such as the joint participation of men and women in agricultural work, household chores, and other shared responsibilities. This analysis revealed the reduction in workload for women, greater peace in households, and shifting gender roles due to *Titukulane's* interventions.

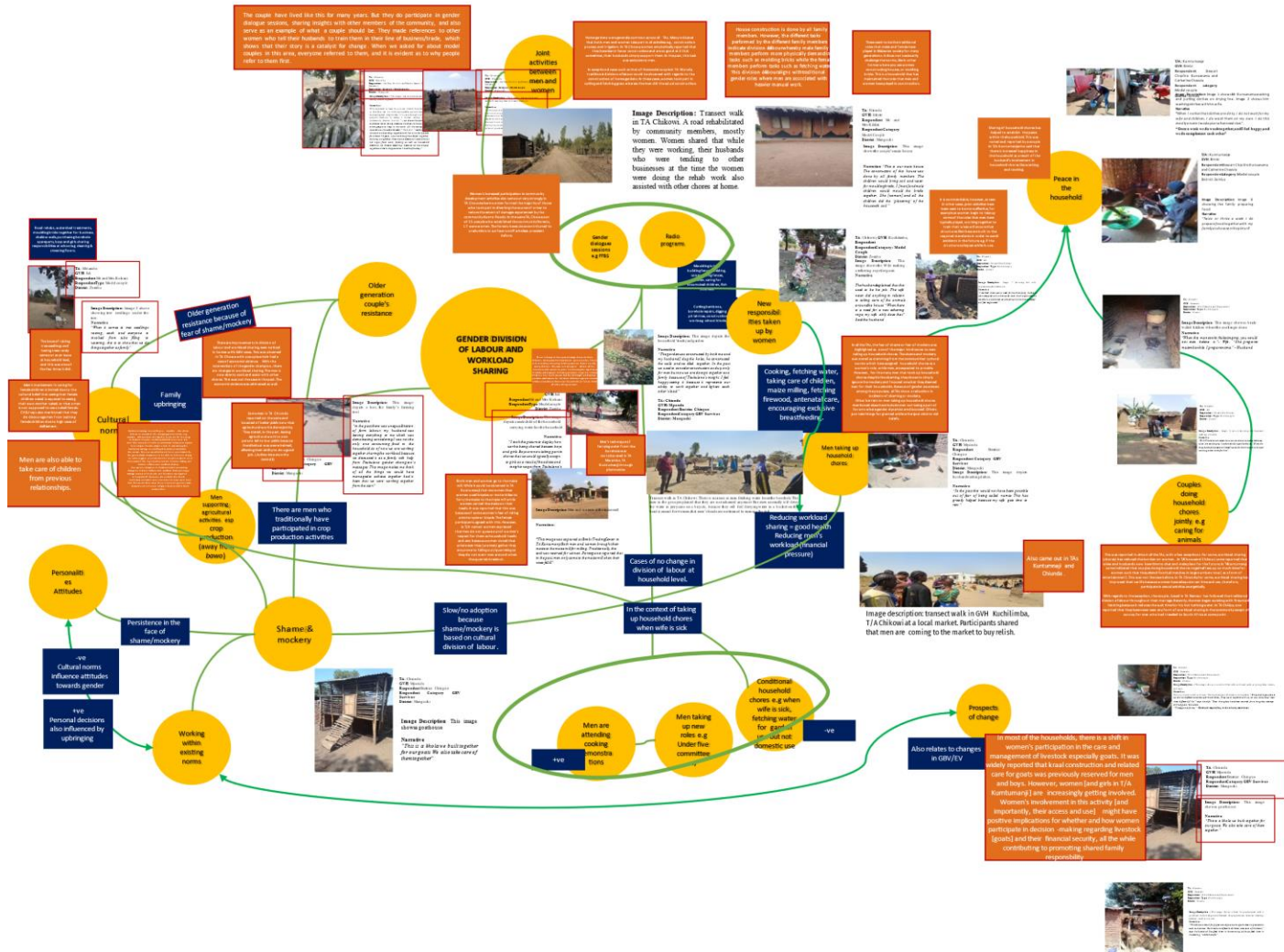


Figure 2 Illustration of the Integrated Analysis Process of Gender Division of Labor and Workload Sharing data

This figure incorporates Photovoice and Transect Walk visual data (photographs) with thematic analysis. The orange boxes represent the insights drawn from the interview transcripts, field notes, and visual data. The analysis synthesizes findings from the fieldwork, combining firsthand visual documentation with participant reflections.

The sense-making process allowed for a clear understanding of how *Titukulane's* gender equity interventions had impacted various facets of community life, leading to a comprehensive report that

linked the findings back to the 2023 Gender Outcome Mapping baseline. The note-taking template, which organized data from interviews and other participatory methods, will be annexed to the report for transparency and reference.

Ethical Considerations

The Gender Outcome Harvesting process adhered to strict ethical standards to ensure the safety and well-being of all participants, particularly GBV survivors. Key ethical principles included:

- **Informed Consent:** All participants were fully informed about the purpose of the study, the methods being used, and their rights as participants. Written or verbal consent was obtained before any data collection activities began, ensuring that participants willingly engaged in the process.
- **Confidentiality:** Participants were assured that all information shared during the study would remain confidential. Any identifying details were removed from reports to protect the privacy of individuals, particularly sensitive cases involving GBV and economic violence (EV).
- **Participant Autonomy:** Participants were free to withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences. Special care was taken to ensure that participants, especially survivors of violence, felt no pressure to continue if they felt uncomfortable during interviews or discussions.
- **Trauma-Informed Approach:** The gender team led and prepared the field teams on how to approach interviews sensitively, particularly with GBV/EV survivors. A trauma-informed approach was used to minimize any potential distress, and participants were encouraged to share their stories only to the extent that they felt comfortable. Interviews with GBV survivors used a series of vignettes followed by related questions, allowing survivors to avoid speaking directly about their personal experiences. In instances where participants found it difficult to verbally express their experiences, Photovoice was employed as an alternative, allowing them to capture their stories through imagery.
- **Follow-Up Support:** After interviews, follow-ups were conducted to ensure that survivors of GBV/EV received continued support from CVSU members, who had been trained (and further trained through *Titukulane*) to provide psychosocial support. This additional care ensured that survivors had access to the necessary resources after the study, contributing to their ongoing safety and well-being.

These ethical measures ensured that participants' rights and dignity were respected throughout the research process, and that all necessary precautions were taken to protect the most vulnerable individuals involved in the study.

Limitations

While the outcome harvesting exercise was comprehensive, several limitations were encountered, particularly during the sampling process:

Participant Selection: In Mangochi, there were instances where incorrect participants were selected, such as couples who did not qualify as model couples. The research team managed to address this by identifying and engaging the correct participants after the workshop.

Gender Balance in Methods: During the outcome harvesting workshops, there were instances of higher male representation among participants, as these workshops involved community volunteers. However, this did not influence the outcomes, as the few women present were notably vocal and expressive during the discussions, ensuring their perspectives were well represented. Thus, no specific mitigation measures were necessary to balance gender influence during these sessions.

Differences from Baseline Approach: Unlike the baseline outcome mapping, which incorporated both qualitative methods, such as FGDs, and quantitative analysis by quantifying responses and outcomes as percentages, the outcome harvesting process in this report was purely qualitative. This shift may present a limitation in terms of comparing quantified findings directly across phases. However, the outcome harvesting intentionally adopted a qualitative focus to delve deeper into specific issues raised in the outcome mapping report, offering a more nuanced understanding of the extent and nature of reported outcomes.

Cultural Norms and Participant Engagement: In one area in Zomba, only couples were selected to participate in interviews. During FGDs and Transect Walks, some women were initially reluctant to speak, likely due to cultural norms that discourage women from sharing their views in public. However, the facilitators quickly adjusted by actively encouraging and prompting the women to share their perspectives, ensuring their voices were heard throughout the process.

Findings and Discussion

Focus Area 1: Gender Division of Labour and Workload Sharing

Gender division of labor and workload sharing refers to the way tasks, roles, and responsibilities are distributed between men and women within a society, based on traditional gender norms. This concept is crucial for achieving gender equality and fostering economic development, as it challenges the long-standing societal expectations that place unequal burdens on women. Under the *Titukulane* project, gender is a crosscutting theme, with interventions designed to improve household well-being and quality of life by promoting inclusive decision-making on resource allocation. These efforts ultimately contribute to greater investments in education, nutrition, health, and economic resilience by closing gender gaps in workload and income distribution.

The OM results showed positive shifts in gender dynamics, with men increasingly taking on household chores traditionally assigned to women, thereby reducing women's labor burden and improving their ability to care for children and rest. Through gender dialogues and the promotion of shared household

responsibilities, the *Titukulane* project aims to create long-term changes in how households allocate labor.

This report documents changes in labor distribution and analyzes shifts in gender roles and workload sharing through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), Transect Walks, Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), and In-depth Interviews (IDIs). The findings highlight both progress and challenges, offering insights into how labor is evolving across households in rural Malawi.

1. Workload Distribution

- **Then:** Traditionally, labor division in most communities adhered to strict gender roles. Men primarily focused on external income-generating activities, while women took on domestic responsibilities such as child-rearing, cooking, cleaning, and managing household chores. This division created a gendered workload imbalance, with women bearing the brunt of unpaid domestic labor. Cultural norms, religious beliefs, and economic structures reinforced these divisions, often resulting in an additional burden when women had to balance household duties with income-generating activities (IGAs).
- **Now:** There has been a significant shift towards a more equitable distribution of workload. Men are increasingly contributing to household chores, such as cooking, cleaning, and caring for children, while women participate more in IGAs. In most areas, this shift has been more readily adopted among the youth; however, in certain TAs, such as Chilipa, youth were observed to be, in some cases, even more resistant to these changes than the older generations. Despite these advancements, some disparities remain, with women continuing to bear a larger share of domestic work in some communities.

2. Economic Empowerment and Independence

- **Then:** Women's economic opportunities were severely limited by their domestic roles, which created dependence on male income earners and restricted their decision-making power within households.
- **Now:** With increased participation in the workforce and IGAs, women have gained more financial independence, resulting in shifts in household power dynamics. Women are now more involved in household decision-making processes, particularly in financial matters.

3. Social and Cultural Norms

- **Then:** Social and cultural norms strictly dictated gender roles, with men largely excluded from domestic work. Any deviation from these norms was often met with social disapproval or even gender-based violence (GBV).

- **Now:** While traditional norms persist in some areas, men’s involvement in domestic work has become more socially acceptable. The stigma surrounding men performing “women’s work” has decreased, but resistance to change remains in certain TAs.

1.1. Workload Distribution

Shifts in Workload Sharing

The data collected through FGDs, transect walks, and KIIs indicates that, over time, these traditional roles have begun to shift. Men are now increasingly involved in household chores like cooking, fetching water, and assisting with childcare, which were traditionally viewed as women’s responsibilities. This shift in behavior has been supported by *Titukulane's* gender dialogues, which have encouraged more equitable workload sharing in households.



Narrative: “I do fetch water at least once a day most of the times in the morning. I am not ashamed of anyone as I am used to do this. And now, the men in all these [surrounding] houses have changed. Most of them sweep their compound, and one some even cook, on several occasions I have seen my next door neighbour cooking”

Figure 3 Photovoice Image of a married man arriving home from the borehole with two pales of water

"In our family, everything is going fine. Any work that [previously] would have been done by one person is now shared between two people. For example, when my wife is cooking, I can clean the plates or go to the farm. We are sharing the work, and it is not right for everything to be done by the woman alone." – Model Couple, GVH Jali, TA Mwambo.



Narrative: “I took this picture to display how work is being shared between boys and girls. Boys are now taking part in chores that we would typically assign to girls as a result of the advice and insights we got from Titukulane’s gender champions.” – **Mrs Kokani, Model Couple, TA Mwambo, Zomba**

Figure 4 Photovoice image showing a boy on his way back from a borehole with two pales of water.

While men are now more involved in domestic chores, there are still cases where disparities persist. In some areas, men contribute to household tasks, but the overall mental and organizational load still falls disproportionately on women. This reflects the ongoing negotiation of workload sharing, where men may engage in physical tasks, but women continue to manage the overall household responsibilities.

Persistence of Disparities

Despite progress in some areas, the data highlight persistent challenges in others, particularly in regions where traditional gender norms remain deeply ingrained. In many cases, women still shoulder the bulk of domestic responsibilities, especially when balancing household chores with income-generating activities. This unequal division of labor often leads to women feeling overburdened and stressed, despite the small gains made in sharing physical tasks.



Figure 5 Participants at a borehole during transect walk in GVH Kuchilimba, TA Chikowi, Zomba
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During a transect walk in GVH Kuchilimba, participants observed men fetching water from the borehole. While men are increasingly involved in this task, some continue to use techniques, such as ferrying water on a bicycle, to avoid carrying water on their heads, as this is still viewed as a woman's task.

"Men are now helping women with domestic chores like cooking and fetching water, which has reduced the burden on women. In TA Chowe and Chikowi, couples now have time to relax and chat together, making plans for the future. This was not the case before." – FGDs, TA Kuntumanji.

While some communities have fully embraced workload sharing, others remain resistant to change. In TA Chilipa, for instance, workload sharing has not yet been widely adopted, and the division of labor remains largely traditional. However, even in these areas, there are small but significant changes, such as men assisting with tasks like fetching firewood to reduce wait times for hot water.

In summary, while there has been progress in shifting gender roles and promoting equitable workload sharing, significant disparities remain, especially in areas where traditional cultural norms are slower to evolve. Continued efforts are needed to promote awareness and further encourage gender equality in labor distribution.

1.2. Economic Empowerment and Independence

The data reveal a transformative impact of women's increased economic empowerment on household roles and labor sharing. Through various interventions, women have gained greater financial independence, allowing them to participate more actively in decision-making processes and reducing the power imbalance within households. This shift has not only improved women's economic standing but also reshaped the traditional gender roles that defined domestic and financial responsibilities.

Impact of Women's Economic Empowerment

In the past, women's economic opportunities were limited, and they were primarily dependent on men for financial support. This dependency restricted their autonomy in decision-making and reinforced traditional gender roles. However, as more women participate in income-generating activities, they are reshaping household dynamics by contributing financially to the family. This has led to a redistribution of power and responsibilities within households, encouraging more collaboration between men and women.

"Doing business together has made solving problems easier for the family." – GVH Jekete, TA Ntonda.

Economic empowerment has also facilitated better communication between couples, allowing them to share both financial and domestic responsibilities more equitably. With women contributing to household income, men are now more willing to assist with household tasks, creating a more balanced distribution of labor.



Figure 6 Photovoice Image of a Goat Kraal

Narrative: *“This is a kraal we built together for our goats. We also take care of them together.”* – **GBV Survivor, GVH Mponda, TA Chiunda, Mangochi.**

Changing Perceptions of Women’s Roles

The increased economic empowerment of women is gradually altering societal perceptions of their roles within the household and beyond. Women are no longer seen solely as homemakers; instead, they are recognized as key contributors to the family’s economic well-being. As women gain more financial independence, they are also taking on leadership roles in business, agriculture, and community development, areas that were previously dominated by men.

“Women in our community are now running businesses alongside their husbands, and this has led to stronger partnerships and increased income for the family.” – **KII, GVH Chiponda, TA Namavi**

Moreover, women’s participation in income-generating activities is fostering a cultural shift where their contributions are more highly valued. Men are becoming more supportive of their wives’ business ventures, which has also led to an increase in shared household duties. This cultural shift is particularly evident in households that have participated in *Titukulane’s* gender dialogues, which promote the importance of gender equality in all aspects of life.

As women continue to break through traditional barriers and engage in activities that were once considered exclusively male, such as business ownership and financial decision-making, they are

reshaping community norms around gender roles. This shift is not only benefiting individual households but also contributing to broader societal changes, where women are recognized as equal partners in both domestic and economic spheres.

1.3. Shifts in Social and Cultural Norms

The data indicate a gradual but noticeable shift in social and cultural norms around gender roles within households. This section explores how perceptions of gender roles have evolved, especially regarding men's participation in domestic tasks, and the cultural resistance that persists in some communities.

Cultural Resistance to Change

Despite the positive shifts, some communities remain resistant to change, with gender-based stigma still affecting workload sharing in certain areas. In particular, traditional beliefs that domestic chores are solely women's responsibilities continue to persist, creating barriers to achieving full gender equality in workload sharing. This resistance was especially noted in TAs like Chilipa, where youth were in some cases even more resistant to these changes than older generations. Similarly, in TA Namavi, resistance was observed across all demographics—youth, men, and women—making it challenging to identify model couples who truly embodied the changes expected. The persistence of these cultural norms in Namavi underscores the difficulty in achieving household equity, as all groups maintain traditional views on gender roles.

These cultural resistances manifest in regions where men's involvement in domestic work is still stigmatized, with community members viewing such participation as a violation of established gender norms.

“In some villages, men feel that doing household chores like cooking or fetching water diminishes their masculinity. The stigma around this is still strong.” – KII, TA Chilipa.

In these communities, even though some men participate in domestic tasks, their contributions are often downplayed or hidden to avoid social disapproval. Resistance to change is more pronounced in areas where cultural norms are strongly linked to patriarchal values. However, *Titukulane's* gender dialogues have slowly started to break these barriers, although progress is slower in more traditional settings.

Success Stories

While resistance persists, many success stories highlight the progress made in shifting gender norms, particularly in communities where men have taken on roles traditionally viewed as women's tasks without facing social disapproval. These examples serve as powerful motivators for other households,

showing that gender equality in labor sharing is not only possible but also beneficial for the overall well-being of families.



Figure 7 Photovoice Image of Tree Seedlings

Narrative: “When it comes to tree seedlings raising, each and everyone is involved from tube filling to watering, this is to show that we do things together as family.” -Model Couple, GVH Jali TA Mwambo

“Men have realized they are also responsible for household chores like washing plates, previously reserved for women.” – GVH Bimbi, TA Kuntumanji.

These stories demonstrate that, in some areas, men are actively participating in household tasks like cooking, washing dishes, and fetching water, tasks that were once considered solely the domain of women. This change has led to more balanced household environments, where both partners share responsibilities, leading to improved relationships and more efficient household management.

In households where these changes have taken root, men’s involvement in domestic chores has had a ripple effect, reducing the stigma surrounding such tasks and fostering a greater sense of equality between men and women. This has been particularly evident in households that have engaged with *Titukulane’s* gender dialogues, which emphasize the importance of shared responsibilities for improved household outcomes.

1.4. Intra-household Decision-making

This section explores how the equitable sharing of household tasks and responsibilities has positively influenced intra-household decision-making. By sharing both domestic and economic responsibilities, families are experiencing more collaborative decision-making processes, improving overall family dynamics.

Collaboration in Household Decisions

One of the most significant effects of the shift in gender roles and workload sharing is improved communication and collaboration between spouses. As men become more involved in household chores and women gain economic independence, decision-making within households has become more inclusive. Couples are increasingly discussing and making joint decisions about finances, resource allocation, and family matters. This equal partnership is fostering healthier family relationships and reducing conflict over responsibilities.

“In the past, my husband made all the decisions, but now that we both work and share the household tasks, we make decisions together. It’s better for the family this way.” – FGD, GVH Kuchilimba, TA Chikowi

When men and women share the physical and mental load of household chores, they are more likely to engage in open discussions about family planning, financial decisions, and investments in children’s education and health. This shift in intra-household power dynamics is leading to a more balanced and equitable distribution of authority within the home, with women feeling more empowered to contribute to decision-making processes.



Figure 8 Photovoice Image of Couple Sawing Timber

Narrative: Husband: "My wife asked me to teach her how to saw timber from husband so that we can be working together. After discussions, I agreed despite fears of overworking my wife and people’s reactions to seeing a woman sawing timber. The community admires it now." Wife: "...we share the work now and make more money because he does not have to pay other people to help in the work. All the money goes towards our household needs." Husband: "working together ...has brought us closer together, she is my only friend, there are no decisions I take without her input, from work, farming as well as household decisions, we discuss everything because we are always together unlike in the past when I had the final say."- **Model Couple GVH Kamwendo, TA Chiunda Mangochi**

The couple have lived like this for many years. But they do participate in gender dialogue sessions, sharing insights with other members of the community, and also serve as an example of what a couple should be.

“...but if people don’t gather in groups [meetings], they are hard to convince... yes, a lot of us learn through groups. For example, right now, we have learned something. If someone comes to teach us about gender, those who stayed at home won't know about it. By the time we leave and start applying what we've learned, our households begin to change.” - Transect Walk GVH Bimbi TA Kuntumanji

The sawyer model couple in TA Namavi made references to other women who tell their husbands to train them in their line of business/trade, which shows that their story is a catalyst for change. In searching for model couples in this area, most people referred to them, and it was evident as to why people refer to them first. It was a contrast to the struggle of finding other model couples to interview in the same area, as some identified by the gender champions did not possess the qualities expected of a model couple.

Similarly, while some households presented their roles as changes in gender division of labor, they often reflected traditional roles that men and women have maintained for generations in Malawian society. For instance, in some households, men continue to perform physically demanding tasks such as molding bricks, while women fetch water—roles aligned with long-standing gender norms. These examples do not necessarily challenge the existing norms.



Figure 9 Photovoice image showing a house built together by a family

Narrative: *“This is our main house. The construction of this house was done by all family members. The children would bring soil and water for moulding bricks, I [man] and male children would mould the bricks together. She [woman] and all the children did the ‘plastering’ of the house with soil.”*

In contrast, other households have made genuine changes, with women engaging in tasks traditionally reserved for men, such as house construction or molding bricks. These shifts reflect a rethinking of gender roles, fostering a greater sense of shared responsibility and urgency around equitable workload sharing. Such changes have not only challenged the status quo but also created more balanced partnerships in household labor, benefiting both women and men.



Narrative: “I realised there was a need for bathroom, my husband was occupied with other works such that I organised the materials and started constructing the bathroom myself as I feel empowered”

Figure 10 Photovoice image showing a woman constructing a bathroom

The link between gender division of labor and decision-making is clear: as men and women share the responsibilities of daily life more equitably, they are also more likely to share decision-making power. This alignment between workload sharing and intra-household decision-making is particularly important for the long-term well-being of families, as it fosters a sense of shared responsibility and mutual respect.

By ensuring that both partners contribute to domestic tasks, families are better positioned to discuss and plan for their financial future, make joint decisions about investments in education and health, and manage resources more effectively. This has a direct impact on the stability and resilience of households, particularly in ultra-poor and vulnerable communities where every decision can have significant consequences for survival and well-being.

In summary, the data show that equitable workload sharing is not only transforming the physical distribution of labor in households but also reshaping the power dynamics within families, leading to more inclusive and collaborative decision-making processes.

Comparative Analysis

The 2023 Gender Outcome Mapping indicated that decision-making within households was heavily male-dominated. Men made most of the significant financial and family-related decisions, with women being consulted primarily on minor issues. In areas like land and high-value assets, men retained almost complete control, limiting women’s participation in meaningful household decisions.

By 2024, the data shows encouraging progress, with more households embracing joint decision-making. Financial decisions are increasingly made collaboratively, and family well-being is a shared responsibility between spouses. The FY24 annual survey reports that approximately 93% of women and youth feel they have decision-making control over productive resources and assets, with 97% of women and 88% of youth specifically noting this empowerment (FY24 Annual Survey Report). This change reflects the success of gender dialogue sessions and other interventions, which have fostered greater awareness of gender equality and improved communication within households. However, the cultural norm that grants men control over high-value assets, such as land and livestock, remains largely

unchanged, with men still retaining primary authority in these major decisions (FY24 Annual Survey Report). While women's involvement in discussions has grown, the final authority on high-value assets tends to rest with men, underscoring the need for continued efforts to address deeply ingrained cultural norms.

The data also reveals a shift in family planning decisions. In 2023, men primarily controlled reproductive choices, but the 2024 data shows that more couples are now discussing family planning together, allowing women greater input. Nevertheless, men continue to hesitate when it comes to permanent methods like vasectomy, showing resistance to fully equal decision-making in reproductive health.

While joint decision-making is becoming more common, traditional power dynamics still pose significant challenges. Men's reluctance to relinquish control over high-value assets and long-standing reproductive norms highlight the areas where change has been slower. In matrilineal societies, the mental load on women in organizing and managing household responsibilities remains heavy, indicating that further efforts are required to shift entrenched gender roles.

The 2024 data demonstrates notable progress in shared decision-making within households, but persistent barriers to full equality remain. The influence of traditional norms continues to hinder women's participation in high-value decisions and reproductive health discussions. To ensure continued progress, future interventions should focus on addressing these cultural barriers while building on the successes of gender dialogues and family planning initiatives.

Focus Area 2: Intra-Household Decision-Making

Intra-household decision-making is arguably the most central element of gender-related interventions and gender equality efforts. The division of labor and workload sharing within a household begins with decisions made between husband and wife regarding how household activities will be handled. These decisions, in turn, determine how each spouse will be able to pursue and achieve other goals. Within the context of the *Titukulane* project, these decisions impact critical areas such as the ability to increase household income through various income-generating activities (IGAs), the nutritional status of women and children, and the resilience of households. This resilience is fostered by enabling participation in disaster risk management and natural resource management activities, which extend from the household to the broader community.

Decision-making within households also significantly influences women's participation in leadership and public life. Often, these roles depend on agreements made within the household. Without joint decision-making or in situations where power imbalances exist, cases of gender-based violence (GBV) and intimate partner violence (IPV) can arise. Furthermore, decision-making affects the extent to which household members—whether women, men, or youth—have access to and control over resources, assets, and opportunities.

Given *Titukulane's* focus on increasing incomes, improving the nutritional status of women, children, and adolescent girls, and building resilience through comprehensive participation and influence in community decision-making, it is crucial to thoroughly reflect on the intra-household decision-making focus area.

Key Findings

The findings in this section present a comparative analysis of intra-household decision-making between 2022 (as captured in the Gender Outcome Mapping) and 2024 (as reflected in the Outcome Harvesting). The comparison highlights shifts in the roles of men and women in making decisions related to financial matters, family well-being, high-value assets, and family planning.

1. Financial Decision-Making

- **Then:** Financial decisions were predominantly made by men. Women had limited input on significant household expenditures or major purchases. Men typically controlled the use of household income, and women were consulted only on smaller, day-to-day financial decisions.
- **Now:** There has been a noticeable increase in joint financial decision-making. Both men and women now participate more equally in decisions regarding how income is used. However, in some households, particularly concerning high-value assets like land and livestock, men still retain primary control, reflecting a partial shift in traditional gender roles but not a complete overhaul.

2. Joint Decision-Making on Family Well-being

- **Then:** Family well-being, including decisions around budgeting for health care, children's education, and overall household management, was largely in the hands of men. Women had little influence over how resources were allocated to support the well-being of their families, leading to uneven decision-making power within the household.
- **Now:** There has been a significant improvement in joint decision-making on family matters. Couples are now more likely to collaborate on decisions related to household management and the allocation of resources, leading to better communication, more efficient use of resources, and a reduction in household conflicts. This shift has also contributed to more harmonious family dynamics, as both partners now have a voice in key decisions.

3. Decision-Making on High-Value Assets

- **Then:** Decisions about high-value assets, such as land and livestock, were almost exclusively made by men, even in matrilineal systems where women owned the property. Despite formal ownership by women, cultural norms dictated that men controlled the management and sale of these assets, limiting women's influence over important economic decisions.
- **Now:** While there has been some progress, with more women involved in discussions about high-value assets, men often still hold the final authority. The decision-making power over land and livestock continues to rest predominantly with men, reflecting deeply ingrained cultural norms that are proving resistant to change, even as more women seek a greater say in these areas.

4. Family Planning and Child-rearing Decisions

- **Then:** Decisions regarding family planning and child-rearing were primarily made by men. Women had little control over how many children they had or how their children were raised, and family planning discussions were often absent or one-sided.
- **Now:** More couples are discussing family planning and child-rearing together. There has been an increase in men's involvement in these discussions, leading to more equitable decision-making around family size, contraception, and the upbringing of children. This represents a positive shift towards more collaborative approaches to family life, with both parents now playing an active role in these important decisions.

2.1. Financial Decision-Making

Changes in financial decision-making dynamics between husbands and wives

Since the outcome mapping in 2022, there has been a notable shift in how decision-making processes within households are conducted. Previously, financial decision-making was predominantly the responsibility of men, with men holding authority over significant financial and household decisions. However, the influence of gender dialogue sessions and community sensitization efforts facilitated by the *Titukulane* project has led to more inclusive and collaborative decision-making dynamics.

One significant change observed is the increased involvement of women in household financial decisions. Even though men retain primary control over high-value assets like land and livestock in some households, women's participation in financial decision-making has grown. This shift is often linked to their involvement in income-generating opportunities, such as through VSLAs, which have empowered women to contribute financially and engage more actively in household economic discussions.



Figure 11 Photovoice image with a participant showing a solar panel system

Narrative: “Previously, it was difficult to make enough profits to do some household development activities because we were not doing productive activities like farming together, but after we were encouraged by gender champions to be sharing work and making decisions together as a family, we are now able to make significant profits from which we managed to buy a solar system in the pictures worth 500,000 kwacha.”

In various communities, both men and women report making decisions jointly on matters such as the allocation of resources and agricultural practices. A participant from TA Namavi stated:

"In the past, when money came into the home, its usage was determined by the man, where the man claimed that they made the money and the role of the wife was to take care of the home which was wrong. Now things are gradually changing. When men make money, they are able to sit down with their wives and discuss how the money must be used. Using such means improves the livelihood of the household." - KII GVH Chiponda, TA Namavi.

In several instances, joint decision-making has led to positive outcomes for household management. Although not observed consistently, across all the TAs there was evidence of a shift in financial decision-making; from being solely the responsibility of men to a more collective approach. This shift has contributed to a more harmonious household environment, with improved financial management and better household relationships. One such instance was observed in TA Malemia, in Zomba, where a photovoice participant captured photographs of a couple, who made a decision for the wife to return to school after giving birth to a child:



Figure 12 Photovoice images showing a couple and their baby

Narrative: "For the couple in the picture, the wife got impregnated before completing [secondary] school and was denied the chance to continue her education even after giving birth. But after the husband was approached by the gender champion, he changed his mind and allowed the wife to continue with her education. The baby stays home with her father, as you can see the baby is very healthy which goes to show how the father has managed to take up the responsibility in her absence by taking care of her and feeding her a well balance diet."

A participant from TA Mlumbe highlighted this change:

"Before the gender champion came [to our house], when I made money, I would use it the way I wanted since I am the one who made it. Sometimes she would not even know about it; some of the money was used at home for utensils and the like. I could spend the money anyhow, whether buying things for myself or eating. The benefit is there and now I know that I was wrong. Now, when I get money, I show and explain it to her; she counts it, and we sit down to discuss what problems we have." - Model Couple GVH Kuchilimba, TA Chikowi.

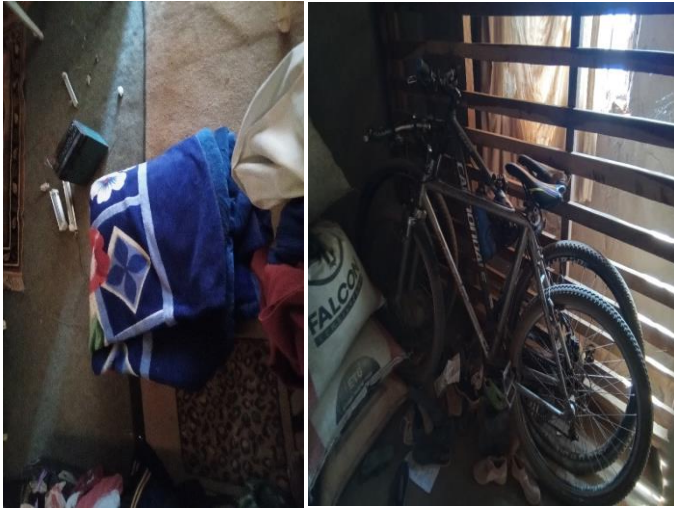


Figure 13 Photovoice images showing items purchased by a household

Narrative: “2 years ago, we harvested maize, sold it and sat to plan how we would use the money. We agreed that bough fertilizer for the next season as you can see in the picture and also bought bicycles and blankets”

a couple from GVH Jali, TA Mwambo, shared:

“We are able to put our money together and make a proper budget together and allocate the money where necessary....It has brought peace into the family. In the past, there were disagreements, but because now we sit down and discuss, such disagreements are no longer there.” - Model Couple (Husband) GVH Jali, TA Mwambo.

The progress observed in the current data shows a continuation and enhancement of the trends identified in the previous Gender Outcome Mapping. While women had gained more control over decisions related to the purchase of nutritious foods and the allocation of food within the home, their influence over decisions regarding high-value assets remained limited due to cultural norms requiring male consent for final decisions.

Current findings indicate that these cultural norms are slowly being challenged, particularly through the project's interventions. Women are now more involved in decisions that affect their households' economic well-being. For example, a woman from TA Chilipa mentioned:

“We even budget together. In the past, when I earned, I would decide on my own how to spend it. But now we sit together and budget our income as a family.” - Model Couple (Husband) GVH Albina, TA Chilipa.

However, while progress is evident, the journey toward fully equitable decision-making is ongoing. The comparison with previous findings shows that there is still work to be done to ensure that women have an equal say in all significant household decisions.

Challenges and cultural barriers to fully equitable decision-making

Despite advancements, challenges remain in achieving truly equitable decision-making. In some instances, what is described as "joint decision-making" may still lean towards one spouse—often the husband—holding the final say, while the wife's role is more consultative.

A GBV survivor from TA Chiunda shared:

“Some time back, my husband was making all the decisions on his own, but now he tells me that I am going to do this and that to support our home.” - GBV Survivor GVH Mponda, TA Chiunda.

Cultural norms also continue to influence how decisions are made within households. In certain communities, traditional views persist, leading to situations where men make final decisions even if consultations with their spouses occur.

For example, in TA Mlumbe, a male participant admitted that before the intervention of gender champions, he would unilaterally make decisions regarding household finances. However, through the project's efforts, there has been a shift towards more inclusive decision-making, with both partners now discussing and deciding together.

2.2. Decision making in Agriculture

In many households, decisions regarding agricultural activities are often influenced by traditional gender roles. However, *Titukulane* interventions have begun to shift these dynamics, encouraging more joint decision-making between men and women in agricultural planning and execution. This has been seen in communities where both men and women now discuss agricultural activities together, determining how best to allocate resources, manage crops, and distribute the benefits from harvests.

Decision-Making in Matrilineal Marriage Settings

In matrilineal marriage systems – the common system in both Zomba and Mangochi, where the man lives in the woman's home or village, there was a common trend noted that women hold more power in making household decisions. This dynamic stems from the fact that the man is residing in the area where the woman's extended family is based, giving the woman a stronger influence. However, the situation can be complex, as men may still exercise authority over certain decisions, especially when it comes to agricultural activities.

A striking example comes from a model couple in TA Namavi. This couple was selected as a model couple—an honor typically bestowed upon households that have made significant progress in key focus areas like joint decision-making. Yet, a deeper look into their dynamics shows that decision-making power still rests primarily with the husband, despite the wife owning the land. The wife described her role in decision-making as one where she initiates the conversation:

"I am the one who tells him now that let us do this and that."

However, it is the husband who ultimately makes the decisions:

"He brings the money and says what we should do with it."

Even though the land is hers, she has given him authority over it:

"She owns the farm but gave me the authority."

This dynamic is further reinforced by cultural expectations, as the wife mentioned being raised to let her husband make decisions concerning their assets:

"My parents raised me well, that is why I said my husband should control the farm."

This case is particularly significant because it raises questions about the criteria used to select model couples and what these selections imply about the broader community's progress in gender equality. Model couples are intended to serve as examples for the community, showcasing how households can evolve toward more equitable practices, particularly in joint decision-making. However, if a model couple still exhibits a significant imbalance in decision-making power, it suggests that the community may not be as progressive as hoped in this area.

The husband's authority in this relationship, even in the context of a matrilineal system where the wife owns the land, reflects the deep-rooted cultural norms that continue to shape gender dynamics. Despite efforts to promote joint decision-making, the data suggests that traditional gender roles remain influential, often placing men in a dominant position.

Moreover, the couple's dynamic highlights a broader issue: the conflation of consultation with genuine joint decision-making. While the wife initiates discussions, the final decisions are made by the husband. This pattern suggests that what is often presented as progress in gender equality may, in fact, be a superficial change, with men retaining ultimate control.

Implications for the Community

If such a couple is considered a model, it raises questions about the overall state of gender equality in the community. The fact that this couple is seen as exemplary could indicate that the standard for what constitutes progress is relatively low. This might reflect broader challenges in shifting deeply ingrained cultural norms, especially in contexts where traditional gender roles are strongly upheld.

The implications are significant: if the most progressive households are still struggling with equitable decision-making, it suggests that more intensive interventions are needed to challenge and change these norms. The selection of such a couple as a model might inadvertently reinforce the very gender imbalances that the project aims to address.

In conclusion, the example of this model couple from TA Namavi highlights the complexities of promoting gender equality in matrilineal marriage systems. While there are indications of progress, such as the wife initiating discussions, the persistence of male-dominated decision-making points to the need for continued efforts to achieve true equity in household dynamics.

Women Leading in Decision-Making

In certain well-off families and those deeply rooted in matrilineal cultural beliefs, women are often the primary decision-makers. This is particularly evident in settings where the man has less influence due to the cultural context, such as in matrilineal systems. A notable example comes from a model couple in GVH Albina, Chilipa, where the wife takes the lead in financial decisions:

"Yes, she told me how much she earns. If there is a problem or an emergency that needs to be solved with finances, I usually open up and asks if we can sell some of our livestock to solve the problem at hand. So, every month we sit around our table and decide on what to do with the money. What we want to buy at household level, what we should concentrate on, and she even shares me money to buy beer." - Model Couple, GVH Albina, Chilipa

This situation demonstrates how cultural norms and economic status can shape decision-making dynamics within households, leading to a more balanced distribution of power in some cases.

Individual Management of Joint Land

In some cases, spouses manage their own portions of jointly owned land separately, growing food and keeping the produce apart. This practice, particularly noted in TA Chiunda, highlights underlying issues of mistrust and conflict over resource use. Women in these communities have expressed concerns about men misusing resources, leading them to take control of their own portions of land and manage their crops independently.

For example, in TA Chowe, during a focus group discussion, a participant noted that among the six men present, only one was not in a polygamous marriage. The women feared sharing their hard-earned resources with co-wives, which influences how decisions are made in these households and impacts productivity and resilience-building efforts:

"For example, you can agree as a family that this year we will grow cotton and when you harvest and sell the cotton, the husband spends all the money instead of discussing and agreeing on expenditure as a family. Some men spend the money on girlfriends and marry another wife, this is violence." -FGD Participant, TA Chiunda

This practice, though aimed at reducing conflict, can also hinder collaborative efforts to increase household income and resilience to climatic and economic shocks.

Decision-Making Among Women with Absent Husbands

The data also highlights an increase in decision-making power among women whose husbands are working away, particularly in South Africa. In these situations, women are entrusted with making decisions in the absence of their spouses, which leads to a shift in household dynamics. This scenario is more common in households where men are not present to assert their authority, giving women more control over financial and agricultural decisions:

"When my husband is away, I am the one who decides how to use the money we earn from farming and what to buy for the family." - FGD Participant, TA Namavi

This trend suggests that geographical separation can influence the balance of decision-making power, with women stepping into roles traditionally held by men.

2.3. Family Planning and Child-rearing Decisions

Family planning is a critical component of intra-household decision-making, particularly in the context of the matrilineal marriage systems observed in the study areas. Data from the 2024 Outcome Harvesting reveals that discussions and agreements on family planning methods have become more collaborative between husbands and wives, marking progress toward gender equality in decision-making. This shift represents a significant departure from the male-dominated decisions of the past, where women had little say over family planning matters.

In several communities, there has been a notable transition from decisions solely made by men to a more inclusive approach. Women are now more actively involved in deciding the number of children they want and the type of contraceptives to use. This shift reflects a broader change in household decision-making, moving towards greater gender equity.

One participant from GVH Jekete, TA Ntonda, highlighted this change, noting that family planning decisions are now often discussed and agreed upon within the family before seeking external help:

"Normally, before the women come for family planning, they discuss it as a family. When they have agreed, they come together to receive help. Family planning methods do not only apply to women, but there are also other methods like usage of condoms which is for men. So, men also come to receive help." – Participant, GVH Jekete, TA Ntonda

Another participant from GVH Mponda, TA Chiunda, shared how the increased agency of women in making family planning decisions represents a positive shift from previous practices:

“Currently, women are able to determine the number of children to have or the type of contraceptives to use. They are able to discuss with their husbands and make decisions. In the past, men would dominate these decisions.” – Female Participant, GVH Mponda, TA Chiunda.

This progress is further emphasized in the words of a participant from GVH Kuchilimba, TA Chikowi:

“Both men and women are participating in decision-making processes for the adoption of various family planning options.” – Model Couple, GVH Kuchilimba, TA Chikowi

The involvement of both men and women in deciding on family planning methods demonstrates the broader impact of gender dialogues and interventions from the *Titukulane* project, which have encouraged open discussions and shared responsibilities within households. These efforts have fostered an environment where decisions related to family size and contraceptive methods are made jointly, benefiting both partners and leading to healthier, more balanced family dynamics.

However, cultural norms still influence these decisions, especially in matrilineal marriage systems. In matrilineal settings, decisions regarding permanent contraceptive methods, such as vasectomies or tubal ligations, are often shaped by concerns about the future. Since children belong to the mother's lineage in matrilineal systems, men may hesitate to undergo procedures that prevent them from having more children if the marriage ends. This concern also affects other household decisions, such as those related to agriculture, where men may have limited influence if the land belongs to their wife's family.

As one participant noted:

“We now discuss how many children we want to have together.” – Model Couple, GVH Kuchilimba, TA Chikowi

Another participant remarked on the increased involvement of men in child-rearing decisions:

“I now help in deciding about our children's needs and upbringing, which I never used to do before.” – FGD, GVH Mponda, TA Chiunda

This progress in joint decision-making on family planning and child-rearing reflects the ongoing cultural shifts promoted by the *Titukulane* project. However, the deep-rooted nature of some cultural norms means that, while progress has been made, challenges remain in achieving fully equitable decision-making within all households.

2.4. Environmental Conservation

Environmental conservation is another area where decision-making within households has shown progress. The data indicates that husbands and wives are increasingly making collective decisions

regarding their participation in environmental conservation activities. This collaborative approach not only reflects improved gender relations but also enhances community efforts to protect and manage natural resources.

A model couple from GVH Jali, TA Mwambo, shared how they jointly decided to participate in tree planting activities initiated by their chief:

"There are ways that we used to follow. For example, when the chief calls, he tells his subjects that we should plant trees so that we replace those that were cut. So, we decided with my husband that we need to take our part." -

Model Couple, GVH Jali, TA Mwambo

This example illustrates how gender dialogue sessions and other interventions by the *Titukulane* project have fostered a sense of shared responsibility between men and women in environmental conservation. Couples are now more likely to discuss and agree on participating in activities such as tree planting, which helps strengthen the overall impact of these community initiatives. By making decisions together, men and women contribute more effectively to the protection and restoration of natural resources, demonstrating the powerful role that collective decision-making can play in environmental stewardship.

Through these efforts, households are not only addressing immediate environmental concerns but are also setting an example for future generations, promoting a culture of sustainability and shared responsibility within their communities.

The current analysis reveals a complex yet evolving landscape of intra-household decision-making in the communities studied. While there is clear progress towards more inclusive decision-making processes, significant challenges remain. The distinction between consultation and genuine joint decision-making is often blurred, and traditional norms continue to influence who holds the ultimate decision-making power. In addition, the dynamics of decision-making are heavily influenced by factors such as marriage systems, the presence or absence of spouses, and the economic status of the household.

These findings underscore the importance of continued efforts to promote gender equality and empower women within households, particularly through targeted interventions that address the specific cultural and social barriers identified in the analysis.

Comparative Analysis

The Gender Outcome Mapping revealed that intra-household decision-making was largely dominated by men, particularly around financial matters, family well-being, and high-value assets such as land and livestock. Women's participation in decisions was often limited to minor, day-to-day issues, while larger economic decisions were handled by men.

In 2024, there has been a noticeable shift toward joint decision-making in these areas. More women are involved in financial discussions, family planning, and decision-making around high-value assets. However, while progress has been made, men still tend to have the final say in many cases, especially when it comes to high-value assets like land. This partial shift reflects the influence of gender interventions, but deeply ingrained cultural norms continue to hinder full gender equality in decision-making.

Family planning decisions, once controlled by men, are now more collaborative, and both men and women are discussing the number of children they want and the types of contraceptives to use. Nonetheless, men remain reluctant to adopt permanent family planning methods, such as vasectomies, indicating ongoing resistance to fully sharing reproductive decisions.

Overall, while 2024 shows improvement in joint decision-making compared to 2023, traditional norms and power imbalances still influence how decisions are made, especially in areas that involve significant resources or life-altering choices. Further efforts are needed to ensure equal participation in decision-making within households.

Focus Area 3: Access and control of Assets and Resources

Women, men, and youth in Mangochi and Zomba face multiple gender-related barriers in accessing resources. Women, in particular, experience limitations in accessing credit facilities, besides those available through that would enable them to venture into higher value enterprises often leaving them financially vulnerable. Although women play a crucial role in agricultural production, men often take over the marketing of produce, restricting women's control over household financial resources.

To address these barriers, approaches that advance gender equality such as Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) were promoted and gender dialogue sessions were introduced. These interventions challenge harmful social norms, encouraging joint decision-making and improving access to and control over productive resources and assets. However, disparities persist, especially in access to high-value assets like land. Despite progress in some areas, women's control over key resources often remains subject to male approval, particularly when it comes to significant financial decisions.

The 2022 Gender Outcome Mapping revealed that although women were fully participating in VSLAs, which enhanced their access to financial resources, their control over valuable assets like land varied significantly. Many women still required male approval to make important decisions, particularly regarding the sale or use of major assets. In response, the *Titukulane* project began implementing community-based interventions, such as Gender Dialogue Sessions at the village head level, led by community volunteers and gender champions. These sessions targeted both men and women and focused on dismantling the social norms that restricted women's access and control over assets.

The 2024 Outcome Harvesting study further assessed women's participation in VSLAs and their control over financial resources and assets. The findings indicate that while there is high involvement of women in income-generating activities (IGAs), women still face challenges in resource management.

Although improved intra-household decision-making has led to notable changes, including more equitable control of resources like land, traditional practices still hinder full gender equity in decision-making processes.

This section explores the comparison between the 2022 Outcome Mapping and the 2024 Outcome Harvesting, focusing on the changes and persistent challenges in access to and control of assets and resources across various subsectors such as agricultural assets, household assets, financial resources, health services, WASH services, and early warning systems.

Key Findings:

The findings compare the 2022 Outcome Mapping with the 2024 Outcome Harvesting, highlighting shifts in access and control of assets and resources for women, men, and youth.

1. Agricultural Assets and Resources

- **Then:** Men predominantly controlled agricultural assets like livestock and land. Women, despite formal ownership in matrilineal systems, had little influence over significant economic decisions.
- **Now:** Joint decision-making over assets like land and livestock has increased. Women have more input in resource management discussions, although men still hold final control in many cases. Improvements are attributed to gender interventions emphasizing joint decision-making.

2. Financial Resources, Services, and Opportunities

- **Then:** Women were active participants in VSLAs but faced significant barriers in accessing formal financial institutions. Men were generally unsupportive of women's participation in external markets.
- **Now:** Women continue to fully participate in VSLAs, giving them better access to financial resources. Some men are now also participating in VSLAs, even though either directly or indirectly through their wives. Youths, both male and female, are increasingly accessing family planning services but still face challenges in accessing financial support for larger businesses.

3. Household Finances

- **Then:** Men held primary control over household finances, with women having little say in how money was spent.
- **Now:** Decision-making on household finances has become more collaborative. More women now manage household finances, especially when their husbands are away for work. However, cultural norms continue to grant men final control over larger financial decisions, such as investments in high-value assets.

4. Health Resources/Services

- **Then:** Women had greater access to health services, particularly family planning. However, men were often reluctant to participate in family planning discussions, especially when it came to permanent methods like vasectomy.
- **Now:** Both men and women now access health and sanitation services, though women still primarily access contraceptive services. Men prefer using condoms, and some still resist permanent methods due to concerns about future fertility.

5. Early Warning Information

- **Then:** Access to early warning information was limited, particularly for women.
- **Now:** Some women, particularly in TAs Chikowi and Malemia, report improved access to early warning information via mobile phones and radios. However, women mostly accessed early warning information through word of mouth. This aligns with findings from the FY24 annual survey, where 64.6% of all participants reported understanding early warning information, including 69.7% of men and 63.6% of women. Additionally, 94.1% of both men and women confirmed receiving this information in a timely manner, corroborating improved access.

3.1. Agricultural Assets and Resources

The gender equity interventions under the *Titukulane* project have brought significant shifts in how agricultural assets—such as land and livestock—are controlled within households. Traditionally, even in matrilineal systems, men retained control over key economic decisions, despite formal ownership of assets by women. This arrangement often limited women's ability to influence decisions on how agricultural resources were used, sold, or managed, thereby restricting their contribution to the household economy.

The introduction of joint decision-making mechanisms has gradually altered these dynamics. Through gender dialogues and sensitization, men and women are now encouraged to collaborate on the use and management of resources like land and livestock. The outcome harvesting revealed that these interventions have begun to reshape household decision-making, with both men and women sitting down to discuss the management of assets.

"Land in this village is owned by women since the husband moves to the woman's home. However, decisions of land usage are shared between man and woman." – Transect Walk, GVH Abiti Kalanje, TA Chowe.

While this shift has empowered women to have more influence over decisions regarding agricultural assets, the situation remains more complex for men who settle in their wives' homes under matrilineal systems. In these cases, men often face limitations in their ability to control or influence how resources are used, even if they contribute significantly to the agricultural activities. These limitations stem from

deeply rooted cultural norms that regard land ownership—and, by extension, the produce from that land—as the woman’s domain.

During an FGD in TA Namavi, a man shared his frustration when his sister and her husband tilled her land and sold the maize they harvested. Despite their joint labor, his sister declared that all the proceeds were hers, as it was her land they worked on, reinforcing the norm that land and its yields are controlled by the woman in matrilineal systems.

Similarly, in TA Chowe, another man expressed that, as a husband living in his wife’s home, he felt like "just a signpost," with no influence over the household’s resources. This sentiment is particularly strong in cases where men marry into wealthier families with many resources, further limiting their say in resource management.

These examples highlight a less discussed, but significant, aspect of cultural norms: the impact on men in matrilineal systems, where their agency over agricultural resources is diminished. While the focus of gender interventions has been to empower women, it is clear that such systems can also create disempowering situations for men, particularly when they are expected to contribute labor without receiving corresponding control over the resources, which then can limit men's investments in the household.

The shift toward joint decision-making has led to more equitable control of resources, particularly land. However, it’s important to recognize that while this is a positive development, the final say on decisions often still rests with men in many cases. The ingrained cultural norms regarding male dominance over economic decisions are not fully dismantled, particularly for high-value assets. The power dynamic still subtly leans toward male authority, indicating the need for ongoing gender-sensitive interventions.

Beyond equity, the economic benefits of this change are tangible. Families that have adopted shared decision-making report faster economic growth. This suggests that allowing both spouses to contribute their insights into resource management results in more informed, strategic decisions that enhance household well-being and financial stability.

"We both have equal access and control to the family resources which has greatly helped with fast economic growth of the household." – Model Couple, GVH Bwanado, TA Mlumbe.

Women in female-headed households, often due to the absence of their husbands, have also taken full control of land and livestock management. This represents a significant empowerment shift, as these women now exercise greater autonomy in their agricultural decision-making. Previously, even in their absence, men often controlled decisions by default. The recognition of women as key decision-makers in these cases represents a notable cultural shift.

Despite these gains, challenges remain. The depth of this transformation is uneven across communities. While some areas are making significant strides toward gender equity, others continue to uphold traditional norms that limit both women's and, at times, men's agency over agricultural assets. Further

work is needed to ensure that joint decision-making becomes the standard across all communities, balancing empowerment for both men and women within these systems.

3.2. Household Assets and Resources

Increased gender dialogues have significantly improved joint decision-making in households, leading to a shift in the control over household assets such as motorbikes and entertainment units. However, cultural norms around male authority continue to influence how control over household assets and resources is exercised.

"There is a belief that a man is the head of the family. That is what influenced the men to be in control of everything." – Model couple, GVH Mtogolo, TA Malemia.

Despite these persistent beliefs, there is growing evidence that joint ownership and control of household assets have improved, with households increasingly working together to purchase and manage resources such as motorbikes. This shift is driven by the recognition that equitable access and control over resources not only empower women but also benefit the entire household.



Figure 14 Photovoice image showing a household's motorcycle

Narrative: *"It represents the achievement we have made from working together. I feel happy looking at it. I also learned how to ride from the same bike." – GBV Survivor, GVH Mponda, TA Chiunda, Mangochi.*

The improved control over household resources extends beyond material assets like motorbikes to essential aspects such as food. Previously, men often consumed food separately and were given special meals. However, through increased dialogue and joint decision-making, this practice is shifting, allowing for a more equitable distribution of resources, particularly food.

"Previously men were eating alone and were given special meals but now they do eat together such that every household member has the same access to the food." – Transect Walk, GVH Mponda, TA Chiunda.

This transition towards shared meals reflects deeper changes in how households distribute resources. Equal access to nutritious food is now evident in households where joint control over household

resources has improved overall well-being, further reinforcing the importance of gender equality within the household context.



Figure 15 Photovoice image showing a model couple with their children sharing a meal

Narrative: *“For the longest time, my husband was given food to eat on his own. Now, everyone eats together.”* **Model Couple, GVH Kuchilimba, TA Chikowi, Zomba**

While these shifts are promising, the progress is not uniform across all households. Traditional norms regarding male control over assets remain prevalent in some areas, especially when it comes to high-value items. However, the increasing visibility of households where joint control is practiced serves as a catalyst for change in communities, demonstrating that when both men and women share control over resources, the household benefits as a whole.

The changes in control over household assets highlight the positive impact of gender dialogues and interventions. However, cultural norms still pose challenges that require ongoing efforts to achieve more widespread equity in resource management.

3.3. Economic and Financial Resources

The data shows a notable improvement in women’s participation in Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) and income-generating activities (IGAs). More men are now supporting women’s involvement in the market economy, leading to greater economic independence for women.

Despite increased participation, women still face challenges accessing larger loans or financial support for bigger businesses. Many women rely on small loans from VSLAs, usually less than MWK 60,000, which limits their business growth.

“Most women engage in petty trading, such as mandasi (fried dough) or selling vegetables, because they have limited access to sufficient capital for larger businesses. Women rely on VSLAs for business loans, which are less than K60,000 in most cases.” – FGD GVH Mtogolo, TA Malemia

Jealousy from male partners had previously been a significant barrier preventing women from joining VSLAs or engaging in market activities. However, gender awareness sessions have led to shifts in this mindset.

“As husbands, we were very jealous. We feared that a certain Che Mmadi would sleep with our wives. But now, we trust them.” – Transect Walk, GVH Abiti Kalanje, T/A Chowe

In TA Namabvi, women mentioned that they do not have access to the lake for fishing, which is where many men earn their capital. As a result, women continue to engage in smaller businesses due to their limited access to capital.

Despite the willingness among some women to acquire vocational skills, they find it challenging to learn because there are fewer women in trades compared to their male counterparts. Most men acquire these skills informally from their friends.

Titukulane’s efforts to increase access to vocational skills are changing this dynamic. Four girls from GVH Mtogolo in TA Malemia acquired carpentry skills through the Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) program and are now serving their community.

There has also been an increased interest from girls in pursuing trades that were previously male-dominated. For example, at Bimbi Trading Center in TA Kuntumanji, two out of three apprentices being trained by a local welder are girls. This shift is encouraging more girls to learn skills traditionally considered male-dominated.



Narrative: This is a welding workshop at Bimbi Trading Center. The owner is training both female and male students in welding, a field once considered a man’s field. Two out of three students are female, which is inspiring more girls to pursue vocational training.

Figure 16 A welding workshop in TA Kuntumanji, Zomba ©TitukulaneRFSA 2024

Male involvement in VSLAs has also increased, with men either participating directly or supporting their wives in accessing financial resources. Youth, both male and female, are increasingly accessing family planning services but still face challenges in accessing financial support for larger businesses.

“Increased participation in VSLAs and IGAs by women has been witnessed in almost all the areas. When women are not in control of household

finances, the household does not develop.” –EV Survivor, GVH Chilembwe, TA Mlumbe



Figure 17 Photovoice image showing men and women engaging in trade at a trading centre

“The results of the male and gender champions have not only affected our household; this picture captures the increased involvement of women in our community in various businesses because of the training provided to husbands, which has led them to trust their wives more instead of suspecting them of cheating when they are doing business.” – Model Couple, GVH Mtogolo, TA Malemia

Vocational training, particularly in previously male-dominated trades like carpentry and welding, is expanding opportunities for women, especially young women. However, there is still a gap in making programs like TVETs available for older women as well, to build their capacity and provide them with skills that can take them beyond petty trades. While young women are benefiting from these programs, older women often find themselves confined to lower-income activities, such as petty trading, due to limited access to such opportunities.

In conclusion, while gender equity interventions have helped women access economic resources, continued efforts are needed to address systemic barriers, particularly access to larger capital and business information, which still heavily favor men. Additionally, expanding vocational training to include older women is crucial to ensuring that all women have the opportunity to break free from lower-income trades.

3.4. Health Resources

Access to health resources, particularly family planning services, has shown significant improvement for both men and women. Youth champions have played an important role in facilitating access to contraceptive services, especially for young people. These champions help bridge the gap between health facilities and the youth by offering support and education, often in more informal settings, which are easier for young people to access.

“The youth also come for family planning methods and they are equally assisted. We conduct meetings every Thursdays and there we educate the people about family planning. Through TfDs like drama, we provide civic education to the community about family planning methods and why it is important. We also help the youth who are still in school but have no control over their sexual desires to use family planning methods so that they can

continue school by preventing early pregnancies." – Transect Walk, GVH Jekete, TA Ntonda.

The outcome harvesting revealed that only few women were encouraging female youth to access SRHR services, including family planning. Women indicated that they encouraged youths to join youth clubs so that they learn about SRHR. Due to cultural values, many women did not openly discuss SRHR issues, especially with their children. Related to that, women who encouraged youths to access SRHR services were viewed negatively by the community as misleading the youths.

Male youth registered low access and utilization of SRHR and family planning services. Some male youth said that they are not comfortable accessing family planning services due to stereotypes and stigma if they are seen taking condoms from some health services. Hence some services, such as SRHR, for youth were facilitated by mother groups in schools and parents often do not encourage their children to access SRHR services. Some female youth who accessed SRHR services, observed being regarded as 'loose' and morally corrupt. Women and men who encourage female youths to access SRHR services were viewed negatively by the community as such acts were regarded as misleading the youth.

The present findings did not fully highlight the access of SRHR services among married couples and youth. This issue only came out once during a gender outcome harvesting session with gender and male champions, whereby it was reported that most couples are making choices on family planning together while male youth in one gender champion's community prefer to access SRH services through him other than a health facility. This implies that SRHR issues are still not openly discussed in communities due to cultural values, stereotypes and stigma just like in the past, even though the services such as family planning methods are needed, as shown by how young men access condoms from a gender champion's home.

Despite this progress, some cultural norms still limit men's full participation in family planning. Many men remain hesitant to undergo vasectomies, expressing concerns about future fertility, especially in cases where a marriage might end. This hesitance is reflected in communities where men tend to prefer temporary methods like condoms, leaving women to bear the brunt of responsibility when it comes to more permanent family planning decisions.

3.5. Early Warning Information

In 2022, access to early warning information was limited, with very few households having direct access to timely information. This was particularly true for women, who often relied on second-hand reports from their male counterparts or other community members. In contrast, the 2024 data shows a slight improvement, with more women reporting access to early warning information through mobile phones and radios. However, barriers still exist, particularly for women, who continue to face challenges in accessing and interpreting information due to cultural norms.

The annual survey report highlights specific findings that corroborate the observations from the outcome harvesting report. For example, 64.6% of participants reported understanding early warning information, with 69.7% of men and 63.6% of women indicating comprehension, suggesting effective information

delivery across genders. Additionally, 94.1% of both men and women confirmed receiving early warning messages in a timely manner, ensuring preparedness within relevant time frames.

During a transect walk in TA Malemia, women indicated that they mostly access early warning information through word of mouth from the VDRMC members, who pass on messages from door to door. Both men and women agreed that the radio is often seen as gendered: many women are not interested in listening to the radio or do not pay attention, even when it's nearby. It is typically men and male children who engage with the information aired on the radio.

“Even when we sit together and the radio is on, and both me and my wife are working, she will miss whatever is said on the radio. I ask her, “Did you here what they just said?”, and she will say, no, and I have to repeat it to her.” –

Transect Walk, GVH Ntologo, TA Malemia

This highlights a persistent cultural gap in access to critical information, with women missing out on important early warning messages because of deeply ingrained societal norms.

Despite these challenges, there are instances where women are taking a more active role in accessing and interpreting early warning information. For example, during the transect walk in TA Malemia, a woman was the only person who could ably explain the river line gauge installed by *Titukulane*, demonstrating that women, when engaged, can effectively contribute to early warning systems and community disaster preparedness. This case illustrates the potential for women to play a more prominent role in accessing and utilizing early warning information, especially when empowered through training and community engagement initiatives.

Overall, while progress has been made in improving women's access to early warning information, cultural norms continue to limit their direct engagement with these tools. The gendered nature of radio usage and the reliance on word-of-mouth communication underscore the ongoing barriers women face in accessing critical information.

Comparative Analysis

The 2023 Gender Outcome Mapping revealed that men predominantly controlled agricultural assets, while in 2024, there has been progress in joint decision-making, particularly in decisions regarding land and livestock. However, men still tend to hold the final say, showing that cultural norms continue to limit full equality in resource control.

Women's participation in VSLAs remains strong, but challenges persist in accessing formal credit. Although men's support for women's economic activities has improved, obstacles like jealousy and unequal access to business information still hinder progress.

In health resources, particularly family planning, men's involvement has increased from 2023 to 2024. However, cultural beliefs still discourage men from participating in permanent contraceptive methods. Youth champions have helped increase access for young people, but broader male engagement is needed.

In conclusion, while the 2024 data highlights positive shifts in joint decision-making and resource access, persistent cultural and systemic barriers continue to affect equitable resource control.

Focus Area 4: Participation in Leadership and Public Life

Women, men, and youth in rural communities in Mangochi and Zomba face significant gender-related barriers to participation in leadership and public life. Women and youth, in particular, have historically had limited opportunities to engage in decision-making processes at the community level, which has left them marginalized and underrepresented. Cultural norms and societal expectations have further reinforced these challenges, preventing many from accessing leadership roles and exercising their civic rights.

To address these barriers, *Titukulane* has introduced gender equity approaches, including leadership and assertiveness training and community dialogue sessions. These interventions aim to empower women and youth by promoting gender equality and enhancing their participation in public life. While there has been progress in women and youth taking up leadership roles in village development committees and other local structures, challenges persist. Cultural and religious norms, as well as entrenched gender biases, continue to limit their full participation in decision-making processes, especially in influential leadership positions.

The 2022 Gender Outcome Mapping revealed an increase in women's participation in leadership, but often in less influential roles. Although some women were able to engage in public speaking and community decisions, they faced significant resistance, particularly in male-dominated spaces. In response, *Titukulane* implemented leadership trainings and community sensitizations to encourage gender equality and support women's participation in leadership.

The 2024 Outcome Harvesting study aimed to assess progress in this area, focusing on the extent of women's and youth's leadership and public participation. The findings show that while there has been an increase in women holding leadership positions and influencing community decisions, significant obstacles remain. This section explores the comparison between the 2022 Outcome Mapping and the 2024 Outcome Harvesting, highlighting progress, ongoing challenges, and persistent gaps in gender equality in leadership and public life.

Key Findings

The comparison between the 2022 Gender Outcome Mapping and the 2024 Outcome Harvesting highlights significant changes in women's and youth's participation in leadership and public life. While progress has been made in increasing women's leadership roles and public speaking, traditional norms and cultural barriers continue to pose challenges. Below are the key findings:

1. Women in Leadership Positions

- **Then:** In 2022, women were taking on leadership roles but were often limited to less influential positions such as secretaries and treasurers, while men typically reserved more powerful roles like chairpersons.
- **Now:** In 2024, there has been notable progress, with more women taking up influential roles such as chairpersons in VDCs, ADCs, and VCPCs. Local leaders and communities have shown increased support for women in leadership, although gaps remain in some areas where traditional norms still persist.

2. Youth Participation in Leadership

- **Then:** Youth, especially female youth, were underrepresented in leadership roles due to social norms that devalued their involvement.
- **Now:** Male youth have shown increased involvement in leadership positions, particularly in VDCs and ADCs. Female youth, particularly those who are married, have made progress but remain underrepresented, facing more challenges compared to their male counterparts.

3. Public Speaking and Influence

- **Then:** Men were often reluctant to support women and youth in speaking up during community meetings. Women and youth had limited influence and rarely contributed to public discussions.
- **Now:** There has been significant progress in both women's and youth's participation in public discussions. Gender dialogues and leadership training have empowered more women and youth to speak confidently and contribute meaningfully during community meetings.

4.1. Women participation in leadership positions

Gender Outcome Mapping results showed that in the past, women were making less progress in participation and leadership in public leadership and access to services. Specifically, in taking up leadership positions and having some influence in committees. Positions that were considered influential, commanding authority, such as chairmanship, along with voting opportunities, were often reserved for men in committees such as VDCs, ADCs, and VCPCs, with women participating in less influential positions. Due to limited leadership skills and agency, women did not take up leadership positions in such committees. An influencing factor that contributed to low progress in these areas were gender norms that resulted in fewer women being engaged in community committees, as these committees were often composed of and dominated by men.



Figure 18 A photo of a mosque in GVH Bimbi, TA Kuntumanji, where participants discussed religious beliefs during the transect walk.

“It affects our daily lives as women are taking leading roles like general secretary, some even chairlady which also gives a lesson to those that didn’t know or were lagging behind they start realising, seeing a woman standing in the midst of people at a funeral doing all that is supposed to be done someone sees and say aaah I can also do this right, you learn a lesson, they act as an encouragement to others who don’t know.”

Transect walk, GVH Bimbi, TA Kuntumanji

Gender outcome harvesting results have revealed that women are making gradual progress in participation and leadership in public leadership. Specifically, in taking up leadership positions and having some influence in committees. Due to acquired knowledge and practice of gender equality by community members, positions that are considered influential and powerful, such as Chairmanship, vice chairmanship and treasurer along with voting opportunities, in committees like VDCs, ADCs and VPCs are now also open to women and youth. For example, in TA Chowe out of 8 chief’s counselors’, 5 are women and in TA Chiunda, the traditional leaders have 4 leaders 2 of whom are women. General committee membership has also improved, in that the members are keen to ensuring gender balance as noticed in VNRMC that had more membership. This development has seen men taking interest and joining health and nutrition, as well as borehole committees, which were mostly patronized by women. Unlike before, local leaders and community members have learnt to trust, encourage and support the participation of women in both community activities and leadership positions.



Figure 19 Two women in leadership positions (**on the left** Cluster leader, Chair of the Area Funeral Committee, and **on the right**, Vice Chairperson of the Village Natural Resource Management Committee (VNRMC) in their area. **GVH Jali TA Mwambo**

“VDC chair, VDRMC secretary and treasurer and other members are women. I trust them to handle their tasks because they do their job well at the VDRMC. When we talk about the VDRMC, it is a committee that looks at emergencies in the area. When such disasters happen, the women work with the men to record which areas have been affected.” KII, GVH Abiti Kalanje, TA Chowe

However, in some communities, women leadership has not been embraced due to deeply entrenched cultural and religious norms. In some areas, women are not in leadership positions because currently volunteerism seem to be beneficial, as such men are still reserving such positions for themselves. When they fail to secure the powerful positions, they tend to rule or exercise leadership powers through the

woman leader, thereby creating a sense of puppet leadership, hence defeating women's agency and instilling self-doubt.

In addition, a community development assistant from Zomba, indicated that even though there are a lot of women in leadership positions, the recent VDC elections shows that women are mostly holding vice positions in committees. Similarly in TA Biti Kalanje, in TA Chowe Mangochi, the FGD indicated that, there is 50-50 men and women participation or more women in leadership positions such that VCPC has 10 members among them, 5 are women, secretary and treasurer positions are held by women. The VDC has 12 members among them 6 are women; Vice chair, Treasurer and secretary are women and all the leadership at irrigation scheme gone to women. This is in line with what was reported by one respondent who narrated that;

“In this area, a lot of positive things are happening. For example, women have leadership positions in VDC and men are also involved....some are secretaries in the VDC, some are treasurers there as well”- KII, GVH Abiti Kalanje, TA Chowe

This signifies the remain gaps that are there in terms of women leadership. Few women leaders are resilient enough to withstand pressure from community members who are yet to have a positive mindset towards the importance of incorporating women in leadership positions.

4.2. Public Speaking and Influence

The previous findings showed that only a few men were in support of women and youth to speak up and contribute during community meetings. This was due to different gender trainings that were offered. During the FGDs, it was indicated that the GVH for Matawa is a woman and men have embraced and support her leadership. Another man also voted for a female Health Promoter and he was working under her as a Cluster Leader. Generally, men were not in support of behaviors related to encouraging women and girls to speak up and contribute to community meetings; supporting youth to access SRHR services (because it was a woman's responsibility) and taking up leadership.

The latest findings revealed that, women can organize meetings and freely engage men on issues to do with agriculture, health, community development in general and gender dynamics. This was due to leadership and assertiveness training for women leaders that were offered by *Titukulane*. During one Transect Walk in TA Chilipa, a female cluster leader reported that their Primary School Committee is driven by a lady, who had recently organized a community meeting where she was appealing to the community to jointly build an additional school block, and the event was attended by both men and women from that community. This implies that generally, women who are in leadership positions can now publicly address and engage men in their community.



Figure 20 A chief's courtyard in GVH Mponda, TA Chiunda where transect walk participants discussed how men, women, and the youth participate in public life.

Youth participation

Previously, female youth registered low progress on behaviors related to participation and public life leadership. Female youths reported that low and no female youth are in positions of leadership, including in community groups, ADCs and VDCs.

While male youth were partially willing to share information and encouraging female youth to participate in TVETs trades, male youths also had low participation in and contribution to collective decision-making at the community level. This corresponded with Gender Analysis results that reflected low participation among male and female youth in positions of decision-making due to norms that did not value the views and opinions of young people.

The gender outcome harvesting findings revealed that, there is still low progress related to the participation of female youth in public life leadership. It was observed that female youths who are mostly in positions like cluster leaders or lead farmers are those that are married while those still living with their parents do not really take part in leadership positions. So far few female youth are in positions of leadership, including in community groups, ADCs and VDCs. On the contrary, male youth have improved on their willingness to be in leadership positions even in ADCs and VDCs.

“There are more changes in leadership such as inclusion, transparency and accountability and VDC chair is from the youth” - KII, GVH Jali, TA Mwambo

There is also an improvement and change in the interest to learn vocational skills such as carpentry, plumbing, brick laying, electrical installation among males and females. Male youth are committed to sharing information and working with female youth. During a transect walk in TA Namavi, one man reported that one female youth managed to open a welding shop which she shares with various youth and other men who are interested in the same trade. This improvement is attributed to the *Titukulane's* efforts of linking up the youth and the rightful vocational institutions such as Mangochi Technical College.

4.3. Gender balanced committees for health and environmental activities

The findings from gender outcome mapping revealed that there was a division in the way committees were made. This was whereby men and women deliberately allocated themselves in committees that had to do with traditionally allocated roles. This saw women being allocated to health committees while men to environmental committees, where women were selected to be in male dominated committees, they remained in very low positions and therefore had little to no influence.

“There are supposed to be 10 people in each committee.....There are 6 women and 4 men [in our committee]. We just do that [have more of one gender] for the sake of not having equal number of men and women in the group. When it is like that [equal] people think every man will have one

**woman in the committee, so we just put a difference of 1.” – Transect Walk
GVH Jekete, TA Ntonda**

The above quotation is validating the findings from gender outcome harvest have shown that progress has been made in the way health and environmental committees are made. Due to gender leadership trainings TFD, radio jingles and programs, sensitizations of community members during other community meetings and dialogue sessions, women participation in leadership roles especially in environmental committees have improved. There is gradual participation of men in health and nutrition committees. The coming in of men in health and nutrition has improved child nutrition because men are now able to do away with cultural beliefs that were causing poor child health such as denying a child some foods that are crucial for child development. On the other hand, men’s membership in wash committees have promoted hygiene, in that they are now able to join women in constructing covered toilet facilities and the use of chlorine in drinking water.

Participation of women in VSLA

Women participation in VSLA was initially embraced by women, with a few joining the groups. The registration and memberships of the groups kept growing because of the benefits such as loan facility and local banking. However, few men supported their women mostly due to fear of how they would be financing their membership.

The present findings revealed that there is a big improvement in women’s participation in VSLAs due to moral and emotional support they receive from their spouses. This is due to reflection meetings with both community leaders and members, that helped in sensitizing the community on the benefits of joining VSLs. Gender champions also played and are big role in convincing men to let their wives take part in the same, as narrated by one respondent during an FGD;

**“Through the efforts of gender and male champions, some men who FGD GVH Nsonthe TA Chilipa previously prohibited their wives from joining savings groups or running businesses are now supporting their wives to do so.” FGD
GVH Jali TA Mwambo**

Men became more supportive because it is through these groups that women shifted from being financial dependents of men to contributors of various programs of households such as buying farm inputs and financing business that the home can be benefiting from.

However, there is still resistance from a few men who do not support women to join such groups even when their wives are willing to join.

“I want to join a VSLA because it helps, households get help from places like VSLAs....when you are stranded and you need school fees, you ask the group and get the money but my husband wants us to be struggling.”

This shows that there is still more to be done in terms of sensitizing the community on the benefits of joining VSLA. There is also need to address the resistance that comes from the thought of creating financial burdens especially when men do not have any reliable source of funds.

4.4.Barriers to women participation in leadership positions

Women face multiple barriers to participating in leadership positions, many of which are deeply rooted in cultural and religious norms. One significant challenge is self-doubt, where societal expectations and long-held beliefs make women question their own abilities. This internalized doubt prevents them from seeing themselves as capable of assuming leadership roles. In addition, jealousy from both men and other women can act as a deterrent. Some men fear that their wives, if they join VSLA groups or take on leadership positions, may be influenced or "taken" by other men. In one extreme case, a gender champion's marriage ended because her husband could not handle his jealousy over her increased community engagement.

Fear is another powerful barrier, as many women worry about making mistakes in leadership roles and the possible negative consequences of those errors. This fear often results in hesitancy to pursue leadership opportunities. Furthermore, exclusion by men remains a problem in some areas where men deliberately retain leadership positions for themselves, largely because of the perceived benefits that come with these roles, including power and resources. Lastly, spousal pressure can prevent women from taking on leadership roles, as some are forced to choose between their marriage and their aspirations. Husbands, concerned about infidelity or the ability of their wives to manage household responsibilities alongside leadership duties, discourage or outright forbid them from pursuing such roles. These factors create a complex environment in which women face both internal and external challenges in breaking into leadership.

Focus Area 5: GBV Prevention and Response

Gender-based violence (GBV) remains a significant challenge that undermines the well-being, safety, and participation of individuals, especially women and girls. In the context of the *Titukulane* project, addressing GBV is crucial for advancing gender equality and ensuring that women, men, and youth can fully engage in community life. GBV, particularly in rural areas, not only affects individuals but also has ripple effects across families and communities, perpetuating cycles of poverty and inequality.

Titukulane has integrated GBV prevention and response mechanisms into its activities, aiming to create a safer and more equitable environment for all. By promoting awareness, encouraging reporting, and involving both men and youth in GBV interventions, the project seeks to address this critical issue. The 2022 Gender Outcome Mapping revealed significant strides in community engagement around GBV, but persistent challenges—such as cultural norms and fears of losing marriages—continue to inhibit progress, especially when it comes to women reporting violence.

Key Findings

In response to these findings, the 2024 Outcome Harvesting exercise was conducted to assess the current status of GBV prevention and response, with a focus on the community's evolving attitudes toward GBV, the role of men and youth, and the overall effectiveness of the project's interventions.

Then: In 2022, women had gained access to GBV information and services, but many were still hesitant to report GBV incidents due to fear of losing their marriage or community backlash. Men had shown some engagement, particularly in resolving domestic disputes without violence, but broader community involvement remained limited. Youth, particularly through youth clubs and peer educators, were increasingly vocal in speaking out against GBV.

Now: By 2024, there has been observable progress in community attitudes toward GBV. More women are speaking out and reporting GBV cases, with increased trust in the systems put in place, such as community-based reporting structures and police services. Men have also become more active in sharing GBV information at community meetings, with 83% now resolving domestic disputes without violence. However, cultural barriers still exist, with women continuing to face challenges in reporting violence from their husbands due to the potential social fallout. Moreover, youth, especially male youth, are taking a more proactive role in preventing GBV by participating in youth clubs and other GBV-related activities.

Men, particularly in matrilineal settings, have started to share their experiences of violence, though many hesitate to report due to societal pressures to appear strong. This highlights that GBV affects all genders, underscoring the need for safe spaces where men can seek help.

Youth, especially young men, are becoming more proactive in preventing GBV through youth clubs, which play a key role in educating peers, fostering healthier relationships, and encouraging open discussions.

5.1. Access to GBV Information and Services

In 2022, many women had some access to GBV information and services, although there was a clear need for improvement. The current findings suggest progress, with women demonstrating a better understanding of different types of GBV, including economic violence and emotional abuse. For instance, one participant noted:

“Gender-based violence (GBV) refers to situations where there is a lack of peace in a household, often resulting in one person being forced to do things against their will. GBV arises from disagreements between a man and a woman. For instance, a man might have extramarital affairs and neglect his responsibilities at home, such as leaving his wife without food.” - GBV Survivor, GVH Nikisi, TA Chilipa

However, despite this increased awareness, a significant challenge remains: many women still hesitate to report GBV incidents, particularly those involving their husbands, due to fear of losing their marriage. This barrier was also prominent in the 2022 findings.

Men's Involvement in GBV Prevention

The 2022 mapping highlighted that men were actively resolving domestic disputes without violence but were less engaged in broader community efforts to address GBV. The current data reveals that while men continue to show progress within their households, their involvement in community-wide GBV prevention remains limited. For example, one respondent shared:

"Men resolve domestic disputes without violence, but they are not as involved in community discussions on GBV." – FGD, TA Namavi

This ongoing trend indicates a need for more targeted efforts to involve men in leadership roles within community GBV initiatives.

Women's Voice and Reporting of GBV

The 2022 findings indicated that while women were beginning to speak out and report GBV cases, there was still significant reluctance due to fear of social stigma and divorce. The current data shows that this hesitation persists, with many women still choosing not to report GBV to avoid the risk of marital dissolution. As expressed by one participant:

"There is also the fear of losing the marriage if I report this my marriage will end; it's better to just be and still be married." – FGD, GVH Sonthe, TA Chilipa

The 2024 annual survey data reveals that these fears remain pervasive. Specifically, 16% of women reported experiencing GBV in the last 12 months, with psychological abuse affecting over half (51%) of respondents, and economic abuse impacting 36.1%. These figures suggest that emotional and economic forms of abuse are widely experienced, but they often go unreported due to the perceived consequences within family and social structures. The social stigma associated with reporting non-physical abuse, such as psychological or economic violence, reinforces the hesitancy observed in both 2022 and 2024 findings.

These consistent findings underscore the importance of implementing additional strategies within Titukulane to support women more effectively, through community sensitization and accessible support systems that prioritize survivors' safety and dignity.

5.2. Youth Engagement in GBV Prevention

In 2022, female youth were actively accessing GBV information and services, with some taking a stand against GBV. The recent findings suggest that these trends have persisted, with youth clubs and youth champions playing vital roles in maintaining awareness. However, there remains a gap in the involvement of male youth in GBV prevention, with some still not fully engaged in community activities aimed at addressing GBV. It was also noted that some of the GBV perpetrators (based on the sample of GBV survivors) were also the youth. Particularly in TA Chilipa, Mangochi, participants from several separate

interviews indicated that the youth, specifically those who are married, in the area were not on board with the gender equality interventions.

“...but in this area[GVH], it is mostly the youth who are not doing anything to do with gender equality, the older generation is adopting what is taught [by the gender champions], but [not] these youth...” – EV Survivor, GVH Sonthe, TA Chilipa

This indicates an ongoing need for inclusive approaches that encourage greater participation from both male and female youth.

5.3. Persistent Barriers and Challenges

Despite the progress made, several challenges continue to hinder GBV prevention and response efforts. Underreporting remains a significant issue, driven by cultural norms, fear of retaliation, and lack of trust in authorities. The current findings also reveal confusion about reporting mechanisms in certain areas, such as TA Chikowi, where the roles between traditional leaders and community volunteers appear unclear, leading to gaps in support for survivors. The Group Village Head (GVH) in TA Chikowi, Zomba, mentioned that GBV cases are reported to traditional leaders and the Village Disaster Risk Management Committee (VDRMC) chairperson. This is unusual, given that the VDRMC's mandate is typically focused on disaster risk management, not GBV.

The omission of Community Victim Support Units (CVSUs) and gender or male champions in this process suggests a disconnect between traditional leadership and the community volunteers tasked with addressing GBV. Furthermore, the GVH indicated that unresolved cases are referred to organizations for assistance, rather than being escalated to the police, which would be the expected protocol within the government structure. This highlights the need for clearer delineation of roles and better coordination among all stakeholders involved in GBV prevention and response.

Besides, while gender champions have been instrumental in promoting gender equality, there is a need for better coordination and support to ensure they can effectively fulfill their roles.

The comparison between the 2022 and 2024 findings highlights both progress and areas needing further attention. Improvements in women's access to GBV information and increased awareness among men and youth are evident, yet challenges such as underreporting, cultural barriers, and limited community engagement persist. Sustained efforts in sensitization, support for gender champions, and targeted interventions for men and youth are essential to building on the progress made in GBV prevention and response within the *Titukulane* project.

5.4. Understanding and Definition of GBV

In the communities visited, there was a broad understanding of GBV that extended beyond physical violence to include economic and psychological abuse. The data revealed that many participants

recognized various forms of GBV, indicating a shift in awareness likely influenced by ongoing community sensitization efforts. For instance, one participant defined domestic violence as not just physical abuse but also certain behaviors that negatively impact another person's well-being:

“Domestic violence is not only beating someone but also certain behaviors being done towards someone.” - IDI GBV Survivor, GVH Mponda TA Chiunda

This understanding is crucial because it shows that the community is beginning to recognize the more insidious forms of GBV, which often go unreported due to their subtle nature. Another respondent highlighted how GBV could stem from relational imbalances, such as a man neglecting his household responsibilities due to extramarital affairs, which reflects the complex and varied nature of GBV within these communities:

“GBV can arise from disagreements between a man and a woman. For instance, a man might have extramarital affairs and neglect his responsibilities at home such as leaving his wife without food.” - IDI GVH Nikisi, TA Chilipa

This expanded definition and understanding of GBV indicate progress in the community's conceptualization of violence, suggesting that the interventions by *Titukulane* and partners have been effective in broadening the community's awareness of what constitutes GBV.

5.5. Reporting and Addressing GBV

Awareness of Reporting Mechanisms

The outcome harvesting revealed a varied understanding and awareness of the mechanisms available for reporting gender-based violence (GBV) and economic violence within the communities. Commonly recognized channels include the police, traditional leaders, community mediators (*nkhalapakati*), and traditional marriage counsellors (*Ankhoswe*). Many community members are aware of these mechanisms and make use of them when needed. However, the effectiveness and adherence to these pathways are inconsistent, often due to a lack of clarity about the roles and limits of various mediators.

For example, some traditional leaders expressed concerns about bypassing the established reporting protocols. One local leader noted:

“People in this area report cases of GBV or EV to me as a chief and also to the GVH and police. Most cases of GBV go straight to the police and when people go straight to the police without my knowledge, I sometimes see this as defiance.” - KII, GVH Bwanado, TA Mlumbe

This reflects a potential gap in communication and coordination between community members and traditional authorities, which could hinder effective resolution and support for GBV survivors.

Traditional mechanisms, often respected and trusted within communities, play a crucial role in conflict resolution. The advice and guidance offered by traditional leaders typically lead to apologies and reconciliation. Key reporting channels for GBV incidents include the Victim Support Unit (VSU), Community Victim Support Unit (CVSU), police, traditional leaders (amfumu), and human-rights-focused organizations like Youth Net and Counselling (YONECO), Women's Legal Resource Centre (WOLEC), and Islamic Relief, which has established a committee for receiving grievances.

Despite the availability of these mechanisms, community members often prefer the CSVU due to the familiarity and contextual understanding of its members. However, trust in *Ankhoswe* is not universal. In some cases, *Ankhoswe* are perceived as biased, particularly when they favor their relatives. This can discourage survivors from reporting violence through these traditional mediators.

One survivor's experience highlights both the challenges and potential benefits of involving *Ankhoswe*:

“I was a victim of violence.... My husband would only give me money for necessities, and I would not even know where he kept the rest. Sometimes, he would walk around with it. Once he told me that as he was crossing the river, the money got washed away, which also gave us problems. So, I went to report. The Ankhoswe from his family was harsh and said that as a wife I am only supposed to receive what he [my husband] is offering and ask for what was necessary. So, they debated with my Ankhoswe who said that as a family we need to be doing things together. His Ankhoswe eventually agreed, and my husband learned a few things from there, and things have changed.” – IDI Survivor, GVH Mponda, TA Chiunda

This account underscores the complexity of relying on traditional mediation and the need for more reliable and unbiased support structures for survivors of GBV.

Effectiveness of Reporting Mechanisms

There have been positive strides in improving the reporting and addressing of GBV cases within the communities, largely due to the efforts of gender champions and community action groups. These groups have been instrumental in educating the community and providing a support system for victims of GBV.

The data suggests that these interventions have led to a noticeable decrease in GBV cases, as the community becomes more aware of the consequences of such behavior:

“Now there is a decrease because when the gender champions are moving around in our homes, they are teaching us some things that we were doing ignorantly.” - FGD GVH Sonthe, TA Chilipa

The presence of gender champions has also facilitated the creation of a safer environment for victims to report incidents of violence, knowing that there is a structured support system in place.

Support Systems

Traditional marriage counsellors, such as *Ankhoswe*, continue to play a crucial role in resolving GBV cases within families. However, there has been a shift towards resolving issues internally within the family, reflecting a growing confidence in handling disputes without external intervention. This change is indicative of the community's evolving approach to conflict resolution, emphasizing the importance of education and empowerment in reducing reliance on traditional mediators:

***“We now resolve our issues in the family amongst ourselves.” - Model couple
GVH Ntologo, TA Malemia***



Figure 21 Photovoice image showing a couple with their Ankhoswe in the middle

“When I was being deprived of conjugal right, I had to engage the third person, the Ankhoswe. The Ankhoswe brought us together and we sat down and amend our ways. Things changed in our marriage”.

This shift suggests that the community is moving towards more autonomous conflict resolution practices, which may contribute to longer-lasting changes in behavior and attitudes towards GBV.

Challenges in Reporting:

One of the primary challenges in addressing GBV within these communities is the significant barriers that hinder women from reporting cases. Economic dependency on their spouses often leaves women vulnerable, as they fear the repercussions of reporting, such as being abandoned and left without financial support. This fear is deeply ingrained and compounded by social stigma, where the community might view a woman who reports GBV as responsible for the breakdown of her marriage:

“The main barrier is poverty. So when you face such violence you are afraid of reporting such issues because you think of what will happen to you if the spouse abandons you.” -FGD GVH Ntologo, TA Malemia

This highlights the intersection between poverty and GBV, where economic constraints play a significant role in silencing victims, thereby perpetuating the cycle of violence.

Community Attitudes towards GBV

Cultural and Social Norms:

Cultural and social norms continue to influence how GBV is perceived and addressed within these communities. In matrilineal settings, for instance, men often feel the need to overcompensate to gain approval from the wife’s family, which can sometimes lead to stress and subsequent GBV. The matrilineal system culture, where men live in their wife's village, has historically placed additional pressure on men, influencing their behavior in ways that may contribute to GBV:

“...in the past due to the matrilineal system, since women control resources men were being forced to overwork for approval from the wife’s family.” - IDI GVH Nikisi, TA Chilipa

These ingrained cultural practices underscore the complex interplay between traditional norms and GBV, suggesting that efforts to reduce GBV must also address these deeper societal structures.



Figure 22 Photovoice image showing their matrimonial bed covered in a mosquito net

“This bedroom reminds me of the violence that I faced, my wife accused me of mismanaging money, so she was trying to get it all and was not allowing me to enjoy the conjugal rights like a couple for over a month to punish me. I felt very restricted and powerless”.



Figure 23 Photovoice image showing a household's previous and current dwelling houses.

“I took this picture [on the left] to represent the time things were okay in our marriage, before the new house was constructed”

“I took this picture to represent the onset of the violence that I have been facing, all was well before we had some money, and we were living in the old house. After building this house I was deprived the conjugal rights by my wife”.

These narratives reveal the complexities of GBV, where power dynamics, economic shifts, and emotional manipulation can fuel conflict and violence, even against men. Addressing GBV requires acknowledging these nuances and the fact that violence can manifest in various forms, impacting all members of the household.

Shift in Attitudes:

The interventions by *Titukulane* have begun to shift these entrenched attitudes, with more men recognizing their role in preventing and responding to GBV. The data indicates an increasing willingness among men to participate in household duties and support their wives, reflecting a broader acceptance of gender equality principles:

“Men are helping us do things we were doing on our own.” - Transect Walk, GVH Jekete, TA Ntonda

This shift in attitude is crucial, as it demonstrates the community's growing recognition of the importance of shared responsibilities and the active role men can play in fostering a violence-free environment. The change in behavior is a positive indicator of the potential long-term impact of the gender-focused interventions under *Titukulane*.

GBV Prevention Initiatives and Their Effectiveness

The GBV prevention initiatives under the *Titukulane* project have led to notable successes, particularly through the active involvement of gender champions and model couples. These individuals have become vital in promoting gender equality and reducing violence within their communities. Their engagement has resulted in significant behavioral changes among community members, as illustrated by the experiences of survivors who have benefited from these interventions. For example, one survivor from GVH Mponda in TA Chiunda shared how the gender dialogue sessions dramatically transformed her husband's approach to decision-making:

“After those meetings I saw a huge change in my husband. Now he does not make decisions without me.” -IDI Survivor, GVH Mponda, TA Chiunda

This quote underscores the impact that targeted GBV prevention initiatives can have on shifting household dynamics, leading to more equitable decision-making and a reduction in domestic violence.

In discussing the successes of GBV prevention initiatives, it is also important to highlight not only the stories of change but also the tangible evidence of physical violence and its impact on survivors. The photographs below show the real consequences of domestic violence. These visuals reinforce the seriousness of GBV and the need for continued and effective prevention strategies.



Figure 24 Photovoice images showing a door frame that the husband broke while beating the survivor in the house, and a solar panel that he broke on the same day and the glass was shattered completely

“...This door frame was damaged during the incident”

“after we fought in the house, he then came outside and broke the solar panel”

These examples emphasize the critical role of gender champions and model couples in promoting non-violent and equitable household practices. However, the contrasting experiences of nearby households

in TA Chilipa reveal significant gaps in the intervention efforts of these champions, Community Victim Support Units (CVSUs), and the police. In the case depicted in the photographs above, despite the physical evidence of extreme violence, the case was reported only to the gender champion and was not escalated to the CVSU. The survivor's body language when she described the photographs indicates that there is a need for the issue to be escalated further. This survivor also requires psychosocial support, which the CVSU is trained to provide but did not in this case.

There were multiple instances where survivors did not report receiving any support from the gender champion, even though these individuals had been identified as survivors by the champions themselves within their areas of work. This reveals a gap in the intervention process, indicating that some survivors may be falling through the cracks despite being within the purview of the project's support mechanisms.

Community awareness about the existence and role of CVSUs appears to be limited. For example, during a focus group discussion (FGD) in TA Chilipa, one participant had to explain to the group what the CVSU is. Similarly, in TA Kuntumanji, only one out of 12 FGD participants were aware of the CVSU's existence.

These findings highlight the need to clarify and strengthen the roles of gender champions, CVSUs, and model couples to ensure more robust community engagement and interconnectedness, ultimately leading to better prevention and response outcomes.

Community Engagement

Community engagement has been a cornerstone of GBV prevention under *Titukulane*. Community-wide campaigns and interface meetings have played an essential role in raising awareness about GBV and mobilizing collective action against it. The involvement of traditional leaders, such as chiefs, has been particularly effective in ensuring that these campaigns resonate with the broader community. The traditional practices that once perpetuated GBV are being re-evaluated and reformed through these interventions. A model couple from GVH Jali in TA Mwambo shared how community directives are now being embraced to support environmental conservation, a shift that mirrors broader changes in community attitudes towards collective responsibility, including in the context of GBV:

“There are ways that we used to follow. For example, when the chief calls, he tells his subjects that we should plant trees.” -Model Couple, GVH Jali, TA Mwambo

This example highlights the importance of integrating GBV prevention within broader community development activities, making these initiatives more holistic and sustainable.

The influence of programs like *Titukulane* has been significant in promoting gender equality and reducing instances of GBV in the communities. Many participants attributed positive changes in household dynamics to the interventions brought by the project, particularly the work of gender champions. These champions have played a critical role in raising awareness and promoting behavioral change, as highlighted by one participant:

“We have been experiencing these forms of violence in this community but thanks to Titukulane for coming with their interventions. Families are becoming stable. Through the gender champions that were given to us by Titukulane, many families are now doing things together such as farming.” -

FGD GVH Mtogolo TA Malemia

The role of gender champions was frequently mentioned as a driving force behind the behavioral changes observed in many households. These champions were instrumental in educating the community about gender equality, which led to increased awareness of rights and responsibilities within the household. The following quote exemplifies the impact of these interventions:

“The male champions have different subjects which they would come to teach us through dialogues with the community including GBV and economic violence.” - FGD GVH Ntogo, TA Malemia



Figure 25 Photovoice image showing an uncompleted brick house.

“About two or three years ago, I reported my husband to the gender champion. The champion sat him down and I have no idea what they discussed. But after those meetings, I saw a huge change in my husband. Now, he does not make decisions without me. Since then, we have grown crops and after the sale of crops, we sat down and started to build this house. Construction of this house started last year [2023].”

Furthermore, the community’s response to gender awareness meetings indicated that these initiatives were effective in reducing occurrences of GBV. Participants noted that the knowledge gained from these

meetings helped them resolve issues within their households, reducing the need to escalate conflicts to traditional mediators:

“Yes, the changes have been there because of the knowledge we have gained through Titukulane. Now we do things together. We have only gone to our Ankhoswe for advice once because we now resolve our issues in the family amongst ourselves.” - Model couple GVH Ntologo, TA Malemia.

This shift towards internal resolution of conflicts suggests a deeper understanding and application of gender equality principles, indicating that the community is becoming more self-reliant and proactive in addressing GBV. The role of gender champions in facilitating these changes cannot be overstated, as they have helped communities move from reactive to preventive measures in dealing with GBV.

The comparison between the 2022 Gender Outcome Mapping and the 2024 Outcome Harvesting shows notable progress in GBV prevention and response. While cultural norms and fear of social backlash still hinder some women from reporting GBV, more women now trust the community structures and police services. Men and male youth have increased their involvement, with 83% resolving domestic disputes without violence and youth clubs actively promoting GBV awareness. However, persistent challenges remain, particularly in underreporting and the need for clearer reporting structures. Sustained efforts are crucial to fully dismantle the barriers to gender equality.

Recommendations

As *Titukulane* concludes, these recommendations address critical areas for sustaining and scaling gender equity and resilience in Malawian communities. The Ministry of Gender is urged to prioritize scaling up gender dialogue sessions across all five focus areas of this outcome harvesting. Throughout *Titukulane*, gender and male champions have proven instrumental in shifting mindsets; thus, establishing them as a formal entity within these dialogues is essential for social behavior change impacting household resilience and livelihoods.

1. Addressing Gender Norms in Intra-Household Decision-Making

In both matrilineal and *Chitengwa* systems, traditional norms continue to influence decision-making over key household resources. While joint decision-making has improved in areas like financial resources, cultural dynamics often leave men's roles diminished in matrilineal systems, creating tensions and affecting household cohesion. In some cases, men voiced frustration over reduced control, impacting their investment in family resources. Addressing these dynamics deliberately through gender dialogues

can support equitable decision-making and mitigate burdens on women who may have become sole earners.

- **Implementation:** Establish gender dialogue sessions led by male and gender champions, focusing on building shared decision-making roles in culturally sensitive ways. These dialogues should provide men a platform to share experiences and work towards balanced contributions, fostering resilience within households.
- **Responsible Bodies:** Ministry of Gender, with support from traditional leaders and local NGOs.

2. Expanding Gender Dialogues with Youth-Focused Engagement

Youth have shown receptiveness to gender equality, with lower instances of resistance to workload sharing and gender equity principles. However, challenges remain, not exclusively but especially in deeply patriarchal communities. Expanding youth-specific dialogues can harness their openness, ensuring early adoption of gender-equitable practices and addressing issues such as GBV and SRHR within this demographic.

- **Implementation:** Create youth-focused gender dialogue sessions in collaboration with youth networks, gender champions, and CVSU representatives. Integrate these sessions with youth community structures to maintain sustainability, with targeted discussions across all five focus areas.
- **Responsible Bodies:** Ministry of Youth, Ministry of Gender, gender champions, and youth network organizations.

3. Establishing and Expanding the Role of Model Couples

- **Context:** Model couples have proven effective in influencing peers towards equitable workload sharing and joint decision-making, particularly in TAs like Chiunda. However, inconsistent selection of model couples across communities has sometimes resulted in couples who do not fully embody Titukulane's values, risking the initiative's credibility. Standardizing criteria for selecting model couples and defining their mentoring role will ensure they serve as effective, credible role models.
- **Implementation:**
 - Develop and distribute a standardized rubric for model couple selection, clearly defining criteria that align with gender equity goals.
 - Train model couples on their mentoring role to guide other households on gender-equitable practices, with active coordination from gender champions. This approach will support a community-wide impact, ensuring model couples not only exemplify but also promote positive change in workload sharing and decision-making.

- **Responsible Bodies:** Ministry of Gender, district councils, gender champions, and NGOs involved in gender interventions.

4. Strengthening GBV Prevention and Response Mechanisms

Cases of extreme violence were reported but often went unaddressed by CVSUs, despite being known by gender champions. The disconnection between these groups has led to inadequate support for survivors. Furthermore, while some perpetrators received counseling, survivors often lacked psychosocial support, raising questions about the efficiency of existing mechanisms.

- **Implementation:** Strengthen collaboration between CVSUs and gender champions through joint meetings on case management. Establish clear follow-up protocols to ensure that survivors are linked to psychosocial support resources and are continually supported. Regularly evaluate cases to ensure that all interventions address survivor needs comprehensively.
- **Responsible Bodies:** Ministry of Gender, CVSUs, traditional leaders, and community-based NGOs.

5. Enhancing Women's Access to Vocational Training and Business Mentorship

Although vocational skills empower women economically, many programs focus on youth, excluding older women who equally benefit from skill-building. Additionally, high-profit trades remain dominated by men, creating barriers for women. Mentorship from experienced female entrepreneurs can build women's self-efficacy in such sectors, facilitating their entry into high-value trades.

- **Implementation:** Partner with TEVETA to expand vocational programs that are inclusive of older women. Establish a mentorship initiative through the Ministry of Trade, linking women in small businesses to female mentors in high-value trades. These mentors can provide practical insights and support, helping mentees overcome cultural and operational barriers.
- **Responsible Bodies:** Ministry of Gender (vocational inclusion), Ministry of Trade (mentorship), TEVETA, and private sector partners.

6. Improving Access to Financial Resources for Women

While VSLAs have enabled access to financial resources, limited capital restricts women's ability to scale their businesses. Many continue to rely on small loans, confining their ventures to petty trading. Developing larger credit products tailored to rural women's needs could unlock their potential for broader enterprise.

- **Implementation:** Collaborate with financial institutions to develop credit products specifically for rural women, designed to support medium-scale enterprises. Link these credit options with vocational training programs to provide holistic support for women-led business development.
- **Responsible Bodies:** Financial institutions, Ministry of Finance through its Economic Planning & Development Department, and NGOs.

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Annexes

Annex 1: Gender Outcome Harvesting Framework

Focus Area	Indicator/Issue	Explanation of the Issue	Interventions Since Outcome Mapping	Outcome Harvesting Objective	Methodologies	Learning Documentation
Gender Division of Labor and Workload Sharing	Women's Engagement in Agriculture Men's Support in Domestic Roles	<p>Women increasingly requested assistance and encouraged men to support with household chores, leading to them finding more time to rest and care for children due to a reduced labor burden.</p> <p>More men assisted in both farming activities and household chores, including traditionally viewed women's work like child feeding and housekeeping.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gender dialogues promoting shared household responsibilities. 	Measure changes in the division of labor within households and the extent of men's participation in traditionally female tasks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) to gather qualitative data on changes in household labor division. - Transect Walks to observe labor distribution in community settings. - Photovoice to capture visual evidence of labor-sharing in households. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Case studies documenting shifts in labor distribution. - Final report analyzing changes in gender roles and workload sharing. - Photographic evidence from Photovoice sessions showcasing labor-sharing.
Intra-household Decision-Making	Control Over Nutritional Decisions Participation in Financial Decisions	<p>Women gained more control over decisions related to the purchase of nutritious foods and the allocation of food within the home.</p> <p>While women participated more in financial decisions, cultural norms still limited their control over high-value assets like land and livestock, often requiring male consent for final decisions.</p>	<p>Community dialogue sessions with care groups beneficiary households and follow up on agreed actions on health and nutrition.. (Target for sessions may vary depending on main theme of dialogue, e.g. men only, men and women, grandparents only, women only)</p>	Assess the level of women's influence in household decision-making and identify any remaining barriers to equitable decision-making.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with traditional leaders and community members to assess decision-making patterns. - In-depth Interviews (IDIs) to explore individual experiences regarding control over resources. - FGDs to discuss changes in household decision-making. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Final report highlighting decision-making dynamics. Comparative analysis of decision-making power pre- and post-intervention. - Documented stories of change illustrating shifts in financial and nutritional decision-making.
Access to and Control Over Resources	Women in Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs) Ownership and Management of Resources	<p>Women fully participated in VSLAs, enhancing their access to financial resources.</p> <p>Despite progress, women's control over the use of resources and valuable assets like land remained varied, with many still needing male approval to make significant financial decisions.</p>	Community Gender Dialogue sessions with men and community leaders (religious leaders and other influencers)	Evaluate women's participation in VSLAs and their control over financial resources and assets, identifying ongoing challenges in resource management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - FGDs to assess women's experiences with VSLAs and their control over resources. - Transect Walks to observe resource allocation and land use. - KIIs with local leaders to understand barriers to resource ownership. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analysis of VSLA participation trends and resource management. - Case studies on women's control over assets. - Visual documentation of resource use through Photovoice.

Focus Area	Indicator/Issue	Explanation of the Issue	Interventions Since Outcome Mapping	Outcome Harvesting Objective	Methodologies	Learning Documentation
Participation in Leadership and Public Life	Women in Leadership Roles Public Speaking and Influence	<p>There was an increase in women taking up leadership positions, but they were often in less influential roles within community structures.</p> <p>Women's participation in public speaking and their influence in community decisions had improved, yet significant cultural hurdles remained, particularly in male-dominated settings.</p>	<p>Leadership and assertiveness training for youth and women leaders</p> <p>Reflection meetings with community leaders', community structures and duty bearers on women and youth leadership in producer group activities</p>	Examine the extent and impact of women's leadership roles and public participation, identifying both progress and remaining obstacles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - KIIs with community leaders to explore perceptions of women's leadership. - FGDs to discuss women's roles in public life and decision-making. - Photovoice to document women's participation in leadership and public speaking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Documentation of women's leadership journeys through narrative reports. - Thematic analysis of barriers to leadership roles. - Case studies highlighting successful women leaders and their impact on community decisions.
Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response	Community Attitudes Towards GBV Support Systems for GBV	<p>Community responses to gender-based violence gradually improved, with more cases being reported and discussed openly.</p> <p>Men and youth were more involved in speaking out against GBV and supporting community efforts to address and prevent violence, although there were noted discrepancies in how deeply these behaviors were embedded.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community-wide GBV awareness campaigns. Interface meetings with influencers, community men and women on GBV from the Social Analysis Action (SAA) dialogues 	Assess the effectiveness of GBV prevention and response mechanisms, focusing on involvement of men and youth in GBV initiatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - FGDs to explore community attitudes towards GBV and changes over time. - KIIs with religious leaders and police to assess support systems for GBV survivors. - Photovoice to document community efforts and attitudes towards GBV prevention. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analysis of community attitudes towards GBV and shifts in support structures. - Case studies on successful GBV prevention initiatives. - Visual documentation of community-based GBV experiences and prevention efforts through Photovoice.

Annex 2: Data Collection Tools

A. Key Informant Interview (KII) Guide

Introduction

- 1. Welcome and Introductions:**
 - Welcome the participant and thank them for agreeing to the interview.
 - Introduce yourself and the research team.
 - Explain the purpose of the interview and the topic of interest.
 - Inform the participant about the duration of the interview (approximately 1 hour).
 - Ensure confidentiality and explain that their responses will be anonymized.
- 2. Ground Rules:**
 - Encourage the participant to speak freely and share their honest opinions.
 - Assure the participant that there are no right or wrong answers, and all viewpoints are valuable.
 - Explain that the interview will be recorded for accuracy but will remain confidential.

Interview Questions

Background and Role

- 1. Role and Responsibilities:**
 - Can you please describe your role in the community and your responsibilities?
 - How long have you been in this role?
- 2. Relevance to Gender Issues:**
 - How does your role relate to gender issues within the community?
 - What specific gender-related initiatives or programs have you been involved with?

Focus Area 1: Gender Division of Labor and Workload Sharing

- 1. Understanding Traditional Roles:**
 - How were household chores and agricultural tasks traditionally divided between men and women in your community?
 - What cultural norms or beliefs influenced this division of labor?
- 2. Changes and Impacts:**
 - Have you observed any changes in the division of labor between men and women recently? If so, what changes have you noticed?
 - What factors have contributed to these changes?
 - How have these changes impacted families and the community?
- 3. Challenges and Solutions:**
 - What challenges have arisen from changes in the division of labor?

- How are these challenges being addressed within the community?

Focus Area 2: Intra-household Decision-Making

1. Decision-Making Processes:

- How were household financial and resource decisions traditionally made in your community?
- Who typically had the final say in these decisions?

2. Recent Changes:

- Have there been any changes in how household decisions are made? If so, what are these changes?
- What has driven these changes in decision-making processes?

3. Influence and Participation:

- How has the participation of women in household decision-making changed over time?
- What impacts have these changes had on households and the community?

Focus Area 3: Access to and Control Over Resources

1. Traditional Access and Control:

- How did men and women traditionally access and control resources such as land, livestock, and money?
- What cultural norms influenced this access and control?

2. Changes in Access and Control:

- Have there been any changes in how men and women access and control resources? What are these changes?
- What factors have contributed to these changes?

3. Impacts of Changes:

- How have changes in access to and control over resources affected men and women in the community?
- What benefits or challenges have arisen from these changes?

Focus Area 4: Participation in Leadership and Public Life

1. Traditional Leadership Roles:

- What roles did men and women traditionally hold in community leadership and public decision-making?
- What factors influenced these roles?

2. Recent Changes:

- Have you observed any changes in the participation of women in leadership and public life? What are these changes?
- What has driven these changes?

3. Impacts and Challenges:

- How have changes in leadership participation impacted the community?
- What challenges have women faced in taking on leadership roles, and how are these being addressed?

Focus Area 5: Impact of *Titukulane's* Interventions

1. Perceptions of Interventions:

- How have *Titukulane's* gender inclusion interventions been received by the community?
- What specific interventions have had the most significant impact on gender dynamics?

2. Changes and Outcomes:

- How have *Titukulane's* interventions influenced gender roles, decision-making, and access to resources?
- Can you provide examples or stories of change influenced by the project?

3. Sustainability and Future Directions:

- What changes do you believe are sustainable beyond the lifespan of the project?
- What additional support or interventions are needed to further improve gender dynamics in the community?

Closing

1. Additional Comments:

- Is there anything else you would like to share about gender roles, decision-making, resource control, leadership, or the impact of *Titukulane's* interventions?

2. Thank You:

- Thank the participant for their time and valuable insights.
- Explain the next steps in the research and how the findings will be used.

B. Transect Walk Guide

Introduction

1. Welcome and Introductions:

- Welcome the participants and thank them for agreeing to join the transect walk.
- Introduce yourself and the research team.
- Explain the purpose of the transect walk and the topic of interest.
- Inform participants about the duration of the walk (approximately 1-2 hours).
- Ensure confidentiality and explain that their observations and comments will be anonymized.

2. Ground Rules:

- Encourage participants to observe carefully and share their honest observations.
- Remind participants to respect each other's opinions and speak one at a time when discussing observations.
- Explain that notes will be taken and photographs might be captured for documentation purposes, but identities will remain confidential.

Walk Structure

1. Starting Point:

- Begin the walk from a central location within the community, such as a marketplace, school, or community center.
- Explain the route and key stops along the way.

2. Observation Focus Areas:

- Gender Division of Labor and Workload Sharing
- Intra-household Decision-Making
- Access to and Control Over Resources
- Participation in Leadership and Public Life

Detailed Guide

Focus Area 1: Gender Division of Labor and Workload Sharing

1. Observation Points:

- Observe and discuss areas where community members engage in daily activities such as cooking, fetching water, farming, and child-rearing.
- Note the division of labor between men and women in these activities.

2. Discussion Questions:

- What activities are men and women engaged in at different times of the day?
- How has the division of labor changed over time? What factors have influenced these changes?

- What challenges or benefits have arisen from these changes?
- 3. **Documentation:**
 - Take notes and photographs (with consent) of key activities and locations that illustrate the division of labor and workload sharing.

Focus Area 2: Intra-household Decision-Making

1. **Observation Points:**
 - Visit households or community meeting points where financial and resource decisions are commonly made.
 - Observe interactions and discussions related to decision-making processes.
2. **Discussion Questions:**
 - Who is involved in making decisions about household finances and resources?
 - How have decision-making processes changed over time?
 - What factors have contributed to these changes?
3. **Documentation:**
 - Take notes and photographs (with consent) of interactions and settings that illustrate decision-making processes within households.

Focus Area 3: Access to and Control Over Resources

1. **Observation Points:**
 - Visit key resources in the community such as farmland, water points, marketplaces, and savings groups.
 - Observe who has access to and control over these resources.
2. **Discussion Questions:**
 - How is access to and control over resources such as land, water, and money distributed between men and women?
 - What changes have you observed in access and control over these resources?
 - What factors have contributed to these changes?
3. **Documentation:**
 - Take notes and photographs (with consent) of key resources and interactions that illustrate access and control dynamics.

Focus Area 4: Participation in Leadership and Public Life

1. **Observation Points:**
 - Visit community meeting places such as village councils, development committees, and public forums.
 - Observe the participation of men and women in leadership roles and public decision-making.
2. **Discussion Questions:**
 - How are men and women participating in leadership and public decision-making?
 - What changes have you observed in women's participation in leadership roles?

- What challenges or benefits have arisen from these changes?
- 3. **Documentation:**
 - Take notes and photographs (with consent) of leadership meetings and public forums that illustrate participation dynamics.

Impact of Titukulane's Interventions

1. **Observation Points:**
 - Visit sites where Titukulane's interventions are being implemented, such as training centers, savings groups, and agricultural projects.
 - Observe the impact of these interventions on gender roles and community dynamics.
2. **Discussion Questions:**
 - How have Titukulane's interventions influenced gender roles and dynamics in the community?
 - Can you provide examples or stories of change influenced by the project?
 - What additional support or interventions are needed to further improve gender dynamics in the community?
3. **Documentation:**
 - Take notes and photographs (with consent) of Titukulane intervention sites and activities that illustrate their impact.

Closing

1. **Additional Comments:**
 - Ask participants if they have any additional observations or comments about gender roles, decision-making, resource control, leadership, or the impact of Titukulane's interventions.
2. **Thank You:**
 - Thank the participants for their time and valuable insights.
 - Explain the next steps in the research and how the findings will be used.

Additional Notes

- **Facilitator:** Ensure to probe for more details when observations are brief or unclear.
- **Notetaker:** Take detailed notes and highlight key observations and quotes from participants.
- **Materials Needed:** Recording device, notepads, pens, consent forms, camera for documentation.

C. Semi-Structured Individual Interview Guide

Introduction: Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. Our conversation today aims to understand your experiences and perceptions regarding economic activities and intra-household dynamics, especially in relation to income-generating activities (IGAs) and the impact of *Titukulane's* interventions in your community. Please feel free to share as much or as little as you are comfortable with. Everything you share will remain confidential.

Warm-up Questions:

1. Could you tell me a little about your daily activities, especially those related to farming or income generation?
2. How do decisions about economic activities get made in your household?

Theme 1: Understanding and Perceptions of Violence

Definitions:

1. How would you define violence within a household context?
2. What does gender-based violence (GBV) mean to you? Is it something recognized in your community?
3. How would you define economic violence? Do you think it is a common issue in your community?

Theme 2: Experiences and Perceptions of Economic Violence Through Vignettes

Introduction to Vignettes: Now, I will share a few scenarios with you. I would like you to tell me what you think about each one and whether you consider it to be a form of violence.

Vignette A (Control Over Resources):

- Scenario: Imagine a situation where Patuma, who farms, is not allowed by her husband, Joni, to decide how the income from her crops is used. Joni takes all the money, saying it's for the best.
 - Do you think Joni's actions are a form of violence? Why or why not?
 - How common do you think this situation is in your community?
 - If Patuma were your friend, what advice would you give her?

Vignette B (Restriction of Opportunities):

- Scenario: Tadala is interested in joining a local women's savings group, but her partner, Jemusi, insists it's a waste of time that could be better spent at home.
 - What are your thoughts on Jemusi's perspective?
 - How might Tadala respond to assert her interest in joining the savings group, and what support would she need?

Vignette C (Misuse of VSLA Participation):

- Scenario: Jemusi refuses to join a VSLA, seeing it as unproductive. Instead, he has Tadala join, expecting her to hand over all earnings from the VSLA to him, claiming his initial investment.
 - Do you believe Jemusi's actions are fair or justified? Why or why not?
 - What impact might this have on Tadala's participation and benefits from the VSLA?

Vignette D (Economic Coercion by Family):

- Scenario: Tadala’s husband is away working in South Africa. After she sells her harvest, her in-laws, led by her mother-in-law, demand she sends the money to her husband, questioning her loyalty if she refuses.
 - Is this a form of support or pressure from the family? How should Tadala navigate this situation?
 - In this context, what does being a 'good wife' mean? Is it fair?

Vignette E (Economic Pressure from Husband):

- Scenario: Tadala, a member of a producer group, has had a bumper harvest. Her husband, who contributed financially to some of the farming inputs while working in another town, asks her to send most of the money realized from the sale back to him.
 - How do you perceive the husband's request? Is it fair or justified? Why or why not?
 - What impact might this have on Tadala's financial independence and household dynamics?

Theme 3: Reporting and Conflict Resolution

1. Are you aware of any mechanisms within your community or family for reporting economic violence? What are they?
2. Have you or someone you know ever tried to report economic violence? What was that experience like?
3. Do you feel that family members, like ankhoswe or mother-in-law, can assist in resolving these issues? How?

Theme 4: Impact of *Titukulane*'s Activities and the Role of Champions

1. From your experience or observation, how have *Titukulane*'s interventions influenced perceptions or experiences of economic violence?
2. How do male and gender champions contribute to addressing GBV and economic violence? Have their efforts been effective?
3. Have the gender dialogues and other interventions by *Titukulane* helped in increasing household income or improving economic decision-making?
4. Since the introduction of income-generating activities (IGAs) by *Titukulane*, have you seen an increase in your earnings? How has this affected your household?
5. Do you feel that there has been an increase or decrease in violence within the home since the start of the *Titukulane* interventions?

Closing Questions:

1. Reflecting on our conversation, what changes do you hope to see in your community regarding economic violence?
2. Is there anything else you'd like to share about your experiences or thoughts on how to better support victims of economic violence?

Closing Remarks: Your input today has been incredibly valuable, and we truly appreciate your openness. Thank you for contributing to this important discussion. Your experiences and insights will help us shape more effective interventions and support systems.

D. Participatory Community Sessions Semi-Structured Guide

Introduction: Thank you all for joining today's session. Our aim is to understand your perspectives and experiences regarding economic activities, intra-household dynamics, and the impact of community interventions such as those by *Titukulane*. Your contributions will help us improve our programs to better support our community. Please feel free to share openly, and remember that your input is valuable and confidential.

Session Structure:

1. **Welcome and Icebreaker**
2. **Understanding of Key Concepts**
3. **Vignette Discussions**
4. **Discussion on Reporting and Conflict Resolution**
5. **Impact of *Titukulane's* Interventions**
6. **Closing Remarks and Open Floor**

Detailed Guide:

1. Welcome and Icebreaker (15 minutes)

- Welcome participants and introduce the session's objectives.
- Icebreaker activity: Have participants share their names and one positive aspect of their community related to economic activities.

2. Understanding of Key Concepts (20 minutes)

- **Facilitator:** Let's start by discussing some important terms. How would you define violence within a household context?
- **Probe Questions:**
 - What does gender-based violence (GBV) mean to you?
 - How would you define economic violence?
 - Do you think economic violence is recognized as an issue in our community? Why or why not?

3. Vignette Discussions (45 minutes)

Introduction to Vignettes:

- Now, I will share a few scenarios with you. For each scenario, we'll discuss whether you think it represents a form of violence and why.

Vignette A (Control Over Resources):

- Scenario: Imagine a situation where Patuma, who farms, is not allowed by her husband, Joni, to decide how the income from her crops is used. Joni takes all the money, saying it's for the best.
 - Do you think Joni's actions are a form of violence? Why or why not?
 - How common do you think this situation is in our community?
 - What advice would you give to Patuma?

Vignette B (Restriction of Opportunities):

- Scenario: Tadala is interested in joining a local women's savings group, but her partner, Jemusi, insists it's a waste of time that could be better spent at home.
 - What are your thoughts on Jemusi's perspective?
 - How might Tadala assert her interest in joining the savings group?

Vignette C (Misuse of VSLA Participation):

- Scenario: Jemusi refuses to join a VSLA, seeing it as unproductive. Instead, he has Tadala join, expecting her to hand over all earnings from the VSLA to him, claiming his initial investment.
 - Do you believe Jemusi's actions are fair or justified? Why or why not?
 - What impact might this have on Tadala's participation in the VSLA?

Vignette D (Economic Coercion by Family):

- Scenario: Tadala's husband is away working in South Africa. After she sells her harvest, her in-laws, led by her mother-in-law, demand she sends the money to her husband, questioning her loyalty if she refuses.
 - Is this a form of support or pressure from the family? How should Tadala navigate this situation?
 - What does being a 'good wife' mean in this context? Is it fair?

Vignette E (Economic Pressure from Husband):

- Scenario: Tadala, a member of a producer group, has had a bumper harvest. Her husband, who contributed financially to some of the farming inputs while working in another town, asks her to send most of the money realized from the sale back to him.
 - How do you perceive the husband's request? Is it fair or justified? Why or why not?
 - What impact might this have on Tadala's financial independence and household dynamics?

4. Discussion on Reporting and Conflict Resolution (30 minutes)

- **Facilitator:** Let's talk about what happens when someone experiences economic violence.
- **Questions:**
 - Are there mechanisms within our community or families for reporting economic violence? What are they?
 - Have you or someone you know ever tried to report economic violence? What was that experience like?
 - Do you feel that family members, like *ankhoswe* or mother-in-law, can assist in resolving these issues? How?
 - What are the barriers to reporting incidents of economic violence?

5. Impact of Titukulane's Interventions (30 minutes)

- **Facilitator:** Now, let's discuss the impact of *Titukulane's* interventions on our community.
- **Questions:**
 - How have *Titukulane's* gender inclusion interventions influenced perceptions or experiences of economic violence?

- How do male and gender champions contribute to addressing GBV and economic violence? Have their efforts been effective?
- Have the gender dialogues and other interventions by *Titukulane* helped in increasing household income or improving economic decision-making?
- Since the introduction of income-generating activities (IGAs) by *Titukulane*, have you seen an increase in your earnings? How has this affected your household?
- Do you feel that there has been an increase or decrease in violence within the home since the start of the *Titukulane* interventions?

6. Closing Remarks and Open Floor (15 minutes)

- Summarize key points discussed.
- Open the floor for any additional comments or questions from participants.
- Thank participants for their time and valuable contributions.

Facilitator's Closing Remarks: Thank you all for your active participation and valuable insights. Your input will help us understand and address the challenges our community faces. We appreciate your openness and willingness to share your experiences. Together, we can work towards creating a safer and more supportive environment for everyone.

E. Key Informant Interview Guide for Traditional Leaders

Introduction: Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. We are seeking to understand the roles and perspectives of key community figures like yourself in addressing economic violence and gender-based violence (GBV). Additionally, we aim to gather insights on the impact of *Titukulane's* interventions in your community. Your insights will help us improve our programs and support systems. Please feel free to share openly and remember that your responses will be kept confidential.

Detailed Guide:

1. Introduction and Roles (10 minutes)

- Could you please describe your role in the community?
- What are your main responsibilities concerning maintaining peace and addressing conflicts, especially those related to economic activities and household dynamics?

2. Understanding of Economic Violence and GBV (15 minutes)

- How would you define violence within a household context?
- What does gender-based violence (GBV) mean to you?
- How would you define economic violence?
- Do you think economic violence is recognized as an issue in your community? Why or why not?

3. Community Dynamics and Conflict Resolution Mechanisms (20 minutes)

- In your experience, what are the most common types of conflicts related to economic activities and household dynamics?
- Can you describe the process you follow when a case of economic violence or GBV is brought to your attention?
- What role do traditional leaders play in resolving these conflicts?
- How effective do you think these traditional mechanisms are in resolving conflicts related to economic violence and GBV?

4. Reporting Mechanisms and Experiences (20 minutes)

- What are the common ways people in your community report incidents of economic violence or GBV?
- How accessible and effective do you believe the police and traditional systems are in handling these reports?
- Can you share any experiences where a reported case of economic violence or GBV was resolved successfully? What factors contributed to its resolution?
- What barriers do you think exist that might prevent people from reporting these incidents?

5. Impact of *Titukulane's* Interventions (25 minutes)

- From your perspective, how have *Titukulane's* gender inclusion interventions impacted the community?
- Have you noticed any changes in how economic decisions are made within households since the introduction of these interventions?
- What role do male and gender champions play in addressing economic violence and GBV in your community?
- Have the gender dialogues and other interventions by *Titukulane* helped in reducing incidents of violence within homes? Can you provide any examples?

- Do you feel that these interventions have empowered women economically and socially? How has this empowerment affected household dynamics?

6. Closing Remarks (10 minutes)

- Reflecting on our conversation, what changes do you hope to see in your community regarding economic violence and GBV?
- Is there anything else you'd like to share about your experiences or thoughts on how to better support victims and prevent economic violence and GBV?

Facilitator's Closing Remarks: Thank you for sharing your valuable insights and experiences with us today. Your input is important for understanding and addressing the challenges our community faces. We appreciate your openness and commitment to improving our community's well-being. Together, we can work towards creating a safer and more supportive environment for everyone.

Annex 3: Notetaking template

GENDER OUTCOME HARVESTING DATA ENTRY TEMPLATE

Instruction: Each FGD/KII should be entered on a separate template. Eg if two KIIs were conducted, you will have two data entry template forms

Facilitator		Date	
Note taker		Time Start	
District		Time End	
TA		Gender: M/F	
Village		No. of Participants	

General Observations:

Key Area	Guidance for Observation	Notes
Gender Division of Labor and Workload Sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Specific examples of task division between men and women. - Changes in men's involvement in domestic roles. - New responsibilities taken on by women. 	
Observation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Physical division of labor during transect walks. - Visible signs of shared workloads in households. - Comments or behaviors indicating role shifts. 		
Intra-household Decision-Making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Who makes decisions regarding the sale and use of produce. - Women's influence over financial and nutritional decisions. - Instances of restricted decision-making. 	
Observation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Body language and tone in discussions. - Whether decisions are made jointly or dictated by one person. - Reactions and interactions on finances. 		
Access to and Control Over Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participation in VSLAs and women's control over money. - Changes in women's ownership/control over assets. - Barriers women face in accessing resources. 	
Observation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evidence of women in VSLAs or similar groups. - Instances where men control or restrict access to resources. - Discussions on land ownership or financial use. 		
Participation in Leadership and Public Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Examples of women in leadership roles. - Types and influence of leadership roles compared to men. - Barriers to women's leadership participation. 	
Observation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participation of women in public forums or meetings. 		

Key Area	Guidance for Observation	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community responses to women in leadership. - Women’s confidence and assertiveness in roles. 		
Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community attitudes towards GBV reporting and addressing. - Changes in GBV cases reported and discussed. - Role of men/youth in supporting GBV prevention. 	
Observation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presence of GBV support structures. - Reactions when GBV is discussed. - Efforts by men/youth groups in GBV prevention. 		
Vignette Discussions: Agreement on Economic Violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Count of participants agreeing the scenario represents economic violence. - Record number of men and women who agreed. - Note patterns in gender agreement. 	
Vignette Discussions: Majority Opinion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify whether men or women formed the majority in agreeing the vignette presented economic violence. - Note any clear majority and reasons for consensus. 	
Vignette Discussions: Disagreements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Record any disagreements on whether the scenario is economic violence. - Note whether disagreements were more common among men or women. - Capture reasons for disagreement. 	
Vignette Discussions: Leadership in Responding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Observe who led in responding to the questions—whether predominantly men, women, or a specific individual. - Note dynamics of the discussion and if the leader influenced group consensus. 	

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Disclaimer

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