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ABOUT LADDER

LADDER is a research project funded by the Policy Research Programme of the UK Department for International Development (DFID) that seeks to identify alternative routes by which the rural poor can climb out of poverty. LADDER is working with nearly 40 villages and 1,200 households in Uganda, Tanzania, Malawi and Kenya to discover the blocking and enabling agencies in the institutional environment facing rural people that hinder or help their quest for better standards of living for themselves and their families.

This working paper represents work-in-progress and the reader is advised that it has not been subjected to academic quality control, nor edited for errors of fact or interpretation. The paper forms part of a mosaic of research findings that will contribute towards an overall picture of rural livelihoods and micro-macro links to poverty policies in the case-study countries. The findings and views expressed here are solely the responsibility of the authors and are not attributable to DFID.

All available Working Papers and Village Reports can be downloaded from the project website: <http://www.uea.ac.uk/dev/odg/ladder/>, which also details other information about the project. For any further enquiries, please email j.mims@uea.ac.uk.

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Summary

Malawi has a relatively new forestry policy enshrined in the 1997 Forest Act and the 1998 National Forest Programme (NFP), which espouses a community forest management approach predicated on the idea that local people need to be given authority to manage resources on which their livelihoods depend in order to preserve them. This paper examines early experience in the effectiveness of this policy, as revealed by secondary materials and livelihoods research undertaken by the LADDER project in Dedza District in 2001.

Whilst the NFP process has been relatively strong on consultation and explicit with respect to prioritising livelihood, poverty and equity concerns in community forestry, major challenges remain for realising this intent: the political vision for community forestry remains fundamentally controversial; there are problems with the basic institutional and policy framework; the process itself is stalled in practical terms; the impact of and linkages with broader policy and political change in Malawi are ambiguous. The NFP has not, despite good intentions, engaged directly with the broader challenges raised by the changing face of poverty, including HIV/AIDS, and livelihoods in Malawi. Forest resource use and control is clearly differentiated by wealth and gender and conflicts of interest over forest development are evident within households and communities and between these groups, traditional authorities and the state.

Some key findings of the field research are as follows. First, the policy changes have had no significant impact where there have been limited forest resources, and where communities have always had control, under a traditional set-up, over their own areas of woodland. For the policy changes to have an impact in such communities, active promotion of forest rehabilitation is required so that there is a dynamically improving resource over which communities can exercise actively their new management rights. Second, the new policy seems to have had little effect on the differential access to forest resources that in reality characterises village society. The research found that now, as before, there is a strong correlation between relative wealth and income and ease of access to available forest resources. Third, the new policy, certainly so far, fails to address issues related to advice available to communities on forestry matters, and previous problems with obtaining forestry extension advice persist.

Qualitative work with community groups revealed a considerable credibility gap between the views of traditional leaders, government officers and NGOs regarding community based forest management (generally positive and optimistic), on the one hand, and the experience of ordinary community members (confused or indifferent), on the other hand. Narrowing this gap in opinion would imply greater effort in involving ordinary members

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of the community in forestry initiatives, and seeking to make the benefits of active community involvement in forestry management evident to community members.

Introduction

International support for community forest management (CFM) is predicated on the view that local people need to be given authority to manage the resources on which their livelihoods depend in order to preserve them. It is now largely uncontroversial to combine conservation and poverty alleviation goals within policy although the feasibility of doing so remains highly uncertain. Although there is “acceptance that forests conserved under sustainable productive management provide the fundamental support to rural livelihoods” (Jere *et al.*, 2000: p34), this is not the same as saying that forestry can alleviate poverty. There are now a wide number of reviews looking at the ‘success’ and ‘lessons’ of CFM practice worldwide (Hobley 1996, Carter, 1996), which suggest that the extent to which the livelihood needs of the poor have been successfully addressed by CFM is at best poorly documented (DFID, 1996) and, at worst, questionable despite very real conservation gains. There are problems with the underlying interpretation of livelihood needs within forest policy which are frequently rather static and overwhelmingly subsistence and smallholder-orientated. One feature of this is the widespread labeling of the poor as particularly ‘dependent’ users who it is implied have much to gain from CFM and a general bias against developing sales of firewood and timber as part of responding to livelihood needs. The very localized understandings of CFM have focused excessively on within-village situations without adequate consideration of wider economic, social and political processes including those of livelihood diversification and migration.

Reviews of CFM generally share the view that “representation of all groups with an interest in resources, even those who do not normally have a voice, is important” (Jere *et al.*, 2000) but difficult to achieve. Assessments of CFM generally confine themselves to the quality of participation at the local level but in view of their neglect of wider political processes and other local power relations it remains difficult to assess the impact of CFM on the nature of social capital. For example, the DFID review found that: “Frequently the most significant benefits voiced are the decline in harassment and a more positive relationship between delivery agencies and users” (Jere *et al.*, 2000). Although these kinds of benefits are not usually labeled as livelihood benefits that impact on poverty (given the often rather narrow definitions of livelihoods that privilege productive contributions), these are in broader understandings of livelihoods undoubtedly highly significant. There remains controversy though about the mechanisms whereby these changes are achieved and who benefits within local communities. A decline in harassment by the authorities often represents a displacement of policing activities to communities themselves and may be equally, or often more, restrictive of access for poor users. Similarly, contacts between delivery agencies and users, and the fringe benefits arising from them (such as status, training, per diems and subsidies of one sort or another), are usually heavily mediated by more powerful community members. In other words, the kind of social capital being created may be reversing the alienation of community control over forest resources but simultaneously strengthening social stratification or even social exclusion within communities.

Although Malawi is a relative latecomer to the community forestry movement in international terms, it has capitalised on this timing by learning some of the lessons emerging from other countries. The process in Malawi is most notable for its consultative character and relatively promising institutional framework embodied in the 1997 Forest Act and the 1998 National Forestry Programme. Although Malawi has experienced substantial and rapid changes in its

wider political, institutional and policy frameworks since 1994, the country remains one of the poorest in Sub-Saharan African with poor social indicators that are further threatened by HIV/AIDS with 16 per cent of the population estimated to be infected in 1999. Recent policy directions encouraged by international agencies and promoted to varying degrees by the Government have favoured liberalization and decentralization and the impact of these 'reforms' on livelihoods in the broadest sense remains controversial. However, since 1995 poverty alleviation has been given prominence and priority within policy forums and is ostensibly the corner stone of the country's development efforts (Machinjili *et al.*, 1999) including the reforms within the forestry sector.

This paper explores the links between macro level policies and institutions with micro level livelihood dynamics with respect to forest resources in Malawi. There are two sets or key questions that we seek to investigate:

- How has the changing control over forest resources, including the recent shift to co-management and community-based management, affected the livelihood options of different people? How have broader changes in the control over forest resources supported or restricted livelihood diversification? How have broader changes affected the possibility of utilizing FRs as a means of gaining a livelihood?
- What are the implications of livelihood diversification for the ability of different people to invest in forest resources and to participate in co-management and community-based management of forest resources? What are the implications of new livelihood activities for forest resource demands? Can changing management of forest resources provide opportunities for forest-based diversification that can contribute to household resilience or provide a route out of poverty?

We have adopted a multi-level approach that considers the changing relationships between forestry and livelihoods nationally, at district level in Dedza and at the micro-level through four contrasting village case studies. Our discussion of national trends relies on secondary materials, for which Catherine Locke was primarily responsible, whilst our analysis of dynamics within Dedza relies on primary fieldwork, for which Dennis Kayambazinthu was primarily responsible¹. The paper begins by summarizing the changing policy and institutional environment for forestry and livelihoods and proceeds by bringing together secondary data relating to changing forest resources for livelihoods. It goes on to report on changing forest management and livelihoods using data from Dedza district and focusing in on micro-level changes in four villages within the district. It concludes by reflecting back on the key questions posed here. We hope to emphasise both 'objective' changes and to illustrate how perceptions of forest problems in relation to livelihoods have developed.

Changing Policy and Institutional Environment for Forestry in Malawi

Local people have, of course, always been involved in managing and using trees in Malawi. However, the first forestry-sector engagement with community-based management of miombo woodlands in Malawi dates back to the 1920s (Kayambazinthu, 2000). After the gazettement of forest reserves in the early/mid 1920s (mainly for watershed and soil erosion protection), village heads, were allocated patches of woodland for local use and management (Kayambazinthu, 2000). These Village Forest Areas (VFAs) increased rapidly with legal backing for their formation by the Forestry Ordinance of 1931 (Kayambazinthu, 2000). However, a decade later, colonial foresters turned their attention to the more strategic issues

of plantation development and in the mid-20th century, Malawian forestry was praised throughout Southern Africa for its professionalism. Colonial forestry was controlled by expatriates, focused on developing plantations of exotics (mostly pines and eucalyptus) and on protecting forests (mostly miombo woodlands) from local use (Mayers *et al.*, 2001: p15).

Dr Banda's government perpetuated these policies but by the 1980s it was clearly evident that plantation forest industry was not producing rewards, forests were being depleted by local use and the Forest Department's capacity to respond was declining (Mayers *et al.*, 2001:15). Although the number of active VFAs in 1963 was 5,108 (Kayambazinthu, 2000: p47 citing Varela *et al.*, 1995), at Independence in 1964 control, protection and management of trees and forests on customary lands was transferred from the Forestry Department to district councils. The Department, therefore, had little involvement in woodlands outside reserves as extension responsibilities for these trees were transferred to agricultural extension. The political machinery of the single party progressively undermined the power of the village heads in favour of district councils and VFCs' composition and operations were effectively dictated by these councils (Kayambazinthu, 2000). This decision was reversed in 1985 in the face of extensive degradation of these woodlands (Kayambazinthu, 2000).

However, by 1994 only 1,182 VFAs remained active and the change of government in this year created a vacuum of political power and space for the opportunistic overexploitation of forest and woodland (Kayambazinthu, 2000). At the same time though these wider institutional changes in the 1990s also created a unique opportunity for sectoral reform and in time led to a substantial change in policy direction as signified by the publication of the 1996 Forest Policy and the 1997 Forest Act. There was little impetus to move towards implementation until 1998 when the National Forest Programme² was created and coordinated in the Department of Forestry through the NFP Co-ordination Unit (Mayers *et al.*, 2001). To date, this process has focused on developing policy priorities and directions through consultation, negotiation and strategic maneuvering that has encompassed a broad range of government ministries, forest industries and the views of forest users (Mayers *et al.*, 2001). This process has had strong support from the UK's DFID and UN's PROFOR and has consciously worked at crystallizing agreed ways forward rather than being technically-driven. Both key donors amongst other interests remain concerned about sustainable rural livelihoods (DFID) and the dependence of smallholders' livelihoods on forests (PROFOR) (Mayers *et al.*, 2001: p20).

In relation to international standards for sustainable forest management, the NFP process has been comparatively strong in relation to consultation and participation, and in considering contribution to development (both Mayers *et al.*, 2001: p84). The process so far is documented in Mayers *et al.* (2001) and there will be no attempt to rehearse the details here. However, it is important for our purposes to briefly review the overall orientation of the NFP with respect of livelihoods, diversification and poverty. According to Mayers *et al.* (2001) the NFP aims to manage forests and trees to contribute to national poverty eradication, a thriving economy and good environmental management. However, its formal goal is phrased as follows: "sustainable management of forest goods and services for improved and equitable livelihoods" (Mayers *et al.*, 2001: p24). The NFP sees the major problems as follows: inequality, food insecurity and more generalized insecurity of law and order are causing forest degradation; demand for forest products and especially fuelwood is outstripping supply; plantations are poorly managed; and existing institutions are unable to respond to new circumstances (Mayers *et al.*, 2001: p3). In order to combat these difficulties the NFP has identified twelve strategies that include amongst them optimizing policy influences on

forests and livelihoods, supporting community-based forest management and improving individual smallholder livelihoods as well as strategies of institutional reform and strategies to enhance forest productivity in all sectors (Mayers *et al.*, 2001: p5). The contributions that forestry can make to livelihoods are envisaged in terms of creating employment, generating household income, contributing to food security and providing environmental services (Mayers *et al.*, 2001: p4). The mechanisms for doing so include cross-sectoral policy co-ordination, collaborative management, increased smallholder tree production and generally improved prices and supply of forest products, including fuelwood (Mayers *et al.*, 2001: p5). The NFP has understood 'socially beneficial' to mean "contributes to the alleviation of poverty and supports equitable and culturally appropriate development" (Mayers *et al.*, 2001: p59). From this, it can be reasonably assumed that there is an intention to address the livelihood needs of the poor and that this vision is one that perceives poverty as part of a wider problem of social justice and which extends livelihood concerns beyond CFM to engage with wider debates over forestry strategy.

That said, there are inevitably some significant tensions within the NFP and 'touchy subjects' include institutional reform, large-scale private sector forestry and charcoal production (Mayers *et al.*, 2001: p39, 60). These difficulties in part reflect areas where the NFP is out of step with wider processes of change, particularly decentralization, in Malawi, as well as the natural desire to protect the interests and power of the DoF (and its contacts with private sector forestry and powerful politicians). A more politicized view of the reluctance to tackle institutional reform is that there is unwillingness to devolve power internally within the DoF and to put in place mechanisms to link with the devolving district administrative and related channels of democratic participation. Despite wider changes, and the fact that the Forest Policy supports devolution of NR management, responsibility and authority within the DoF has not been completely devolved, the Forestry Act promotes a centralized system, and linkages between forestry and the decentralized government structures are ill-defined (Jere *et al.*, 2000: p43, 44). Whereas the Forestry Act 1942 gave certain powers to local authorities, including district councils, the Forestry Act 1997 removes local authorities (Jere *et al.*, 2000: p12) altogether from responsibility for forests and remains unclear about the formal role of traditional political structures. The Policy and the Act and indeed the NFP process make no explicit mention of other related NR policies, particularly notable is the apparent disengagement from the process of decentralizing environmental management (GOM, 1996) and discussion of changing land policy and agricultural policy (Jere *et al.*, 2000: p12-13).

The absence of relationship with the Environmental Management Plan and related devolutions of local governance are considered in Seymour and Jere's (2001: p5) suggested Action Plan for CFM and they note that progress is less advanced within MNREA than in other ministries involved in the first phase decentralization. Whilst arguing that devolution is essentially supportive of CBFM, allowing flexibility and local sensitivity, they warn that district-level capacity is weak and that the DoF should retain central control over forest reserves which have strategic importance for at least the immediate future (*ibid*: 6). Overall, despite considerable progress at upper levels of policy making, the absence of a management process is obstructing real progress in implementation (*ibid*). Turning more specifically to co-management within the NFP, it is perhaps telling that whilst this has not proved to be a 'touchy subject' at the level of policy consultations, it too remains stalled at field level (Seymour and Jere, 2001: p8) and in no small measure because of the wider difficulties with institutional reform outlined above. As of 2000, Seymour *et al.* (2000: ii) identify a lack of clarity over practical implementation as both a constraint and threat for real progress: "instead of precisely defined hand-over of rights and responsibilities from the state to the

resource users, state management appears largely to have been abandoned, leaving, in the widespread absence of trained VNRMCs, management plans and by-laws, a management vacuum”.

Co-management in Malawi encompasses much more than CBFM – which is specifically orientated at managing forests on customary lands – with arrangements proposed for the shared management of forest reserves and forest plantations. However it is acknowledged that the “mechanisms of ownership and control” for co-management have been insufficiently addressed in the 1996 Forest Policy. Concern centers on the following issues: the government’s share of produce from CBFM on customary lands; the role of traditional leaders in CBFM on customary lands; the flexibility to designate existing institutions as VNRMCs; the freedom of VNRMCs to develop rules locally; the devolution of approval of VNRMC rules from the Minister to District Assemblies; and the negotiability of co-management for forest reserves (NFP Co-ordination Unit, 2001). We will return to these issues later, but here it is worth elaborating with respect to the role of traditional leaders as this tension reveals a controversy over the fundamental spirit of the community forestry process.

Seymour *et al.* (2000: i) point to the “absence of any guidance, in either the national Forest Policy or the Forestry Act (1997), in the relationship between traditional leaders and the new democratic institutions for forest management at the village level (VNRMCs)”, as a significant weakness in an otherwise strong policy and legal environment for forestry reform. The implication is a failure to harness the “most important partnership” between the DoF and the traditional leaders and the related power of customary law. They hypothesise that the difficulty lay in reconciling the “autocratic nature of chiefly authority with the new spirit of democracy” (Seymour *et al.*, 2000: p20). The result is variation in practice with some extension workers seeing VNRMCs as integral to the traditional power structure and others seeing traditional leaders as merely advisors to these distinct and democratic entities. Whilst these commentators acknowledge the risk of corruption by traditional leaders subverting CBNRM, they warn that new institutional structures may be equally vulnerable to corruption and that there already exists a system for disciplining traditional leaders (the ‘mphale’ system) (ibid: 20).

There is more general agreement about the urgent need to strengthen the capacity of the forestry extension service for technical support for CFM (Jere *et al.* 2000:46). However, such an undertaking appears to be at odds with the wider emphasis in Malawi on streamlining government services as part of the drive towards liberalisation. Seymour *et al.* (2000: I) see the ultimate decentralization and unification of the extension services as positive but unsuited to the immediate task of transferring management and responsibilities for forests to communities. Although there remain significant difficulties with the policy and legal framework, “the biggest challenge” lies with “trying to change the attitudes and approach” of the Forestry Department (Kayambazinthu 2000: p47). “The FD’s reputation as a ‘policing’ institution, the limited capacity of local level institutions for resource management, and the ability of current forestry staff to work together with communities remain the major obstacles to effective devolution” (Kayambazinthu, 2000: p47). The DoF had only 31/180 Forestry Assistants having received training for their new roles in 2000. They project a need to raise the total number of FAs to 400 to achieve the target of 10,000 functioning VNRMCs (40% of Malawi’s villages) over 8-10 years (Seymour *et al.*, 2000: p1). The Working Group on Community Forestry’s (WGCM’s) review of participatory management initiatives confirmed that institutional support (rather than local project-related support) from the forestry

department is not forthcoming. Seymour *et al.* (2000: ii) are explicit in their view that “the delivery of field extension services to rural communities must still be regarded as a service, i.e., that is not profitable, nor is it likely to be in the foreseeable future”. Although this recognition runs counter to key themes in broader reform agendas, several sources note that external funds for CBFM are unlikely to be a constraint (see Seymour and Jere, 2001, also Seymour *et al.*, 2000).

To sum up, although some form of local control over forests has an extensive history in Malawi, the previous century has been punctuated by politically motivated shifts in the bureaucratic management of village forests that have effectively alienated local communities and their leaders. Whilst the NFP process has been relatively strong on consultation and explicit with respect to prioritising livelihood, poverty and equity concerns in community forestry, major challenges remain for realising this intent: the political vision for community forestry remains fundamentally controversial; there are problems with the basic institutional and policy framework; and the process itself is stalled in practical terms. The impact of the broader context of rapid policy and political change in Malawi is ambiguous. Thinking about linkages to broader decentralisation is weak and the need to build the technical and physical capacity of the forest service for outreach for community forestry is in important ways out of step with wider reform agendas. So far, as we shall see in the next section, the NFP has not, despite good intentions, engaged directly with the broader challenges raised by the changing face of poverty, including HIV/AIDS, and livelihoods in Malawi.

Changing Livelihoods and Forest Resource Management in Malawi

Over 60 per cent of the population in Malawi live below the poverty line “the most vulnerable group being the smallholder farmers with less than one hectare of land, tenants, urban poor and female headed households and people with disabilities (GOM, 1996)” (nd: 32). Over 85 per cent population live in rural areas on customary land and the majority live below the poverty line (FFSSPPFWG nd) and the average land holding size ranges from 0.5 hectares in the Southern region to 1.3 hectares in the Northern region. Illiteracy is around 50 per cent (ibid). Around 30 per cent of Malawi’s households are female-headed, a significant proportion of whom are amongst the poorest (ibid). Half of the 2.3 million farm families and rural households are food insecure (ibid). Problems include growing population, inaccessibility of adequate and appropriate extension services, credit to buy high priced inputs, and markets for trading and as a result livelihoods operate under conditions of low productivity.

The majority of observers report, as the FFSSPPFWG did, that: “Many of these farm families turn to natural resource exploitation for income, to cultivation on marginal lands and steep slopes, and encroach on gazetted forest reserves and estates” (FFSSPPFWG nd). However, a significantly different spin is put on this situation by Mayers *et al.* (2001) who have been closely involved in the NFP. They say that: “Forest goods and services may be crucial components of these livelihoods and could be further developed to improve them through enhancing their contributions to household fuel supplies, building materials, cash or needs of soil fertility.” (Mayers *et al.*, 2001: p9): These authors see the NFP as an opportunity to respond to the “urgent needs of the poor”. In other contexts it has generally proved difficult to effectively substitute, let alone enhance, the direct productive contributions of forest exploitation through co-management. This is not to say that there has not been considerable success and interest in co-management, only to be clear that direct productive contributions to livelihoods have proved hard to realize. Mayers *et al.*’s own analysis of macro-policy

influences on forests and livelihoods, itself identifies a number of serious negative trends (2001:33, see Table 1).

Table 1. Macro-policy influences on forests and livelihoods – challenges for the NFP

<p>There are positive trends rooted in macro-policy development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Inflation is down and growth is increasing</i> – encouraging investment, at least by a few niche forest product producers and the larger private sector in forestry • <i>Primary school enrolment is up</i> – which in time increases the capacity of the workforce, small entrepreneurs and management in forests • <i>Smallholders are benefiting from market liberalization</i>, e.g., removal of restrictions on burley tobacco – providing a much needed boost to livelihoods but at the expense of woodlands in some areas as farm sizes increase • <i>Privatisation and decentralization</i> are creating new opportunities for other stakeholders notably in the commercial plantations, and in smallholder tree production. • <i>Land policy reform</i> – the draft new Land Policy includes proposal to allow for the registration of communal land. This is intended to increase security of access and use, which should increase willingness to make long term investments for production, including tree planting.
<p>However, there are also negative trends for livelihoods and forests exacerbated by macro-policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Land shortage and food insecurity is chronic</i> – which is neither conducive to long-term smallholder tree production or larger forestry investment. It puts additional pressure on forests by stimulating agricultural expansion at the expense of forest resources. Such trends reduce the possibility of smallholders investing their precious land, time and task in the forest and tree resources which could help them stabilize and improve their livelihoods. • <i>Credit use and repayment is declining</i> – which militates against small and medium enterprise in forestry. • <i>Roads, law and order are still deteriorating</i> – which keeps smallholder farm gate prices low and reduces security of forest and tree assets. • <i>Income inequalities are increasing</i> – exacerbated by currency devaluation which benefits only those with access to foreign exchange and markets. Within households, apparently positive effects such as market liberalization of tobacco have exacerbated gender inequalities. • <i>HIV/AIDS is overwhelming</i> the abilities of the social services to contain it and is a major cause of mortality in service provision agencies, rural and urban communities alike. The epidemic also has other massive impacts on livelihoods – reduced availability of labour, increased responsibilities for orphans and the sick, and the financial demands of funerals. • <i>Inadequate fuelwood is a chronic problem</i> which, in a country where an estimated 93 per cent of all energy used is derived from biomass, has resulted in the diversion of household time (particularly female labour) away from productive activities to the search for fuel; the burning of crop residues and available biomass to the detriment of soil fertility; and reduced consumption of energy through less frequent cooking – with attendant adverse nutrition consequences, particularly for children. • <i>Civil service reform and shrinking budgets</i> have contributed to a collapse in capacity in some key areas, and on-the-ground realities are revealing the costs in e.g., poor plantation and natural woodland management. • <i>Weakly-planned decentralization</i> needs much attention to rise to the demands for a quite radical devolving of decision-making, capacity and resources to district and sub-district level if local communities are going to be able to realize opportunities to access resources, assert their rights and rise to their responsibilities.

Source: Mayers *et al.*, 2001: p33, Box 3.

Forest resources in Malawi fall under three main tenures (see Table 2): public lands (including all protected areas), customary lands and private lands (mainly leased to smallholders or estates, mainly tobacco) (all following from Jere *et al.*, 2000). Although public lands account for two-thirds of Malawi’s forest resources, 75 per cent of indigenous woodland is on customary lands and residence on customary land allows cultivation, fuelwood and timber collection for domestic use and livestock grazing. “Customary land is the most critical in terms of vulnerability, complexity and role in livelihoods. It is also where

most uncertainty exists regarding the Act and the role of the DoF” (Jere *et al.*, 2000: p43). The end of the policing associated with Banda’s era meant that “tree theft from public and private lands accelerated dramatically (in some areas whole forests disappeared almost literally overnight)” (Walker and Peters, 2001: p414). Whilst illegal cutting existed during one-party rule, punishments were severe, but today tree theft is often perceived as a morally justifiable necessity and is rationalized in terms of long-standing cultural claims and grievances (Walker and Peters, 2001: p414). Democratisation in Malawi accelerated deforestation with “a euphoric sense that ‘democracy’ means the overthrowing of all confining rules of the old regime, a lack of enthusiasm among political leaders for enforcing unpopular forest regulations, and a reduction in state enforcement capacities” (Walker and Peters, 2001: p414). Customary land is where most agricultural expansion occurs and where management systems are weakest and therefore vulnerable to over-exploitation. It is customary land that is targeted for CBFM under the NFP.

Forests are unevenly distributed with the northern region being the most forested and experiencing the lowest pressure for clearance (see table 2). In the South where half the population lives, there is little forest cover left and so clearance is only 2,000 hectares p.a. This is in contrast to the Central region, where 39 per cent of the population live and 30 per cent of forest cover is found and where clearance was 32,000 hectares p.a. In the North, where 40 per cent remains under forest and only 11per cent of population lives, the pressure is much less at 14,000 hectares p.a. (Walkers and Peters, 2001: p414). Despite the pressure for land for cultivation, “trees are not just a minor crop although they are least prioritized by the local communities” (nd: 25). Natural and man-made indigenous ‘miombo’ forests and plantations of exotics “play an important role in providing basic human needs (fuel, food, fodder, fibre and pharmaceuticals), employment, income and foreign exchange, hence contributing to social development”(FFSSPPFWG nd: 10).

Table 2. Distribution of Forest Cover and Population Across Malawi’s Regions (Kms²)

Region	Total Forest Cover	Forest Reserves	National Parks and Game Reserves	Forests on Customary Lands	Population
Northern	11,231	2,358	3,060	5,813	1.23 (12%)
Central	7,374	2,577	4,120	677	4.19 (38%)
Southern	7,823	2,970	2,500	2,353	5.35 (50%)
Malawi	26,428	7,905	9,680	8,843	10.77 (100%)

Source: FSPPF WG nd: 11.

Livelihood contributions of forest resources in Malawi include food, fodder, organic manure, fuel, medicine, building materials, household items, coffins and “many more intangible benefits such as cultural symbols, ritual artifacts and sacred sites” (nd: 25) as well as services such as soil fertility, controlling soil erosion, providing shade, ornamental functions, fencing and boundary demarcation (nd: 15). Both rural and urban people depend on forests and woodlands as “crucial sources of firewood, poles, timber, fiber, and traditional medicine.” (Walkers and Peters, 2001: p414). Throughout Malawi, “poverty is severe and chronic, and alternatives to forest products (e.g., electricity or kerosene for cooking) are beyond the financial reach of all but a tiny minority.” (Walker and Peters 2001: p414).). Considerable evidence “shows that trees provide the only source of livelihood for the poor or marginalized families and those temporarily in need during the hungry season or in poor farming years” (FFSSPPFWG nd: 25).

NTFP trade is “an important economic activity as it involves a great number of people including gatherers, producers and wholesale and retail traders” (and includes fruits, mushrooms, seeds, spices, nuts, charcoal, medicines, cane, household goods such as sponges, mortars, pestles, utensils, and wood carvings, food wrapping leaves and tool handles.”) (nd: 25). Despite this, surprisingly little is known about changes in livelihoods and the resulting impact on forest resources, but what information that does exist suggests that these tend to be negative trends that exacerbate pressure on already depleted forest resources and undermine conditions conducive to greater investment in rural areas. For example, the FFSSPPFWG found that forest resources are becoming scarcer through depletion and through changing land use systems (nd: 7). It also noted that women “depend on tree products and assume an ever growing share of family work as men seek cash income by wage migration... However, as men migrate to find paid income this results in labour deficit on the farm which women have to fill. This leaves not only less time for collecting firewood and fodder, but also less time for farming” (ibid). At the same time, whilst women were generally more associated with forests through their household roles of firewood and water collection and use (ibid), the study found that they had less incentives to plant trees where they lacked legal rights to land.

Although there appears to be a wide area of agreement over the importance of the role that forest resources play within livelihoods, there are significantly different opinions about the potential of forestry to play a role in offering a way out of poverty, or at least a way out of chronic poverty (see table 3 below for the challenging findings of the ground-truthing about livelihoods). Whilst Mayers *et al.* (2001: p9) see an opportunity to respond to the “urgent needs of poverty”, the FFSSPPWG found that the scope for farm forestry to contribute to alleviating poverty was minimal. As they see it then, the potential to respond to the needs of the poor is therefore largely confined to co-management. In many cases, at the moment, forest resource use appears to be more critical for coping practices (negative diversification) rather than for positive diversification. One clear example of this in the past is the displacement of forests by refugees both for camps, and for firewood for burning and for sale to generate an income. It appears to be the chronically poor and those living nearby plantations who are most dependent on their subsidized materials, but to be the less poor who would be able to respond to better prices for forest products by investing in developing forest resources on their own land.

Table 3. Ground-truthing findings of the NFP about livelihoods

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Considerable <i>indigenous knowledge and skills</i> for managing forest goods and services are often available at village level• Households will not invest precious labour and time nurturing trees when there are more pressing needs for food security. Thus often the most significant support which can be given to ‘forestry’ at local level is to focus on <i>improving labour efficiency and food security</i> – with forestry extension information and inputs only having much impact when such improvements have already been made.• Dependence on wood from government plantations is high in some communities, and <i>these subsidized resources are a disincentive</i> for many other communities to invest in forestry.• <i>Diversity of village-level institutions</i> which can be effective in management of forest resources needs to be recognized – and a flexible approach to developing Village Natural Resource Management Committee is needed, rather than forcing conformity to a blueprint.• Demand for improved forms of farm forestry and limited forestry extension is high, and a focus is needed on improving the <i>quality and targeting of forestry extension</i>, as well as expanding capacity.• Capacity of the FD at district level is low compared to some other government agencies and NGOs, and district forestry offices are often overlooked in local initiatives. The potential for <i>partnerships between the FD and other forestry related institutions</i> at district level is high” |
|--|

Source: Mayers *et al.*, 2001:46.

The WGCM's case studies of recent participatory resource management initiatives³ suggests that income generation is a common component of projects with the intention of diverting livelihood dependence away from the sale of firewood and charcoal⁴ (see table 4 below). Sometimes, but with varying success, these income generation activities include developing alternative uses of forest resources, for example for bee-keeping. A lack of alternative income sources and inadequate incentives for protection are noted in several instance. It is revealing that the stakeholder ranking as part of the NFP consultations placed fuelwood and charcoal sellers as the third most numerous group affecting forestry but ranked their potential to contribute to good forestry lowest (out of 17). Curiously the same ranking saw smallholders on the other hand as the most numerous groups with the most potential to contribute to good forestry (Mayers *et al.*, 2001: p49). 'Pit sawyers' and 'small NTFP enterprises' receive middling rankings in terms of their number and their potential to contribute to 'good forestry'. Questions we return to in our micro-level studies are: are these groups of people really distinct or do these represent the multiple livelihood strategies of smallholder households? In the case of firewood and charcoal selling do these represent the desperately single-stranded livelihood strategies of chronically poor households? The ranking betrays the legitimacy that is accorded to smallholder 'needs' as most legitimate in contrast to the unacceptability of firewood selling and charcoal making with debates on CBFM. In practice the latter have provided an important distribution network particularly to urban areas of cheap fuel. Whilst there are clear problems around sustainability of pricing of fuelwood and charcoal and around developing mechanisms for the sustainable harvesting and production of fuelwood and charcoal⁵, this policy discourse effectively labels a key livelihood strategy for those who are chronically poor as undesirable.

Whilst there are studies that focus on directly productive or consumptive users of forest resources within livelihoods, the social, political and spiritual uses of forests have generally been neglected. In some areas burial groves remain important sacred sites, which have come under considerable pressure in the context of rising HIV/AIDS infections and related increases in mortality. In social and political terms the ability to have a say in the way your resources are managed and to resist or reverse their alienation by the state or the private sector is far greater than previously. Being part of the exercise of local authority and effective local action may well enhance a sense of identity/belonging and in a context of rising insecurity, the capacity to protect communal woodlands may enhance certainty and the possibility of building local relations of trust. This is not to deny that such 'social capital' also involves the exercise of power and local control but even where this is considerable it may be useful to consider what lies behind a calculated decision to participate or cooperate for those who appear to be 'losers'. Although frequently relegated in the face of desperate livelihood needs, there is undoubtedly also evidence that people appreciate and take pride in their local environment and express an enjoyment of trees. In considering livelihood interests in forests, questions of tenure and local politics around natural resources and their management are integral.

On customary lands trees are planted both individually and communally – individual planting occurs on farm boundaries, as windrows, in woodlots, in the fields within crops and in the homestead. Farms often include areas of bush or shrubland and remnants of forests including taller trees, often along riverbanks or on steep slopes (ibid: 12). Because of differences in marriage and kinship systems, most individually-planted trees in matrilineal societies in the South and Central regions is by women whereas in the patriarchal systems of the Northern region it is by men. Although "in most cases" use "lies in the hands of men regardless of who planted" (FFSSPPFWG nd: 11), the Farm and Small-Scale Private Production Forestry

Working Group reported that “women respondents...said that husbands cut down trees and sell in the form of fuelwood charcoal, planks, poles the money of which, the whole of it, does not go back to the family.” (nd:11-12) Most women therefore opt for food trees and firewood trees whereas men prefer trees that yield poles, planks for construction and can be used to generate cash (nd:11-12,20). Men were more disinterested in individual planting of trees in matrilineal systems (nd: 20) and even within patrilineal systems, the “Rural-urban migration of men and boys normally during the rainy season has led to tree planting by more women who are at that time heads of the households and busy.” (nd: 16).

The communal planting of woodlots normally occurs on open customary land (hilly areas, dambos, rocky ground, or degraded grazing areas) and the FFSSPPFWG found that they planted species suitable for poles and planks for development projects and for firewood during community ceremonies (funerals, initiations, weddings) and for sale (the money being deposited in the community’s account for other development activities) (nd: 12). Communal planting is generally overseen by a committee selected by the community and bound by agreed rules and regulations agreed by the community (nd: 12). The FFSSPPFWG study found that “the poor... participate but mostly in the communal woodlots by the fact that they have less land to spare for the individual woodlots” (ibid). Inevitably, “The closer people are to forest reserves the less trees they plant (cf. Villagers around Chongoni, Dedza district) and vice versa. When there is scarcity of forest resources in the vicinity of the village, people have a particular interest for a private planting or plantation in degraded areas. And mostly they would go for more fruit and pole trees than fuel wood trees.” (nd: 15). Traditional beliefs impact on people’s tree planting and use strategies: “The traditional beliefs have enhanced the protection and management of trees and forests in the graveyards in most societies of Malawi. A villager in Chiradzulu reported that the ancestors will be angry and therefore misfortune may befall that particular individual who cuts down trees from the graveyard or the whole village. They also said it is one way of respecting their forefathers. Again, some Malawian societies have a belief that there are some trees which are not supposed to be planted at the homestead because they bring disease such as asthma during the time of their flowing.” (FFSSPPFWG nd: 16).

Walker and Peters (2001) describe struggles over the meanings of boundaries between local people and private and state landowners around the collection of forest resources. Like Fortmann and Bruce (1988), they agree that rights to trees and specific tree products are separable from territorial claims and both sets of authors argue that conceiving of resource tenure as a bundle of comprehensive rights within territorial boundaries may misunderstand the nature of local claims and contests around resources (Walkers and Peters, 2001: p421). For example, Walker and Peters (2001: p416, 418) found that in Mchombo village 65 per cent of households relied upon an adjacent private estate for firewood and 59 per cent for poles and that in Napolo Village 71 per cent of households relied on cutting trees illegally from the neighbouring National Park for larger poles. In both cases villagers felt morally justified in their thefts referring back to long-standing grievances. In the case of Napolo, the villagers disinheritance by the gazetting of the Park is supported by the headman’s powerful claim that the Park contains a burial site for his ancestors (419). In another example, Chimaliro FR was gazetted in 1926 and although communities remained involved in firebreak maintenance and early burning they were moved out of the forest and discouraged from practising shifting cultivation within the reserve. Whilst one village remained behind as a forest caretaker and was initially permitted to cultivate certain areas, it too was relocated in 1945 and cultivation was prohibited within in the reserve (Kayambazinthu, 2000). There is ample evidence that alienation from forest reserves is widespread and contested.

Malawi’s traditional political structure was multi-layered involving Ndunas (or councilors), Village Heads, Group Village Heads, Sub-traditional Authorities of Sub-Chiefs, Traditional Authorities or Chiefs, Senior Traditional Authorities and Paramount Chiefs. The traditional structure has been deliberately co-opted by past governments, particularly during the post-Independence era and traditional governance remains an instrument of the political and administrative framework of government (Kayambazinthu, 2000: p51). The district administration – the main structure of local governance – runs parallel to the traditional structure and is “the main channel for central and local government authority in the office of the president and cabinet for reaching out to local communities.” (Kayambazinthu, 2000: p51). The two systems converge most closely at the lowest level of the VDC, chaired by the Village Head, which is responsible to all development activities in the villages. “In some cases in the past, particularly under the dictatorial rule of the one-party state, real power in driving activities at the local level lay with the state. The existence of almost parallel, local and central government structures to the traditional ones, particularly during the one-party state where the former had over-riding powers, brought about greater weakening of the latter” (Kayambazinthu, 2000: p52). Management of village forest areas was subject to political manipulation in this way and Kayambazinthu warns that contemporary influences may continue to weaken traditional structures as local chiefs are now on the pay roll of the local government authority and political opportunism may hijack devolution over NRM to the community level (2000: p53).

Despite this, there are often community institutions in existence managing trees on community land and these take varying forms of associations (relatively informal and usually self-initiated user groups often supported by an NGO) or committees (more formal and linked into government structures) (Jere *et al.*, 2000: p13). Jere *et al.*, (2000: p13) emphasise the capacity for change for the persistence of such organizations but also point to a multiplicity of over-lapping institutions even at the local level when “government agencies, NGOs and projects will establish a new committee for their purpose of project without always assessing existing institutional structures and existing organizations” (2000: p14). Few studies have attempted to investigate fully the impact of recent participatory initiatives on local institutional structures and local power relations. The WGCM’s case studies of recent participatory management initiatives (see table 4) noted that the ‘weakness’ of traditional authority causes considerable difficulties⁶. Although not systematically investigated, 2/7 cases mention weak traditional leadership, 5/7 that participation was uneven and that there were problems with institutionalisation and in at least three corruption was mentioned.

Table 4. CBNRM, livelihood, diversification and leadership

Initiative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Chimaliro FR	X	√	X	√	√	√	√
Nyika/Vwaza Border Zone	?	√	√	√	√	√	√
Kasungu NP	?	X	?	?	?	√	?
Blantyre City Fuelwood Project	√	√	√	√	?	√	√
Lilongwe FP	√	√	√	√	?	?	√
Mwanza East CBNRM	?	?	?	?	√	√	?
Lake Chilwa	X	√	?	?	√	√	?
Lake Malombe	X	?	?	√	X	X	√

Source: Based on Jere *et al.*, 2000.

Key: 1 = Weak traditional leadership creating problems
 2 = Uneven participation
 3 = Corruption

- 4 = Problematic lack of official recognition /institutionalization
- 5 = IG to divert fuelwood and charcoal selling/fishing
- 6 = Forest/water-based livelihoods activities being developed
- 7 = inadequate income/livelihood alternatives problematic
- √ = occurring
- X = not occurring
- ? = not reported

To conclude then, poverty is severe in Malawi with around half of rural families struggling in the face of basic food insecurity. These households face major constraints in enhancing their livelihoods, including small landholdings, inadequate extension services, lack of markets, lack of credit and poor human resources, all of which are being exacerbated by the growing impact of HIV/AIDS and the deterioration of law and order that has accompanied democratisation. Although forest resource exploitation is a part of these livelihoods in various important ways, it is by no means clear that improving their governance can substantially enhance the livelihoods of the poorest. Livelihood trends appear to be exacerbating pressures on already depleted forest resources as in the current climate forests offer free/subsidised inputs for sale, consumption or other livelihood activities including encroachment for agriculture. Given the vacuum of power over forest resources, technically illegal practices are widespread and justified by a heart-felt morality of coping and survival strategies. Forest resources use and control is clearly differentiated by wealth and gender and conflicts of interest over forest development are evident within households and communities and between these groups and TAs and the state.

Few rural families are in a position to respond to increasing incentives to invest in forest resources, only a tiny minority can afford to substitute current forest resource use, and community planting has so far been strongly orientated to clearly circumscribed uses that effectively limit its capacity to contribute to enhancing livelihoods. Improving governance over forest resources is perhaps more likely to undermine and threaten some livelihood activities, particularly of the poorest, in the short term at least. Participatory initiatives reviewed by the WGCM are orientated to taking livelihood pressures off forest resources with little understanding of how activities like firewood selling and charcoal making representing the coping strategies of the poorest and activities like pit-sawing and NTFP enterprises may represent part of broader diverse livelihoods. In the 5 WGCM case studies that considered the adequacy of livelihoods for those engaged in participatory management initiatives, all were found to face problems developing alternative livelihoods and had inadequate income (see table 4 above). The evidence available suggests that, as with other international experiences, that community forestry in Malawi may struggle to develop livelihoods or alleviate poverty and significant political challenges lie ahead if it is to at least succeed in more sustainable management of forest resources. We turn now to the evidence from our own case studies.

Dedza District Case Studies

Study Areas

The research work was conducted in four villages, Mpango, Chiwamba and Lumwira in TA Kasumbu and Phumula in TA Kachindamoto. This sample of villages lie on the east-west transect of the wider project and represent communities with varying forest resources ranging from abundant to scarce as one moves from Mpango, Phumula, Chiwamba to Lumwira, in

that order. This variation also reflects varying resource management and utilisation problems (see product matrix in Appendix).

Chiwamba lies on top of the escarpment with steep topography where cultivation takes place on very steep slopes. There is little evidence of spare land that could be brought under cultivation; most of the spare land not under cultivation being rocky. Some gardens of maize, potatoes, cassava and paprika are to be found in river valleys. The people, who are mostly of the Yao tribe (muslim and matrilineal) moved from Mangochi (South of Lake Malawi) in 1960s and probably brought with them the cultivation of cassava and trade in fish; the lake being within 6 hours walk one-way.

There is little miombo woodland of poor quality on the escarpment. The only good trees are mainly found in river courses but these are vulnerable to frequent cutting by pit-sawyers apparently from within the village. As a result of the deforestation, mainly due to clearing for agriculture and for settlement, the village graveyard does not have natural woodland but it is instead covered in young eucalyptus trees, a very unusual scenario for a graveyard in Malawi. There are, however, a few small privately-owned and protected woodlots, mainly of eucalyptus trees. Individuals or households who own them appear to have more land than the average person or household. Apart from these, wood resources are mainly accessed from rocky areas with open access or illegally from the nearest forest reserve. Encroachment into the forest reserve even for cultivation is visible.

Phumula village is at bottom of the escarpment but having a lot of land for cultivation. The village is bounded by rivers on the east and western side and it lies on the border with Ntcheu District. The village boundary reaches up the hills at the bottom of the escarpment with an abundance of natural woodland. The area has a mixture of Ngoni and Chewa tribes with the former, the larger group, being the original settlers who migrated down from the hills. Ngoni are patrilineal muslims. Miombo woodland is widely dispersed on customary land and of varying condition with considerable amount of bamboo being available. There are a few eucalyptus planted on homestead land. There is no apparent shortage of forest resources although it is generally felt that the miombo is more open than in the past.

Mpango village is situated in the Dedza hills with adequate land for agriculture and for tree planting. The village is composed of a mixture of Yao and Chewa tribes both of which are matrilineal. The village shares the management of a customary land woodland on the hill with neighbouring village (Tembwe). Each village protects and uses its side of the hill and has its own VNRMC. Protection allows collection of dead wood but no cutting. The village has undergone a training in forest resource assessment to enable the community to quantify their own forest resources. Apart from the miombo woodland, the village also has a pine plantation established and handed over to them by UNHCR. The patches of woodland around fields on flatter land are somewhat degraded and are almost grassland. However, there are quite a lot of trees around the homesteads, including eucalyptus and some private miombo woodland.

Lumwira, composed of a mixture of Ngoni and Chewa tribes, is a contrast case with little/no forest resources. Wood requirements are accessed from a nearby plantation. Most land is under cultivation, especially for maize and vegetables in the valleys.

Results and Discussion

In this section we report some of the results from the various PRA exercises, by first looking at general community perceptions about forest resource availability and control and how this has changed in the study areas, particularly since multipartyism in 1994. In subsequent sections, we deal in greater detail the perceptions regarding the utilisation and management of forest resources and how these relate to people's livelihood diversification strategies.

- *Resource Availability, Change and Control*

The links between diversified livelihoods and forest resources as mediated by changing government policy and, more particularly, forest policy and institutions regulating management and utilisation, appear to have been strongly felt by most respondents (76%) across the study areas (Table 5). This is to the extent that removal of government controls and restrictions of access and use of resources was perceived by 26 per cent of these respondents as having placed the control and management in the hands of the local traditional leaders and their people. With easier, unrestricted access and more freedom to own forest resources (unlike prior to 1994), there was now a greater sense of awareness of government's intention for communities, with the assistance of extension workers, to depend on themselves in managing and utilising resources. The same proportion of respondents (26%), however, alluded to the fact that the changes also resulted in over-dependence on the resources to sustain people's livelihoods. This also resulted in an increased section of the population willing to engage in the sale of forest products, giving less regard for wise management and the future of the forest resources, and making the resources more scarce, distant and expensive. More pessimistic views were expressed by 25 per cent of the respondents, who linked changes to policy and governing institutions to the general destruction of NRs and therefore reduced availability of NRs for sustainable livelihoods. Invariably, most of these respondents cited examples of deforestation through wanton and illegal cutting of trees, setting of fires to forests, all resulting in forest degradation and loss of soil fertility. Part of the destruction has been through overexploitation of NRs to sustain people's livelihoods since most of them are unemployed, some of whom lost their jobs from government during the implementation of the Structural Adjustment Programme. Apparently, because of these factors and/or the new-found freedoms under the democratic dispensation after 1994, communities also felt rules were not being respected and offenders were not disciplined, everyone was minding their own business and there was a general lack of cooperation in the care and management of NRs.

The above responses on the effect of policy and institutional changes on resource availability and impact on livelihoods appear to have varied between members of a household, between households and between villages. Generally, perceptions of change or no change were better appreciated for by the elder members of households than the children, except in the case of (iii) (Table 5) where there was a general convergence of thought among household members in terms of the resulting resource degradation and livelihood hardships. Most children attributed this to traditional institutions, rather than government policy, which prevent and restrict their involvement and interest in forestry-related issues affecting their villages. Again, except for the response in (iii), the effects of policy and institutional changes on forest resource availability and people's livelihoods were more strongly felt in the poor households than in the better off households (HH5 - 10). This relationship, almost linear as one moves from poor to better off households, i.e., HH25 - 35 to HH5 - 10, shows that the changes, since multipartyism in 1994, affected resource availability and people's livelihoods. This

shows a greater dependence of poorer households on forests and forest resources for sustaining their livelihoods.

The linkage between the extent of forest and forest resources and people's diversified livelihoods in the face of changing policy and institutional set-up seem to be further attested by the varying degrees of perceptions between the different study areas. Lumwira, with the most limited forest resources, has the highest percentage of respondents (42 % (i) + 30 % (iii)) reflecting on the degradation and scarcity of forest resources and the limited opportunities that the changes offer for improved resources and livelihoods. The new opportunities, provided for in the new, forest policy empower rural communities to engage in community-based conservation and sustainable utilisation of forest resources. This, as a means of alleviating poverty, and achieving sustainable self-sufficiency in wood and forest-derived products for improved and diversified livelihoods, seem therefore not to be fully appreciated (8 % of (i)). This, as reflected in (i), is in contrast to the greater appreciation by the Chiwamba respondents (34 %), with open-access to available miombo woodland and nearby forest reserve, and by Mpango respondents (59 %) with substantial customary land woodland, pine and eucalypt plantations. None of the respondents in Phumula, with an abundance of natural woodland and no apparent shortage of forest resources, registered any appreciation (in (i)) of the positive changes since 1994. This is largely because control and management of forest resources has always been in the hands of the community, under traditional leadership. To this community, the policy change has either brought no significant change to resource availability for diversified livelihoods (43 %, the highest across study areas) or contributed significantly to forest resource degradation (45 %, highest across study areas), creating some level of mismanagement and weakening of traditional institutional structures.

From these results, it would appear then that the policy and associated institutional changes have had no real impact where there have been limited forest resources and where communities have always had control, under a traditional set-up, over their own resources. For the former, in the case of Lumwira, government's development efforts, informed by the current forest policy, should aim at establishing and rehabilitating forest resources, in order for communities to appreciate government's policy and role in alleviating their poverty and enhancing their livelihood strategies. In the latter case (Phumula), where perceptions about policy change point to resource degradation and institutional breakdown, and therefore adversely affecting livelihood strategies, government should put in place political, institutional and socio-economic frameworks that promote existing traditional structures and livelihood diversification strategies. As an example, and as will be seen later, existing extension services to the community in Phumula is rather weak and need strengthening.

To establish the level of livelihood diversification and dependence on existing forest resources in the study areas, a number of resource uses and NR-based livelihood activities were determined between household members and across villages and households based on wealth ranking. Although a few resource use and livelihood activities, such as pit-sawing (L), pottery (L), game hunting (P and M), curio-making (M) and bee-keeping (P), were acknowledged to be done mostly by men these seem to have been influenced by existing resources and wealth ranking (Table 6, (i)). The last three activities, which can only take place with abundant resources have been mentioned for Phumula and Mpango, which have more woodland resources than Chiwamba and Lumwira. The latter villages, which registered pit-sawing and pottery, have limited areas of natural woodland but with communities able to access timber from distant places, e.g., Mpango, and clay soil for pottery from degraded

woodland areas. In general and albeit based on a few respondents, most of these activities seem to be common among members in the better off wealth rank perhaps suggesting their greater access to necessary resources than members in the poorer households. The most common resource use and livelihood activities among household members and across villages are collection of various FPs for domestic use, for sale, for building or construction of various domestic structures and for weaving baskets, cane furniture, etc., in that order of importance. The most frequently mentioned activities of collection of FPs for domestic use (37 %) and sale (33 %), and weaving (7 %) with the exception of carpentry (9 %, done only by men and sons), are invariably done by all members of a household, across all villages.

Table 5. Observed changes in resource availability and control since multipartyism in 1994 as indicated by household respondents (expressed as percentage of respondents per response)

Response	Village	Husband	Wife	Son	Daughter	HH5-10	HH15-20	HH25-35	Mean %
(i) NRs now under control/management of local communities and chiefs – easier, unrestricted access; suspension of licences to extract resources from forest; government wants people to depend on themselves in managing NRs; more care and protection with assistance from extension workers; more freedom to own forest resources (23 %)	Lumwira	8	-	-	-	-	-	8	8
	Chiwamba	8	17	8	-	-	17	17	34
	Phumula	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
	Mpango	33	25	-	-	17	17	25	59
		50	42	8	0	17	34	50	
(ii) FRs more scarce, distant, expensive and declining – people more dependent on sale of products to sustain livelihood; lack of care in management; increased population (26 %)	Lumwira	14	21	7	-	14	7	21	42
	Chiwamba	-	14	-	-	7	7	-	14
	Phumula	14	-	-	7	7	7	7	21
	Mpango	-	7	7	7	-	7	14	21
		28	42	14	14	28	28	42	
(iii) Destruction of NRs, wanton & illegal cutting, degradation and loss of soil fertility – overpopulation & poverty; setting fires to forests; rules not respected & no disciplining of offenders; overexploitation to sustain livelihoods since people are unemployed; everyone minding own business & lack of cooperation (25 %)	Lumwira	-	-	15	15	23	-	7	30
	Chiwamba	7	7	-	7	15	-	7	22
	Phumula	15	15	7	7	31	7	7	45
	Mpango	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		22	22	22	30	69	7	23	
(iv) No noticeable change (26 %)	Lumwira	-	21	-	-	7	7	7	21
	Chiwamba	7	-	-	7	7	-	7	14
	Phumula	7	29	7	-	-	14	29	43
	Mpango	14	7	-	-	7	14	-	21
		28	57	7	7	21	35	43	

Table 6 Number of household members in resource use and livelihood activities, their proportion (rounded-off %) across villages and household wealth categories (L – Lumwira, C – Chiwamba, P – Phumula, M – Mpango; H – Husband, W – Wife, S – Son, D – Daughter; - zero response)

(i) Current stakeholders engaged in resource use and livelihood activities														
Resource Use stakeholder	Household members						Villages				Household Wealth Category			
	H	W	S	D	n (188)	%	L	C	P	M	5-10	15-20	25-35	
FPs Collectors for domestic use – mushrooms, firewood, bamboos, fruits, medicines, etc.	18	34	8	10	70	37	31	23	15	31	34	23	43	
FPs Collectors and sellers – mushrooms, trees, firewood, bamboos, fruits, etc.	12	22	8	20	62	33	32	23	16	29	42	19	39	
Carpenters	12	-	4	-	16	9	38	25	13	24	25	25	50	
Builders, constructors (houses, roofing, granaries, drying stands 'nthalo', etc)	2	4	4	2	12	7	17	33	17	33	17	33	50	
Weavers (Baskets, cane furniture, 'nsengwa', etc)	4	3	1	-	8	4	50	-	50	-	33	33	33	
Pit-sawyers	4	-	2	-	6	3	100	-	-	-	50	50	-	
Potters	-	6	-	-	6	3	100	-	-	-	50	50	-	
Game hunters	4	-	-	-	4	2	-	-	50	50	50	-	50	
Craft workers (e.g., curios)	2	-	-	-	2	1	-	-	-	100	100	-	-	
Bee Keepers	2	-	-	-	2	1	-	-	100	-	-	-	100	

(ii) Preferred/conceptualised forest-based activities as livelihood strategies under sufficient NRs													
Stakeholder Resource Use	Household members						Villages				Household Wealth Category		
	H	W	S	D	n	%	L	C	P	M	5-10	15-20	25-35
Carpentry (income, furniture)	26	8	12	2	48	12	8	33	21	38	46	38	17
Make curios (e.g., cars, etc)	17	-	11	2	30	7	-	47	33	20	53	38	19
Firewood for brewing beer	4	16	-	8	28	7	57	7	21	14	36	21	43
Basketry 'Nsengwa', etc	14	6	2	6	28	7	14	43	29	14	57	21	21
Weaving mats, etc.	12	5	8	-	25	6	13	8	37	42	43	35	22
Craftwork (hoe handles, etc)	10	4	6	4	24	6	-	58	25	17	50	17	33
Making cane furniture	15	-	9	-	24	6	7	13	70	10	54	24	22
Making pestle & mortar	14	-	10	-	24	6	10	14	56	20	28	44	28
Firewood for baking scones, cakes, etc	3	11	-	10	24	6	45	5	29	21	23	36	41
Plant Eucalypts woodlot as source of fuelwood	8	6	4	2	20	5	60	-	30	10	60	10	30
Plant Pines as source of timber for sale	9	4	7	-	20	5	-	-	50	50	48	36	16
Selling FPs (trees, poles, etc)	6	6	4	-	16	4	50	25	-	25	75	12	12
Making pots	2	6		4	12	3		100	-	-	-	50	50
Plant Gmelina/Cedrella for timber and fuelwood	6	4	2	1	13	3	60	-	30	10	60	10	30
Game hunting	7	-	-	-	7	2	-	-	50	50	50	-	50
Too old for anything/Cannot say as FPs are scarce	-	4	2	-	6	2	50	-	50	-	33	33	33
Ordering and selling potatoes, tomatoes, fish, etc.	2	-	-	4	6	2	50	-	50	-	66	33	-
Raising seedlings for sale	2	2	2	-	6	2	-	-	50	50	33	33	33
Building houses	4	-	2	-	6	2	25	25	25	25	24	20	56
Harvesting caterpillars	-	4	-	2	6	2	10	20	45	25	20	32	48
Timber sawing	2	-	2	-	4	1	100	-	-	-	50	50	-
Processing and preserving mushrooms for sale	-	2	-	2	4	1	-	50	-	50	50	50	-
Plant N-fixing trees	2	2	-	-	4	1	-	50	-	50	50	-	50
Bee keeping	2	-	2	-	4	1	-	-	50	50	50	50	
Building granaries	-	-	2	2	4	1	10	15	40	35	15	40	45
Make wine from fruits	-	-	-	2	2	.5	-	100	-	-	100	-	-
Sell crafts made by men, e.g., pestle and mortar	-	2	-	-	2	.5	-	100	-	-	100	-	-
Making drums for dances and choir	-	-	2	-	2	.5	-	-	-	100	-	-	100
Buying/selling firewood in bulk	-	-	-	2	2	.5	100	-	-	-	-	-	100
Collecting medicinal plants	-	-	2	-	2	.5	-	-	100	-	100	-	-
Making fruit juices	-	-	-	2	2	.5	-	100	-	-	100	-	-
Bartering baskets with maize	-	2	-	-	2	.5	100	-	-	-	-	100	-
<i>Average</i>	5.2a	2.9b	3.8b	1.7c			24a	25a	28a	23a	46a	26b	28b
<i>N</i>	32	32	32	32	407		32	32	32	32	32	32	32

In this table averages followed by different letters are significantly different and significance is indicated as follows: ns = not significant, *** = p < 0.001 for wealth ranking categories and ** = p < 0.01 for household members.

This is irrespective of how well off a household is. In addition, members within a household often registered more than one resource use and livelihood activities. This suggests that in developing diversification strategies households/communities do not necessarily have to belong to ideal type stakeholder groups, usually identified as headloaders, charcoal makers, pit-sawyers, etc. Rather, all these stakeholders may indeed be members of the same family and certainly of the same village, and not distinct interest groups as conceptualised by the NFP process.

The capacity of communities to develop livelihood strategies as a way out of poverty and for improving their welfare was examined (Table 6 – (ii)) by listing the views expressed by household members regarding forest-based activities they are likely to engage under sufficient NRs. The views expressed on these activities, 32 in all, are shown to be strongly differentiated within households, across villages and household wealth categories. However, the involvement of husbands in these activities (16) is significantly greater than for the rest of the household members, with no real difference between the wife and son, and the daughter being involved in the least number of activities (16). Though the data shows no significant differences in the number of activities each village is engaged in, there appear to be a significantly higher level of envisaged activities by the better off households (HH5 – 10) than the poorer (HH15 – 20 and HH25 – 35). To some extent there are differences that appear to be systematically related to wealth rank with poor to poorer households unable to either conceptualise or realise fully positive diversifications based around CBFM. Again, these findings point to the political-institutional mechanisms for CBFM that need to be addressed to overcome the skewed participation that could limit greater implementation for improved livelihoods and/or alleviating poverty as encapsulated in the NFP process.

- *Livelihood Use, Resource Management and Livelihoods*

The processes of diversification and their impact on the rural poor and not-so-poor as linked to natural resource management, policy and institutional environment and how these affect the diversification options of the poor are examined in this section by looking at four aspects of CBFM. These relate specifically to the availability and accessibility of forest extension to households, the level of involvement or participation in the control and management of forest resources, the hindering factors to having sufficient resources for diversification and the extent of CBFM in the study areas.

There is a general admission, albeit to varying degrees and less so by the children, between household members and across villages and household wealth categories of the positive impact of the existing institutional arrangements in promoting livelihood diversification (Table 7, a). In this regard 31 per cent of the expressed views indicate that communities have access to the available forest extension in areas of training, information and advice on proper forest resource management, conflict resolution and to technical assistance in nursery establishment, raising and planting of seedlings. Most of these extension services are delivered to the community by the extension worker through the Village Headman and, particularly the Village Natural Resources Management Committee (VNRMC), which appears to have the responsibility to train and advice the community. The extension worker appears therefore to take a back-seat role, with no real contact and interaction with the communities. This is confirmed by 69 per cent of the views expressed by households in all villages. In substantiating these views respondents gave a number of reasons. Extension workers are said to be rarely seen or not seen, presumably because they are too busy with other responsibilities or minding government-protected forests (27 %). Responds also indicated lack of opportunities, such as forestry development activities and shortage of land,

and time as having reduced their interest to access forestry extension services (16 % of the views). Further, the institutional arrangement to access extension materials through the Village Headman seem not to work, either because the Village Headman does not pass on vital information or, in the case of Lumwira Village, he would not accept extension materials for personal and political reasons. All these factors, including the admission by some respondents of having had no extension services delivered to them (10 %) and of the non-existence of extension workers (3 %), point to the general weakness of the existing extension delivery system to promote rural livelihood diversification in the study areas.

In considering factors that hinder households from having sufficient resources for diversification and improved livelihoods (Table 7, b), other factors other than institutional in nature become more important. These mainly include lack of money to buy seeds, seedlings, to get started and to pay labourers for those unable to work (25 % of responses). It also includes lack of farm inputs for establishing tree nurseries and for planting (13 %). These factors were mostly felt to varying degrees in all villages but most strongly by the poorer households (HH25 – 35) and not as much appreciated by the children. Various other factors (43 % of responses) point to limitations of knowledge in resource management, poverty and hunger, illness, lack of time for resource management as priority is given to cultivation of agricultural crops, schooling and other more immediate profit-making activities. Also restrictive are the lack of assistance from NGOs and extension workers, theft, intolerance of independent opinion by the village leadership largely from women and others not part of the village committee. In all, these reflect the fact that the ability of rural communities, particularly in the study areas, to diversify also hinges on the availability of material resources, enabling communities to engage in activities that would enable them to have sufficient resources. Important too is the knowledge with which to engage in such activities, the human-wellbeing of household members to participate in CBFM, the priorities they attach to natural resource management *vis-a-vis* other livelihood activities. This is inevitable under the general supporting institutional and policy environment that does not distinguish between participants on the basis of gender or position in the community.

The supporting institutional and policy environment may be best reflected by responses given by household respondents on their level of involvement or participation in the control and development of forest resources for livelihood diversification (Table 7, c). Community participation in resource management appears to be largely centrally controlled by the Village Headman and the village committee, who mobilise people to assist in the protection and management of village woodlands, and in planting trees. Other than managing and protecting one's own trees or woodlots, people's participation (as expressed by 32 % of responses) is seen as being restricted by the institutional set-up, requiring the authority of only the Village Headman and Committee members. The majority of respondents indicated an overall lack of participation (over 65 % of responses) across villages and within and between households. The children in most households are the least involved in CBFM. It is generally perceived that people are not given the opportunity or assigned any responsibility because they are either too young or are not part of the village committee (36 % of responses). Some respondents felt that the lack of advice, i.e., inadequate extension services, limit their participation (16 % of responses) and that women are not given a chance to actively take part in the control and development of forest resources (13 % of responses). The latter group was, however, optimistic of the future and that what was needed was to educate men and village leaders of the importance of their involvement. These results highlight the local institutional-social restrictions, which limit the full participation of women and the youth and, therefore, the livelihood diversification strategies for a household.

However, the gains made in CBFM as affected by new policies, politics and institutions (Table 7, d) appear to be appreciated by most households in all villages (65 % of responses). This is mainly due to the new government policy that has created an enabling environment for people to develop plans and manage resources with the assistance of forestry extension workers (25 %). This is perceived as also having given people greater authority over the control and management of forest resources, with the extension officer only seen as giving the necessary technical support (16 %). Such provisions are seen as having afforded greater cooperation and collaboration within communities and with the extension workers (10 %). Only a few responses (< 15 %) showed that there was no real collaboration, no deep interest and that there was still a lot to be done in educating people and the village leaders and that more work needs to be done by the extension staff for CBFM to be fully appreciated. These views are in stark contrast with those expressed by NGOs such as CONCERN, CARE and government officers operating in the study areas (Table 8). There is a general recognition among them of the wide acceptance of CBFM as having brought about greater cooperation, confidence and opened up opportunities for income generating activities. These have in turn brought self-reliance and improved development of forestry-based activities and that people are now able to develop their forest resources according to agreed plans. Taken together with views expressed by respondents in Table 7, it would appear that there is some disparity in the level of appreciation of CBFM between the communities and service providers.

Conclusions

Changing government policy and, more particularly, forest policy and institutions regulating management and utilisation have been strongly felt by communities in the study areas to have affected their livelihood diversification based on forest resources. This, however, varied between members of a household and between villages, implying differential dependence on the forest resources but with the poorer households having greater dependence on these resources for sustaining their livelihoods.

The extent of forest and forest resources and people's diversified livelihoods in the face of changed policy and institutional set-up appear to point to the fact that these changes have had no real impact where there have been limited forest resources and where communities have always had control, under a traditional set-up, over their own resources. For policy changes to make an impact, development efforts, informed by the current forest policy, should aim at establishing and rehabilitating forest resources, in order for communities to appreciate government's policy and role in alleviating their poverty and enhancing their livelihood strategies. In addition, government should strengthen political, institutional and socio-economic frameworks that promote existing traditional structures and livelihood diversification strategies in order to cement what is already a conducive policy environment for CBFM.

The level of livelihood diversification and dependence on existing forest resources in the study areas has been shown by the number of resource uses and NR-based livelihood activities among household members and across villages and households based on wealth ranking. The perceived capacity of communities to develop forest-based livelihood strategies as a way out of poverty and for improving their welfare in the future, appears differentiated within households, across villages and household wealth categories. Our data has shown that the capacity to base diversification on CBFM in order to improve livelihoods is strongly differentiated. There seem to be clear differences that are systematically related to wealth rank with poor to poorer households unable to either conceptualise or realise fully positive

diversifications based around CBFM. These findings point to the need for the NFP process to address the political-institutional mechanisms for implementing CBFM in order to overcome the skewed nature of participation that could limit its impact to improve livelihoods and/or alleviate poverty.

The processes of diversification and their impact on the rural poor and not-so-poor as linked to natural resource management, policy and institutional environment and how these affect the diversification options of the poor are related to several factors. These have been shown to include availability and accessibility of forest extension to households, the level of involvement or participation in the control and management of forest resources, the hindering factors to having sufficient resources for diversification and the extent of CBFM. In general, the study has revealed a general weakness of the existing extension delivery system as well as institutional problems as the main problems that would allow CBFM to effectively promote rural livelihood diversification. Other limiting factors mentioned by respondents, such as lack of resources, reflect the fact that the ability of rural communities, particularly in the study areas, to diversify also hinges on the availability of material resources, enabling communities to engage in activities that would enable them to have sufficient resources. Effective CBFM would have to embrace processes that would impart knowledge with which to engage in CBFM activities, the promote human-wellbeing of household members to participate in CBFM, re-orient through rigorous extension services the priorities they attach to natural resource management *vis-a-vis* other livelihood activities. The existing policy environment that essentially does not restrict participation based on gender and position in the community must be used to remove restrictive institutional support systems.

Community perceptions about the impact and level of CBFM are not at par with those from traditional leaders and committees, the practitioners in government and from the NGO groups operating in the study areas. In spite of the enabling environment created by the existing policy for CBFM, there is a general feeling in the study areas, on one hand, that more work has to be done on various aspects of CBFM. On the other, there is a general recognition among the practitioners of the wide acceptance of CBFM, greater cooperation, confidence and creation of opportunities for income generating activities. There is now greater self-reliance and improved development of forestry-based activities to enable communities develop their forest resources for diversification. Narrowing this gap in opinion would imply improving the relationships between communities, traditional leaders, village committees, NGOs and government agencies, effectively putting into full realisation the already strong policy and legal environment for CBFM to improve livelihood diversification and rural livelihoods and provide a route out of poverty.

Table 7. Number of household members expressing views about resource management and livelihoods, their proportions (rounded-off %) across villages and household wealth categories (L – Lumwira, C – Chiwamba, P – Phumula, M – Mpango; H – Husband, W – Wife, S – Son, D - Daughter)

a). Availability and accessibility of forest extension to households		Household members						Villages				Households				
		H	W	S	D	n	%	L	C	P	M	5-10	15-20	25-35		
(i)	Through extension workers and VH on forestry issues, for information from the district; advice on proper forest management, raising seedling, training on nursery techniques; frequent visits to committee and learn through committee; asking committee on many aspects of forestry development; how to take care of our woodlands; updated on forestry protection and management, conflict resolution, increase of forest resources	10	9	1	2	22	31	27	32	14	27	23	36	41		
(ii)	Extension workers rarely seen or not at all, probably busy managing protected government forests, e.g., Mua-Livulezi Forest Reserve, five years have passed (only access through radio programmes) (since forests got handed over to us), only familiar with agricultural extension workers, there is no forestry advisor or extension workers available	5	6	3	5	19	27	11	42	42	26	42	32	26		
(iii)	Not accessed due to lack of forestry development activities, shortage of land to plant trees; absent or away when the extension worker meets with the committee; concentrate on Kwacha literacy school, doing own things; whereabouts of extension worker not known, do not have time	3	6	1	1	11	16	9	64	9	18	64	18	18		
(iv)	Extension worker comes through the VH but the latter does not tell us anything to enable us manage and own our own forests, VH not interested, does not make use of extension worker, refused extension materials, e.g., seed, polythene tubes (later given to neighbouring Kumayani instead); not requested for assistance from government unlike in neighbouring village, people not interested (unlike in neighbouring village), Do not have leaders that can invite/bring in extension	3	5	1		9	13	67		11	22	44	12	44		
(v)	Not had any extension, although urgent need for its delivery		4	2	1	7	10			43	57		29	71		
(vi)	None, there are no extension workers			1	1	2	3		100					100		
		Total														
		70														

b). Problems one would face in trying to have sufficient woodland resources for diversification and improved livelihoods		Household members						Villages				Households		
		H	W	S	D	n	%	L	C	P	M	5-10	15-20	25-35
(i)	Lack of money to buy seed, seedlings, necessary tools, and to pay labourers; lack of capital to get started; and long distances to buy seedlings	9	16	6	3	34	25	41	27	6	27	38	24	38
	Shortage, lack, insufficient or no land available for tree planting	11	12	5	1	29	21	38	17	7	38	38	17	45
(ii)	Lack of tools for tree establishment, seed sowing and planting; farm inputs such as tree seedlings, tree seed of favoured timber species, watering canes, etc. for starting a nursery (do not belong to committee); materials for work	5	9	4		18	13		39	33	28	28	22	50
	Lack of training and knowledge in FRM, growing trees and various IGAs; lack of proper guidelines for resource management;	3	4	3	1	11	8	36	64			46	36	18
(iii)	Ill-health due to frequent illness, diseases; funerals, poverty and hunger and therefore less or no time for FRM; old age and therefore lack of strength	3	6			9	7	56		22	22	22	22	56
	Little time available for this type of work; at school, too old; too much time at home; priority is on cultivation of cereal crops; too much increased time for work on FRM, leading to less concentration on farming activities, too much time spent on settling disputes arising from FRM; too many things to do at the same time	4	3		1	8	6	13	25	50	13	25	38	38
(v)	No helpers or NGOs in forestry-based activities; forestry extension officer/advisor; lack of technical advice; lack of extension services	3	2	1		6	4		33	67		67	17	17
	Theft of FPs by fellow villagers/others when out to gardens and funerals; arson; ill-will from others who like destroying woodlands	2	1	1	1	5	4	40	20	20	20	80		20
(vi)	N/A		4	1		5	4			40	60		40	60
	None tolerance of independent opinion (the VH and community around may take my opinion as a threat to their roles and positions) (community may not respect or pay attention to what I say or suggest since I am a woman)	2	1	1		4	3			100		50	50	
(vii)	Lack of leadership for immediate decision-making for the village; lack of direction and provision of information on what to do to have sufficient FRs	1	1	1	1	4	3	75		25		25		75
	Red ants that destroy trees		1			1	1				100			100
(ix)	Too distant markets to sell FPs				1	1	1		100					100
	There are no problems here;	1				1	1				100			100
	Being sold seedlings near termination of rains		1			1	1				100			100
		Total												
		137												

c). Level of involvement/participation in control and development of forest resources		Household members						Village				Household		
		H	W	S	D	n	%	L	C	P	M	5-10	15-20	25-35
(i)	Not involved, everything in the hands of the VH; not given the opportunity, not assigned any responsibility – still young, not a member of the committee, have no committee to look after the forest (only able to voice my concerns); control is in the hands of VH and government	3	12	2	3	20	36	35	15	25	25	30	20	50
(ii)	Involved, e.g., assisting VH in managing graveyard woodland; planting, protecting and managing trees on own farmland; take part in putting out fires and general protection of village woodland by following governing rules , do whatever VH and committee asks us to do; work closely with VH to ensure sustainable forest resource; Involved, an overseer in the development of our forest; member of a political party and committee	10	4	3	1	18	32	22	11	22	44	44	22	33
(iii)	Not involved in village activities due to lack of advice; only have control over and look after my own forest ; Involved in control and management of own indigenous and exotic woodlands for present and future use		5	1	3	9	16		22	56	22	33	33	33
(iv)	Not involved, women not given a chance to take part (need to educate our leaders of the importance of involving women in such work); not accepted as a woman but optimistic about the future		5		2	7	13	29	71			29	29	43
(v)	N/A		1	1		2	4			100			50	50
							Total							56

d). The extent of CBFM as affected by policies, politics and new institutions		Household members					Village				Household			
		H	W	S	D	n	%	L	C	P	M	5-10	15-20	25-35
(i)	Enabling environment for CBFM with extension workers , freely discuss any developmental plans; NRs well managed and cared for, future protection only viable with extension workers (although they concentrate on government forests); people now more careful about protecting NRs with extension workers, understand need for protection to have adequate tree resources	5	3	3		11	25	9	9	27	55	55	27	18
(ii)	Authority now with people (extension only to give direction, guidance and appropriate management prescriptions; disseminate technical information)	4	4			8	16	25		63	13	25	25	50
(iii)	Do not know how these have affected CBNRM (due to lack of leadership)		4	3		7	14		57	29	14	14	43	43
(iv)	Not much hope except for a few people; only exist on existing forest and do not have a nursery; future in the hands the few in the committee and not in the rest of us	2	4		1	7	14		43		57	14	43	43
(v)	Afforded greater cooperation with extension workers and community - meet to discuss issues with guidance of extension worker ; promoted community involvement and collaboration with extension worker	4	1			5	10		40	20	40	20	40	40
(vi)	No real collaboration between the youth, the elderly and extension worker ; No future amongst us villagers; VH may again return seed and polythene tubes on political grounds; No deep interest in FRM due to political influence; situation needs immediate redress through extension; VH and committee to work with extension workers		2	1	1	4	8	75			25			100
(vii)	Need to be educated on current policy on FRM by the extension workers; need to be encouraged, training provided, incentives needed; capacity building needed by NGOs, government through extension workers;	1	1		1	3			100			33		67
(viii)	Able to manage our forests on our own initiative and without extension advice or political influence, without prescriptions from extension workers	1	1			2		50		50		50	50	
(ix)	Future lies in our hands, need extension workers to convince VH to disseminate information further to entire village; future of forest management lies in the hands of VH and frontline staff;	2				2		50		50				100
		Total					49							

Table 8. Views expressed by NGO and government representatives on the extent of CBFM as affected by policies, politics and new institutions

Common Responses	Respondents					
	DFO	CARE	CONCERN	FA (Ext.)	TA	CE
(i) Extent of CBNRM						
Widely covered						
Committees set up in many areas, Cooperation with various forestry based organisations						
It is so minimal in the area due to lack of support from local leaders and other agencies						
(ii) Successes and failures						
Establishment of Nurseries and woodlots						
Low adoption of technical advice (Knowledge)						
Many committees set up, training in forest resource management						
Not able to completely protect natural resources, few extension workers						
Pests destroying seedlings a very big set back						
Community tree planting, cooperation in various development activities and community work						
Woodlots of individual farmers are being established here and there as a success						
Some Village Natural resources Management Committees (VNRMCs) are functioning to date						
Some VNMRCs are being formulated						
Failures: Illegal pit sawing in the forest reserves						
(iii) Impact has CBNRM had on the wellbeing of local people						
Cooperation						
Confidence						
Hope for Income Generating Activities (IGAs)						
Self reliance materially, good health, improved development activities						
People are able to develop their forest resources as per their plans.						

Note: FA – Forestry Assistant; TA - Technical Assistant; CE = Chief Executive.

Footnotes

- ¹ In the absence of records giving time trends in the availability of forest resources, their control, livelihood use and management, qualitative methods and a structured questionnaire were used. Key interviews were conducted and tools from participatory rural appraisal (PRA) were used for household interviews and village focus group meetings, respectively. Key interviews were also done at the district level with the District Forestry Officer, non-governmental organisations (CARE, CONCERN), the District Executive Officer and Forestry Extension workers. Using a wealth-ranking index created in the wider project, household interviews were conducted by picking at random one in every five households within three categories of wealth rank. This meant interviewing 3 households in the poor wealth rank (HH25, 30, 35), 2 households in the middle wealth rank (HH20, 25) and 2 households in the better off wealth rank (HH5, 10). Four individual interviews were conducted in each household, representing a maximum of 28 households, i.e., involving the husband, wife, unmarried son and unmarried daughter in each household.
- ² The NFP distinguishes itself from the National Forest Action Plans (NFAPs) developed from the mid 1980s onwards in many countries following the FAOs Tropical Forestry Action Plan in terms of its focus on mechanism, instruments and processes rather than simply its (written) products (Mayers *et al.*, 2001: p12).
- ³ These included Chimaliro FR, Nyika-Vwaza Border Zone Project, Kasungu NP, Mwanza East CBNRM, Lilongwe Forestry Project, Blantyre City Fuelwood Project, Lake Malombe Fisheries and Lake Chilwa Fisheries.
- ⁴ In the plantation project of Blantyre City where selling fuel was the main aim, plantations proved of low productivity and other problems added to this difficulty.
- ⁵ Charcoal is better made from indigenous trees as is firewood but in practice much firewood is from plantations.
- ⁶ In some cases 'weak' traditional leaders 'were not able to organize...' in others, like the Blantyre City Fuelwood Project, control over land was negotiated away from TAs to develop forestry activities with the intention of handing-back to communities but leading to tensions.

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