



**Youths, Indigenous Knowledge and Climate
Change Adaptation in Malawi:
*Research Conceptualization for the Nexus***

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Outline

- Country Context
- Key questions
- Climate Change related policies and programmes in Malawi.
- Status of research on CC and IKS
- Why IK in CC research?
- Harnessing the future-a youth perspective
- Inquiry on the research tools

Country Context

- Agro-based economy
 - ✓ About 39% of GDP
 - ✓ Employs 80% of total workforce
 - ✓ Over 80% of foreign exchange earnings
 - ✓ Smallholder farming: 70% of agro-GDP
- Rainfed agriculture: 99% of cultivated land
- Risky endeavour as rainfall patterns are erratic.
- Frequent floods and droughts

Key questions

- Where does IK stand in relation to CCA in Malawi?
- Is IK a plausible research priority?
- What are the roles of the various stakeholders including the youths in cultivating on IK for better adaptation strategies?
- How can IK be integrated into the current research and adaptation work on climate change?
- How can research and IK address the communication puzzle?

CC related Policies and research

- Malawi Growth and Development Strategy
 - MGDS II (2011-2016): Now in draft form. Has prioritized climate change and strategies for IK
- National Adaptations Programmes of Action (NAPA)- IK not prioritized
- Currently developing a Climate Change Programme and policy
- Lack of documentation- research and IK

Why IK in CC research?

- Researchers analyse climate data at different timescales than those important for farmers' decision making and crop growth (Ovuka and Lindquist,2000).
- Researchers focus on meteorological droughts while farmers focus on agronomic droughts(Slegers,2008).
- With little evidence and sparse met data locally on many facets of climate science, only peoples experience is **reliable and valid.**

Why a youth perspective?

- Youthful population- 52% aged below 18. Common to all African countries.
- Potential demographic dividend.
- High youth unemployment-25%
- Millennium Development Goals- Most of them are dealing with young people.
- Youths are potential users, doers and leaders in CCA and IKS Research.

Challenges

- Perception- skills and experiences in the number of years lived????



“Why should I care about future generations – what have they ever done for me?”

Groucho Marx

Way forward- Youths

- Mainstreaming in policies- youth participation
- Community indigenous groups- platform for learning.
- Mainstreaming the teaching and learning of IK in school, technical college and university curriculum.
- Indigenous communication channels- drama, music, local structures

Inquiry on research tools

- Cross sectional surveys and FGDs not effective in ascertaining IK.
- Interviewing household heads and selecting the elderly in the FGDs.
- Frequentist approach to data analysis not enough in combining the various knowledge (Science and IK).
- Need for **Bayesian Methods**

Proposed tools

- **Community Foresight Analysis** to allow for collective sharing and learning of experiences among the elderly and the youths for the future.
- **Participatory action oriented research** in which research is done over years with iterative implementation of findings-
Financial Challenges.
- **Bayesian Methods** in which IK estimates are used as priors in the models-skills
- Taking science as knowledge derived from the facts of experience

Addressing the communication puzzle

- Both intra and inter communication barriers;
 - Communities, households: relations and dynamic roles ; Practitioners; Researchers
- IK erosion and trust patterns for adoption of new technologies.

Suggestions

- Creation of **Community Analogues for CBA** work based on credible evidence and contextual understanding.
- **IK based or locally accepted ways of communication systems** blended with new tools e.g. Videos on how others are adapting to climate change.
- **Practitioner research** on communication science in CBA work

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