

NOTES ON RURAL CONSULTATION MEETINGS

A. MPAMBA VILLAGE, T/A TIMBIRI, NKHATA BAY DISTRICT

Participants : Area Development Committee members; Villade Development Committee Members; Members of Youth Groups; Women's Club members; Members of Community Development Organisations (CDOs); T/A Timbiri and his Advisors

1. Feeder Roads/Transport

- a. The area has a lot of agricultural activity and produces food for the district as well as Mzuzu City, but farmers have a problem accessing the markets because of the conditions of the roads in the area. Produce cassava (yuka), bananas, rice, sugar cane, tea, coffee.
- b. Some area around the lake are unable to access health centers/hospitals because of the condition of the road network and also because there is no road network. Need marine ambulances to transfer expectant women from health centers/clinics to the main hospitals
- c. Communities are isolated due to the poor road network. There are a number of roads that need rehabilitation or upgrading which would provide communities with access to markets, health services, etc
- d. Need to consider extending the rail network to Nkhata Bay and Mzuzu – would pass through high agriculture production areas, including Nkhota-Kota, Dowa, Kasungu, Salima and Mzimba. Area produces sugar (by over 2000 smallholder farmers), coffee (smallholder farmers), cattle. Two new sugar schemes will be opening in Nkhata Bay within the year

2. Electricity – the lack of electricity in the area impacts all sectors of productivity.

- a. Communities are asked to pay for the transformer
- b. The tariff needs to be differentiated and segmented depending on location – rural vs urban
- c. MAREP concentrates on selected areas. Electricity would help in the development of small-scale cottage industries
- d. Two rivers in the area have the potential for mini-hydro schemes – Lweya and Liphasa Rivers

- e. Health centers have no electricity supply, thereby impacting maternal and child health
 - f. Farmers are unable to add value to their goods as they cannot invest in machinery and equipment that requires electricity, eg milk bulking groups. Farmers also need to be taught processing skills
3. Water - only the town center (boma) has piped water. There are a number of areas in which dams could be constructed for the supply of potable water. The district has a 65% rate of access to safe water and would like to increase this to 90%. District has a lot of rivers that can lend themselves to the development of gravity-fed water systems for potable water, irrigation and mini-hydros.
4. Human Capital
- a. Girls secondary education – there are over 170 primary schools in the district, but a few secondary schools that have boarding facilities. Impacts girls education as they have to travel long distances to access education and become discouraged. Day secondary schools are not conducive
 - b. Youth need access to vocational schools to acquire vocational skills
 - c. Need for a technical school/college – provide students with technical skills for employment and provide them with entrepreneurial skills
5. Agriculture productivity
- a. Nkhata Bay has wetlands that are not utilized. Farmers still use traditional methods of agriculture – need for modern farming methods and equipment to enhance productivity and processing
 - b. District produces large quantities of bananas – need access to ICT to enhance marketing of produce
 - c. Fisheries – produces a speciality fish that is not available anywhere else in the lake (“Butter Fish”). Need deep water fishing projects with the attendant equipment
 - d. GoM needs to assist farmers in the formation of co-operatives to benefit from economies of scale to access inputs and loans
6. Natural Resource Management

- a. District has thick forest cover, but due to an increasing population (1998 – 164,000 : 2008 – 213,000) new fields are being opened up leading to wanton cutting down of trees
- b. Deforestation leads to siltation and flooding - soil erosion affects the breeding areas for fish
- c. Need for NRM projects that will address issues of deforestation and siltation

B. T/A MALILI, LILONGWE DISTRICT

Participants : Group village headmen; Area Development Committees; Village Development Committees; Women’s Club members; members of Youth Groups; Community Development Organisations; T/A Malili and his Advisors

1. Roads/Transport – lack of proper road network impacts access to various services - health, education, etc.
 - a. Access to education – because of the state of existing roads which get overgrow during the rainy season, young children stop going to school because of crime and incidences of assault
 - b. Access to health a problem – women have to travel long distances to access services, which impacts maternal and child health

2. Electricity
 - a. Lack of electricity – women have to travel long distances to get their maize milled
 - b. The health center has no electricity which impacts the type of services that people can access. Also impacts the staff – health staff prefer to be posted in areas where there is electricity
 - c. Electricity should be a priority for GoM to roll-out to rural areas. Tariff should be subsidised for rural communities
 - d. Would provide a lot of economic opportunities for the area – for example, access to learning through ICT; students would be able to study until late, etc

3. Water
 - a. Rivers in the area would lend themselves to gravity fed systems that would provide water for irrigated agriculture and for household use

- b. Not enough boreholes in the area – people get water from rivers, well, which leads to high incidences of water-borne diseases

4. Human Capital

- a. Lack of education infrastructure impacts the rate of literacy in the area
- b. Schools are located far from the villages/communities which discourages young children from attending
- c. Lack of teaching staff – teachers do not always have the appropriate training
- d. Need for vocational schools – young adults need to acquire vocational skills to increase their chances of employment or being engaged in productive activity. There are high incidences of petty thievery among the young adult population
- e. Rivers are prone to flooding and they have no bridges – once flooded, children tend not to go to school
- f. Among the youth, there are large numbers of orphans who are unable to go to school because of the lack of school fees and also the lack of educational infrastructure

5. Agriculture

- a. High prices of agricultural inputs – parents sometimes make a choice between spending on agricultural inputs (ensuring their food security) and paying school fees for their children
- b. Farmers need to be given access to agricultural equipment and inputs at subsidised rates
- c. Perennial rivers in the area can be used for irrigated agriculture

C. KUNTAJA VILLAGE, T/A KUNTAJA, BLANTYRE DISTRICT

Participants : Area Development Committees; Village Development Committees; Community Development Organisations; Women’s Groups; Youth Groups; Group Village headmen; T/A Kuntaja and his Advisors

1. Roads/Transport

- a. Feeder roads in the area are in a bad state – the former M1 runs through the area but has been neglected. The road goes to the Nkula power station and the source for Blantyre Water Board, but there is no electricity and potable water in the area

- b. The state of the feeder roads impacts maternal and child health – women have to travel long distances in order to access health services.
- c. Some of the roads need to be upgraded in order to open up the area and improve access to services and markets
- d. Access to primary education facilities is impacted because of the state of the roads
- e. State of roads impacts access to agricultural inputs and markets

2. Electricity

- a. Nkula Power station is in his area yet the community does not have electricity
- b. Electricity provides opportunities for economic growth – establishment of small businesses and cottage industries, and will enhance women’s access to services such as health facilities, maize mills, etc
- c. Would also enhance agricultural productivity through the use of water pumps for irrigation
- d. Would enhance education opportunities through the use of ICT for teaching and learning
- e. ESCOM should provide the transformers free of charge to rural communities

3. Water/Irrigation

- a. Limited access to safe water in the area
- b. Dams would provide increased opportunities for multiple harvests through irrigated agriculture
- c. Irrigation schemes would provide income generating activities, particularly for orphan care centres, etc

4. Human Capital

- a. Youth members noted that they only have access to junior primary schools 9Grades 1-5 instead of Grades 1-8). Limits children’s access to opportunities for further education
- b. Lack of education infrastructure – there are not enough teachers houses
- c. Need technical and vocational schools to provide the youth with vocational skills to increase opportunities
- d. The Community Day secondary schools lack infrastructure – equipment for teaching and learning

5. Agriculture

- a. GoM needs to increase access to agricultural inputs, such as small tractors
- b. Need to support initiatives such as dairy farming in the area, particularly for the youth and women
- c. The Ministry of Trade is not assisting with the formation and registration of co-operatives in the area

D. MEETING AT T/A MACHINJILI HQ, BLANTYRE DISTRICT

Participants : Group village headmen; Area Development Committees; Village Development Committees; Women's Club members; members of Youth Groups; Community Development Organisations; T/A Machinjili and his Advisors

1. Roads/Transport

- a. Lack of a systematic road network in the area (covers over 100 villages)
- b. Impacts access to services and amenities

2. Electricity

- a. Even though the area is considered to be within the bounds of the City of Blantyre, most areas do not have access to electricity
- b. Those with transformers in the area do not allow community members to access them to electrify their houses, businesses, health facilities, etc
- c. Lack of access impacts security – incidences of crime due to lack of electricity in the area
- d. Lack of access impacts women – limited maize mills that are electrified. Most run on diesel which makes them expensive.
- e. ESCOM discriminates against the poor – will disconnect those who have very small bills
- f. Health centres are not electrified – impacts maternal and child health

3. Water/Irrigation

- a. Need to construct dams in the area to provide access to water for irrigation and household use
- b. Women have to walk long distances to get water or those who access water at kiosks are paying high tariffs

- c. A number of hills/mountains that can provide water, such as Bangwe/Mpingwe Hill and Mulanje Mountain. GoM should invest in gravity-fed systems to increase access to safe water
- d. Lunzu River could be used for irrigation, but community needs water pumps and assistance with the formation of clubs and co-operatives to access loans for inputs

4. Human Capital

- a. Youth need increased access to university/tertiary education
- b. Need to empower the youth through the provision of access to technical/vocational education. Get involved in politics because they have nothing else to do and it provides an income.