



**Discussion Paper-
Gendered Impacts of
Ukraine Crisis in Malawi**

**FRIDAY 01 JULY 2022
SUNBIRD CAPITAL HOTEL**

Global Context

- Economies worldwide are struggling due to a series of interrelated economic shocks, post-pandemic supply chain distributions, recurring climate events, and the Ukraine crisis which are all contributing to rapid inflation.
- The Ukraine Crisis has put significant pressure on global food, fertiliser and fuel supplies, with price increases particularly impacting on developing countries.
- ActionAid, assessment of inflation in 13 countries indicate that local communities “are being disproportionately affected by price rises caused by” the international armed conflict in Ukraine,
- vulnerable communities are paying higher prices for essential commodities including food, fuel and fertiliser.

Impact on Malawi

- The current negative balance of trade and reliance on foreign currency makes the Malawi economy particularly vulnerable to global economic downturns.
- For Malawi, these price increases are likely to significantly amplify the extent and severity of the 2022/2023 and 2023/24 lean seasons.
- Global conditions will impact heavily on subsistence farmers and urban poor who lack the financial resources to absorb price increases.
- Further impacting this is the devaluation of Malawian Kwacha (MWK), which decreased Malawians' spending power for imported goods by 25%.



FEMINIST
MACRO-ECONOMICS
ALLIANCE-MALAWI



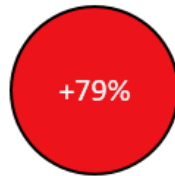
FOR EQUALITY actionaid

CONCERN
worldwide

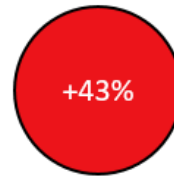
Research Findings



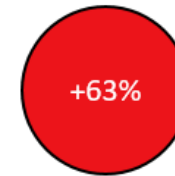
Fuel



Fertiliser



Wheat



Cooking Oil

ActionAid research, conducted prior to the devaluation of MWK), compared relative price increases across key commodities in Malawi since 23rd February 2022.

FUEL

- The Malawi economy is susceptible to rising international transport costs.
- World Bank data shows Malawi imported 3,619 products from 150 countries in 2019, representing 44.37% of total consumer goods traded within Malawi that year.
- Rising global fuel prices drives up transport cost of imports, raising the price paid by consumers.
- Fuel prices will also increase the costs of supplying Malawi's internal markets and transporting goods around the country, disrupting value chains for key commodities

Fuel Gendered Impact

- use of minivans, one of the safest form of transport for women, is very sensitive to **changes in the cost.**
- Increased transports costs will reduce the number of girls travelling to school and women travelling to work and to participate in local markets.
- Women and children choosing to use other means of transport will also be at **risk of abuse** and violence.
- **The elderly and persons with disabilities who are already at a high risk will be denied access of some services** because they cannot afford transportation.
- **Increase of violence for those choosing long walks**
- Fuel prices will also affect **prices of commodities** and this **will heavily affect women and girl eg Menstrual Hygiene and Health materials will become unaffordable** for the rural and urban poor women.



Fertiliser

- More than 80% of Malawians rely on rain-fed subsistence agriculture, with 75% of Malawian households growing maize for their own consumption.
- Currently, the vast majority of these farmers use chemical fertilisers as a key component of their farming system
- Majority access fertiliser at a subsidised rate through the Government Affordable Inputs Programme (AIP).
- The AIP accounts for over 50% of the Ministry of Agriculture budget
- Fertiliser prices have continued to rise and in April 2022 were double the previous highs observed in August 2021.
- If this rate of inflation continues, the IFPRI estimates that the number of AIP beneficiaries will have to be reduced by 66%.
- The absence of chemical fertilisers will result in lower yields, significantly increasing the number of households experiencing food insecurity.
- rise in the cost of fertiliser will have an impact worldwide, driving up the cost of animal feed and maize alternatives, and impacting the cost of Malawian food imports.

Fertiliser Gendered Impact

- The limited supply of fertiliser combined with low-uptake of agro-ecology agricultural methods will disproportionality affect women; 59% of employed women work in the agriculture sector,
- Data from the WB 2021 highlights the large gender productivity gap within Malawi's agriculture sector; underlined by the fact that land farmed by men produces 25% higher yields.
- This gender gap is driven by the “unequal use of land inputs, lower [female] access to farm labour, [women's] inferior access to improved agricultural inputs and technology, and lower participation [by women] in the cash crop/export crop value chains”.
- Women are likely to face sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) when trying to purchase fertiliser.
- Some, especially vulnerable adults and persons with disabilities, will opt to travel long distances to purchase the fertiliser at a lower cost which also puts them at risk.



Food

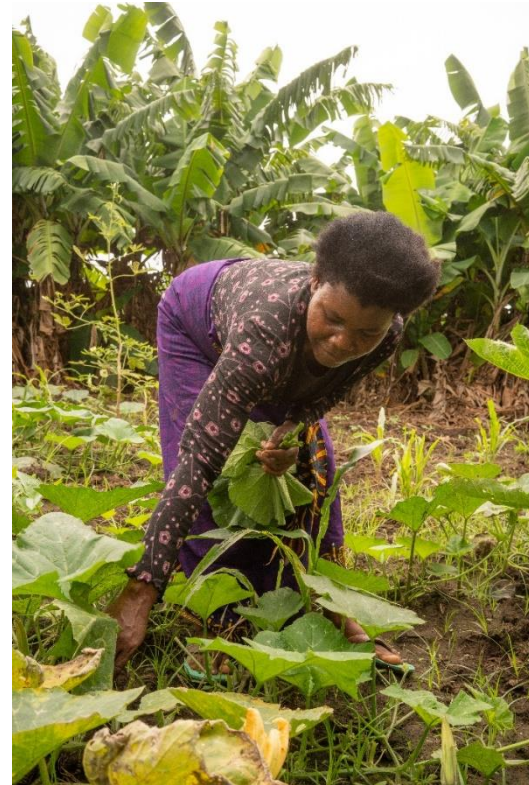
- The rising cost of food will have a significant impact on Malawi's most vulnerable communities, who derive 68% of their calories from maize.
- Although many Malawians grow maize for their own consumption, only 6.4% urban households and 19.1% of rural households produce enough maize to meet their own consumption needs.
- 71.5% urban households and 16.7% rural households do not grow their own food and are particularly vulnerable to market price increases.
- Global maize prices are expected to rise steeply in the context of reduced exports from Ukraine, Russia and Belarus, which collectively produce 17.4% world's maize supply.
- Although Malawi, on average, imports less than 1% of its maize, in years with poor harvests, such as in 2016, imports can rise as high as 10% of total consumption.

Food

- The cost of other common food items, such as cooking oil, is also expected to rise sharply. In addition to curtailed supply of sunflower oil resulting from the Ukraine crisis.
- Despite the Government's decision to remove VAT from the sale of vegetable oils, ActionAid's research shows the cost rose by 46% between February and April.
- Although Malawi is not a large consumer of wheat, prices are climbing sharply. This price increase will impact poor urban communities, where the consumption of bread is more common. ActionAid recorded an average increase of 79% in the cost of wheat nationwide between February and April 2022.
- In addition Malawi food production is at risk of persistent weather shocks, therefore any significant climate event (flood and/or dry spells) will further impact the food insecurity severity in the coming months.
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Food Gendered Impact

- At the household level, women's weak bargaining power and intra-household food allocation tendencies, shaped by cultural norms that prioritise the allocation of food to men and children, leaves women susceptible to intra-household food insecurity.
- As food prices rise, households are likely to adopt negative coping strategies, such as selling household items and livestock. This will disproportionately affect the daily experience of women, as the primary home maker.
- There will likely be a repeat of the observed gendered reactions in previous crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, which saw an increase in girls withdrawn from school and an increase in early marriages among very young women.



Food Gendered Impact

- It is expected that the nutrition status of poorer communities will decrease due to lack of food diversification and failure to afford some foodstuff.
- Pregnant and lactating mothers will be disproportionately affected, impacting the 1000 special days of the child and under five children.
- Furthermore, it is expected that many women who participate in small scale food sales as an income generating activity will not be able to sustain their businesses, which will have a knock-on impact on their household nutrition status.



Recommendations

Social Protection

- Gender Mainstreaming across all social protection systems and programmes
- Lean season planning and preparations must be made well in advance of this year's predicted severe lean season to reassure communities that they will be supported.
- Social Protection programming should target the Urban Poor, with a particular focus on affected women.
- Cash Transfer Programme top ups (both vertical and horizontal) should be considered for affected urban and rural poor.
- Categorical targeting for Social Protection programmes should consider the influence of gender on risk and vulnerability.
- Consider revision of the minimum wage and taxation levels in light of the increasing cost of living caused by inflation and devaluation of the Kwacha.

Agro- Ecology

- Promotion of gender responsive agro-ecological practices
- Increase financing to farmer extension services on agro-ecological approaches, and ensure services are accessible to women farmers.
- Issue early and timely agricultural advice.
- Increase support (both market and subsistence) for the current winter cropping season to buffer food security.
- Farmers should be encouraged to adopt composting, production of Mbeya manure and other available alternatives to chemical fertilisers in light of the rising prices.
- Farmers should be encouraged to mix of certified and recycled seed.
- Promotion of household gardens in urban and peri-urban areas.
- Launch public awareness campaigns to promote agro-ecological approaches

Crop Diversification and Market Opportunities

- Expand volume and value of exports through the further commercialisation of the country's agriculture sector.
- Promote access to cash crop seeds and work to generate awareness and demand among smallholder farmers.
- Early announcement of clear and detailed plans for the AIP.

Recommendations

Farm Practices and Food Reserves

Promotion of storage facilities, PICS Bags and use of agri-chemical preservation agents to reduce post harvest losses

Disaster Risk Management

- Early and appropriate updating of response plans and advance prepositioning of supplies to be
- distributed in case of a natural disaster.
- Timely weather and climate information to allow preparation for any adverse weather events.

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