Balancing men, morals and money: Women's agency between HIV and security in a Malawi village
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This document contains field notes of the anthropological study that led to Janneke Verheijen’s PhD dissertation *Balancing men, morals and money: Women’s agency between HIV and security in a Malawi village* (2013). In this dissertation many references are made to the field notes through codes. These codes refer to the specific document (P2, P3 or P8) and the specific paragraph within these documents. P2 contains the field notes of research assistant Gertrude Finyiza. P3 and P8 contain the field notes of Janneke Verheijen.

As described in the dissertation, the field notes were initially handwritten by Verheijen and Finyiza, and later typed out by a Malawian woman specially hired for this job. The typed out notes were then entered into a computer programme for qualitative data analysis (Atlas.ti). The paragraphs of the field notes were numbered by this software (explaining the sometimes strange numbering).

All documents contain the raw material – no editing of the field notes has been done accept for a replacement of all names (of both persons and places) by pseudonyms, abbreviations, or XXX. Most person pseudonyms consist merely of first names, even though in reality women are generally addressed as “(grand)mother of” followed by one of their (grand)children’s names, or by the name of their father or then-husband. By which name they are addressed or talked about can vary per occasion. For readability, all these varying references were replaced by a fixed pseudonym for each woman.

**Clarification P3:**

P3 contains the bulk of Verheijen’s field notes. Most of the notes were handwritten in notebooks, and later typed into a computer by a Malawian assistant – which explains some strange typos and punctuations. Most of the notes in this document are in English. However, the notes about the initial search for a research site are in Dutch. If you would like a translation of these notes, please contact the author at zokokov@yahoo.com. As time progresses, more ChiChewa words and sentences appear in these field notes. In some cases the words are followed by an English translation, in other cases the translation can be looked up in the Glossary. Most sentences in ChiChewa are translated in the text. Full paragraphs in ChiChewa are followed by a translated paragraph in English.
Glossary of frequently used ChiChewa word:

Chibwenzi = Boyfriend/girlfriend
Chitenje = Multifunctional piece of cloth that women wear over their skirts, carry their babies in on their backs, sleep on and/or under at night.
CUMO = Microfinance institute in Malawi, established by Concern Universal
Dotta = Gertrude’s English spelling of ‘daughter’
Ganyu = Piece work
Kachasu = Locally brewed gin
Kanyenya = Dried fish fried in maize flour Mandasi = snack (fried flour cake)
MASAF = Malawi Social Action Fund
Masamba = Green leafs for relish
Matemba = Dried fish
Ndiwo = Relish
Ngaiwa = Flour made of maize husks
Nkhokwe = Maize granary
Nsima = Thick maize porridge (the staple food)
Thobwa = Maize flour drink/gruel
Ufa = Maize flour
Ufa woyera = White maize flour
Usipa = Small dried fish
Zibwenzi = Boyfriends/girlfriends
Zigumu = Maize flour cakes
Zitenje = Plural of chitenje
Zitumbuwa = Maize flour cakes with banana

Glossary of frequently used abbreviations:

BS = business
DIL = daughter-in-law
GVH = group village head (the head of a group of villages which all have their own village head)
HH = household
MIL = mother-in-law
MK = Malawi Kwacha (national currency, at time of the research 100MK = 0.5 Euro)
SA = South Africa
VH = village head/chief
Fieldnotes Janneke

From other notebook:  
46 married women: 21 have land while husband not, 17 own land both/together, 6 don't have but husband does, 2 both don't own but rent.

Men dependent on their wives? Or is it easy for them to find another wife & land? Both Balakasi and Jeneti related how their husbands stole from their maize to give to/seduce another woman to whom they later moved. If the man has helped (through own labor or payment of ganyu) to cultivate the land, the harvest will usually be shared in case of divorce between cultivation and harvest. When owning separate lands, wife still feeds husband from hers (eg Hamra). When husband has several wives, working separately, but husband may help on wives'.

30 Okt 2009, Amsterdam

Had tea with Magi from Malawi (PhD Uni Twente) who did field work in 2 villages in South Africa: people only cultivating very small plots because will receive food hand outs from gov or NGOs; one counselor had arranged for 2 tractors to be donated, but few people took the effort to use them so were eventually simply confiscuated by two wealthy HHs; one HIV+ young woman got strong again after taking ART and asked Magi’s research assistant about job opportunities, she answered “why look for a job, you can get government support?”; many others had same attitude; if water is not a need, but a car drives up with a water emblem, you say water IS your need; supervisor finds Magi too harsh about lazy attitude of villagers; in SA free electricity (50kW) “because it brings development” eg light for studying etc - nobody studying, only watching television!; she didn’t want to work for commercial company, but here in uni most important thing is money as well, all the time have to be looking for money, money, money; had she opted for research in HIV/AIDS would have been plenty of funds available, but not for energy [in 2005]; Great-grandfather worked and traveled with missionaries, considered education of crucial importance for development, hence sent also his daughters to school, so Magi’s grandmother has been to college...; she and her sister sent over 1000 Euro back home to Malawi, part of which was to be used for renovating a church once built by their grandmother in Magi’s home village, but by accident all it was used and since then no one else contributed, only asked them for everything...

Okt 2009, Amsterdam

Lwanda 2004, 29: Nyamakazi = rheumatism

Anecdote Jones [our nightwatch when I lived in Lilongwe]: did not want a bicycle with logo of [my husband’s company] because then “everybody at Mtandire would see/think that he is employed”.

If Malawians used to belief that the only way to assure themselves of a good harvest was by pleasing their ancestor spirits, by offering specially brewed beer etc - did they select the best grains for these offers? Did this affect the quality of the seeds kept for replanting? Degeneration of seed quality?

Visit to Balaka district coordinators, May 22 2008
HIV & AIDS:
District AIDS Coordinator (DAC) Balaka, Mr Davis Konondo: 08-504201 (afwezig)

HIV coordinator Balaka District Hospital Ms Kasiya Nthanje (08376960/09347777)

Spoken with Mr Cliffon Chyangachyanga - Director of Planning and Development Balaka

- Balaka district population 314.000 (Balaka district as whole considered rural, since towns are very small. Balaka boma has radius of 4,5 km
- HIV prevalence 18,2%

Bureaucratic/Administrative system

- District level: District AIDS Coordinating Committee (DACC), divided into sub-committees (on Youth, Behavior change, Home based care and Orphans - the 4 pillars of the National AIDS Commission NAC)
- Traditional Authority level: Community AIDS Committees (on voluntary basis, participating for own benefit), linked/affiliated to Area Development Committee, also divided into sub-committees
- Group village level: Village AIDS committee (1 per group village headman), existing of support providers & infected and subdivided into CBOs, linked to Village Development Committee

HIV/AIDS interventions Balaka

Holistic approach to fight AIDS pandemic: Food security for infected and affected HHs (both food handouts and farm inputs); Nutrition education & supplementation for infected; Economic empowerment for vulnerable groups (both infected/affected & young women, bicycle transporters, phone boots operators etc); Home based care groups (nutritional education, community care, referral); VCT + ART (hospital).

Generally, especially infected and affected HHs targeted.

Organization involved in HIV/AIDS interventions Balaka (zag van veel kantoorje langs hoofdweg)

- MASAF: targets infected and affected HHs with income generating activities
- UNECO: Training peer educators & supply them with soft loans
- Go Malawi: ART, HBC
- Self Help Development International: Livelihood programs with HIV/AIDS aspect “AIDS management”
- Ray of Hope: Livelihood program, cash & food handouts to infected
- World Vision: Livelihood program with HIV/AIDS management component
Concern Universal: Livelihood program with HIV/AIDS management component

Mwaphunziro (?): Peer education & skills training for youth and CSWs

CADECOM: Nutrition for infected

Emmanuel International: Food handouts for vulnerable HHs

Evangelical Lutheran Development Services

### Agriculture:

Spoken with Crops Officer Ms Mattiya (08-670743) at Balaka (DADO and others will move from Liwonde to Balaka as per June 1 - since Balaka has only been autonomous for TEN years now...)

DADO Mr Luwanda: 05-428828 email: cosluwanda@yahoo.com

Assistant DADO Mr Baluwa: 08874076 (rexbaluwa@yahoo.ca - Mr Luwanda ook op te bereiken)

Head of Crops Mr Dup: 08163187

### Extension Planning Areas

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<td>113</td>
<td>15826</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>NDF</td>
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</table>

Chinyangwa

FF=farm family

*% of FFs without food in Feb 2008

Phalula & Utale worst hit by drought last season

ICRISAT in Mpiilisi: Chimseu Village (GVH), Nailuwa, Ojesi (beide onder GVH Chimseu) - app in centre of Mpiilisi - with Chinyangwa triangle project = improved groundnut (& finger millet?) varieties & seed banks

### Organizations working in field of agriculture/food security

FIDP (all EPAs): Diversification, livestock, conservation agri, horticulture, nutrition, HIV/AIDS (provide farm inputs and training trough clubs)

Concern Universal (Rivirivi): Diversification, livestock, same as FIDP

World Vision (Utale): Just getting started
**May 29, 2008: Second visit to Balaka.**

*Mission: Select EPA [extension planning area], section, village, house...*

Found Ms Mattiya, DADO and all AEDCs meeting at Chitsime Motel of the Catholic Women Organisation (of Balaka, Machinga and Mangochi - gebouwd door kerk ter inkomsten generatie voor vrouwenactiviteiten, cursussen ed, e.g. ‘home craft’, naaien etc) - they gathered here to assemble the crop production statistics of all EPAs of last harvest). Due to drought spell the whole month of Feb this year, lower yields than previous years, answered AEDO Mr Kayenda of Utale EPA when I asked him.

Met DADO Mr Luwanda, nice young man who seemed to understand what I wanted, suggesting the following locations:

- **Between Utale en Mpilisi** (selected by me based on statistics of Ms Mattiya concerning food insecurity in combination with data from Malawi Atlas of Social Statistics - highest food insec along Shire River etc, Utale highest percentage of farmer HHs without food, but in Mpilisi ICRISAT project: Chinyangwa Triangle in Chimseu village, Ojesi village and Nailuwa village - all three under GVH Chimseu) food insec is serieus in all villages along the river, hence both in Utale en Mpilisi, ecologie, environment, rainfall patterns etc, the same everywhere (even mobile network). Mpilisi better, because Utale difficult to reach in rainy season.

- **XXX has no AEDO** [governmental agricultural extension staff], vacancy. But the AEDC [stuurt ons wel naar AEDO van section Mpilisi, Mr Kambo omdat dat een erg actieve man is. Er is nog wel een andere optie, “but he is weak,” zegt Ms Chikwathu met afkeurend gezicht. AEDO Kambo can come on motorbike tomorrow and provide us with data about number of HHs and FHH per village. Zij zou dan zelf vandaag de die data verzamelen en aan hem geven,
maar toen ik haar net (6 PM) hierover probeerde te bellen, geen contact. Kregen wel AEDO Mr Kambo aan de lijn, maar had niks van AEDC gehoord omdat zijn telefoon hele dag ergens aan de charger had gelegen... Hebben nu doorgegeven welke info we zoeken, hij zegt het te gaan verzamelen, we meeten hem morgen om 7 AM bij de spoorwegovergang op de dirt road richting Utale 2 Health Center.

Gingen in (lege) middag maar naar dat health center in Utale, een mission hospital, hopend daar wel gesegregeerde data te vinden over FEMALE vs MALE HIV PREVALENCE IN CATCHMENT AREA & INCREASE OR DECREASE?? Troffen erg vriendelijke Clinical Officer Mr Alexander Nyambe (08642367), maar helaas bleek al HIV personeel naar een paar daagse workshop over HIV, AIDS and nutrition... Tel had hij ook niet, maar ik bel Mr Nyambe op maandag om nummer van Mr Magombo van het VCT center te achterhalen...09381191...

[13 June, finally got info on HIV test results at Utale 2 Health Center: between Jan and May 2008 245 people tested of which 51 HIV positive: 18 males and 33 females. Says that numbers are increasing, especially among women]. Er was tot 2 jaar geleden een HIV/AIDS project van ADRA hier dat 5 jaar liep, maar nu phased out - wellicht hebben zij de cijfers die ik zoek, suggested Mr Nyambe. Contact Mr Usi, ADRA Blantyre.

AEDC Ms Chikwathu zegt vol trots dat ik “to her home” ga - het gebied waar zij oorspronkelijk vandaan komt. Een oudere, leuke docht wat eervolle/pronkende/vrouw. Zoals veel meer al lang gepensioneerd (verplicht bij overheid als je 55 bent, maar gaan daarna blijkbaar nog massaal aan de slag. Zo ook e.g. Mr Samu Phiri met wie ik vandaag op pad ben, werkte 16 bij de overheid, voor laag loon en toen met pensioen). Zij gaat persoonlijk voor me regelen dat ik een goed huisje krijg. Heb op het hart gedrukt dat het vooral niet te fancy moet zijn, ben benieuwd. Ook gaat ze een servant voor me zoeken, hmm, zei ze, misschien wel mijn jongste zusje, of anders een nichtje. Volgens Samu zal zo’n vrouw heel blij zijn met een maandsalaris van 5000 MK. Is alleenstaand, woont alleen met worker in huis. Oudste dochter werkt in Balaka bij de Standard Bank, die daarna bij Escom als technician, en noemde zo alles op. Heeft ook 1 kleindochter die in 1993 geboren is.

Samu Phiri: na overheid andere instituten en nu dus bij ICRISAT terwijl zijn vrouw nog onder Blantyre woont, rearing pigs (houdt ze van, hebben eerst cattle geprobeerd, maar die hebben veel zorg nodig, moeten de hele dag grazen, en hun shepherd was een dronkaard, kwam sommige dagen gewoon niet opdagen enz. Pigs geven veel minder problemen, gewoon af en toe was maar bran voor kopen). Geboren in Zomba district, ouders hadden echter maar klein stukje land en besloten naar Machinga district te verhuizen - naar Mpilisi! Maar veel problemen met water tekorten, erratic rainfal, drought. En na 3 jaar van land gekickt om de nearby Shire Range van Dr Banda moest uitbreiden. Iedereen moest simpelweg verhuizen en kreeg daar een kleine compensatie voor. Niemand protesteerde, want “indertijd was al het land in Malawi van Dr Banda...” Verhuisden toen naar betere, vruchtbaardere plek in Machinga, dus achteraf alleen maar goed geweest.

Vertelt: iii, als mensen in de jaren 70 hadden gezien hoe [geciviliseerd] het er hier nu uit ziet, hadden ze het niet geloofd! Dat er zoveel huisjes zouden staan, een goede [onverharde] weg zou zijn... Toen was hier alleen maar bush, uninhabited. Too hot and too dry. Pas door
We rijden verschillende malen langs trucks vol katoen en 1 keer langs een office van Great Lakes waar katoen in grote juten zakken wordt geprop. Later komen we langs diverse dronken mannen. Aphiri merkt op dat deze mannen allemaal net geld hebben geïnd met de verkoop van hun katoen oogst (nr 1 cash crop in Balaka), en dat nu in grote getalen spenderen aan drank (liefst kachasu omdat je daar het snelst dronken van wordt, en rest houses - “verblijven ze soms 3, 4 weken!” - vrouwen. Hm, suggest ik, dus wellicht dat de HIV infecties omhoog schieten na tabaks- en katoenverkopen... Jaaaaa, bevestigt Aphiri.


May 30, 2008

Sluitingstijd van beer brewing women die huwelijk willen redden, respect tonen aan husband dmv zo’n sluitingstijd: ong 10 PM. Sommige andere blijven mannen dronkener en dronkener voeren tot ze niet meer naar huis kunnen komen en ter plekke in slaap vallen. Vrouw besteedt hem dan, legt eventueel nog meer lege flessen om hem heen zodat wanneer hij zijn roes uitgeslapen heeft en merkt dat al zijn geld weg is, ze kan zeggen dat hij zo veel heeft gedronken, zelfs als zijn vrienden trakteerde. Vrouwen die getrouwd zijn met zulke mannen, met beer drinking habits, blijven meestal wel bij hem: “is my husband...” Eerder de kids, mijn zonen die hem op zijn gedrag aanspreken.

AEDO Mr Kambo ontmoet, die dus eigenlijk AEDO van EPA Mpilisi is, maar wel even de data van de zieke AEDO van Khwalala wilde halen voor ons. Khwalala heeft 13 dorpen (tenminste, er zijn 13 lijsten met aantal HHs, maar de AEDO zegt dat dorpen zich soms opsplitsen enz, ofwel niet statisch):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name village</th>
<th>Aantal HHs</th>
<th>Aantal FHHs</th>
<th>% FHHs of all HHs</th>
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<td>119</td>
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<td>Mekera</td>
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<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nkugula</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mpepho geselecteerd op basis van onder gemiddelde grootte (= 94; 6 dorpen kleiner & 6 dorpen groter)/niet te groot, en relatief groot aantal FHHs (66%; gemiddelde is 41%). Valt onder GVH Wiliki. AEDC Ms Chikwathu kent de VH goed, zegt ze, “is vriend van me, we hebben samen gedanst op feesten.” Zij en AEDO Mr Kambo gaan nu GVH en VH inlichten over mijn plannen. Ik heb gevraagd of ze hem kunnen vragen “to allow me to stay within his community without any direct benefit to them,” benadrukt dat het hier niet om een development project gaat, geen interventie, slechts onderzoek - dat weliswaar als purpose heeft om uiteindelijk interventies te verbeteren, maar zal niet direct leiden naar project/interventie... Kom maandag 23 juni tot 24 juni weer om zelf met VH te spreken, mezelf bij villagers te introduceren en huis te selecteren uit voorselectie van AEDC. Dan ook bed en kast regelen, opdracht geven die te laten maken. + WAAROM ZOVEEL FHHs IN MPEPHO???

Juist veel katholieken in Balaka ivm met oude missiepost: Utale Mission bestaat 15 aug 100 jaar, waren in feite de eerste settlers in omgeving. Balaka boma is echt pas heel recentelijk aan het groeien, boomen, sinds het opeens hoofdstad van een district is geworden, opeens kantoren van DADO etc, NGOs... Vroeger was het genant om te zeggen dat je naar secondary school was geweest in Balaka, nu niet meer (Harvey Charlie and Harry Msere gingen hier naar school).

Village Development Committees bestaan al - het systeem bestaat al - sinds het hele agri extension systeem is ingesteld, Banda’s period. Maar werken helemaal niet, zegt Aphiri. Pas als er een interventie oid komt, wordt er snel een committee verzameld. Worden in principe allemaal gekozen door de dorpen, VH is wel lid, maar vnl formeel, is niet de voorzitter. Altijd erg top-down systeem geweest: alle initiatieven komen van boven, van de District Development Coordinator (die wsl weer orders krijgt van de overheid). Hoewel dat recentelijk wel wat aan het veranderen is, officieel, met meer Participatory Rural Appraisals enz.

Vroeger was agr extension ‘general’, de AEDOs kwamen over vanalles info geven dat de boeren eventueel kon helpen, boeren konden daar dan vervolgens uit kiezen. Ging ook mn een-op-een, AEDO ging alle HHs af. Maar sinds de bevolking opeens enorm gegroeid is (in 70s nog maar 4 miljoen mensen in Malawi, nu 12 miljoen), werd dat onmogelijk. Nu extension on
demand, ofwel boeren moeten zelf naar AEDO komen wanneer ze over iets info willen hebben. Verder gebeurt de extension alleen nog maar massaal: AEDO laat VH weten dat hij zn mensen dan en dan moet verzamelen, en dan komt de AEDO hen inlichten over iets.

August 4, 2008 2 PM, Calling Mr Juwawo, AEDC of Phalula: 08617504

- Selecting village for field research
- Which villages were targeted in Phalula EPA by the ICRISAT NDF groundnut project?
- Impression impact of project: increased livelihood security?

ICRISAT groundnut clubs now active in 25 villages, according to Mr Juwawo. Every year/season new ones are created.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Village</th>
<th>Start project</th>
<th>Nr of HHs</th>
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Plattegrond Phalula district: beetje afgelegen dorp in section met hoge food insecurity

- Which sections most food insecure? (Kuthambo & Phalula)
- Celtel network (ja)
- Impact ICRISAT project on livelihood security
- Exactly which villages did project start & when?
- Necessary that translator speaks Yao too?

In dorp: huisje selecteren bij wc en wasplek; niet te afgelegen, liefst bij FHH

Dinsdag August 12, Mlambe Motel, Balaka

Op 12 augustus naar AEDC Mr Jackson Juwawo gegaan van Phalula EPA, langs de weg naar Blantyre,
30 km na splitsing met weg naar Balaka boma. Met hem tijd gebakkeleid over mogelijk onderzoeksdorp. Criteria: ICRISAT groundnut project for at least some years; small number of HHs but relatively high percentage of FHHs; celtel network; not too close to road (to represent more or less average Malawian village - AEDC bevestigt dat dorpen die dicht bij grote weg (M1) liggen bijna al hun inkomsten halen uit verkoop van charcoal langs weg, indeed anders zijn, minder food insecure. Moeilijke zoektocht, want de dorpen waar ICRISAT in 2003/4 begonnen is met project (Kumkwawa in Chisoka section, Mtengomwacha in Mtengomwacha section en Nd?? in Ku?? Section) allemaal juist dicht langs de weg liggen (makkelijk bereikbaar, AEDC bevestigt ook dat inderdaad meeste ontwikkelingsprojecten in dorpen zijn die makkelijk te bereiken zijn). Vanuit die dorpen verspreidt het project zich elk jaar een beetje verder van de weg af, dan worden in nieuwe dorpen seed multiplication clubs georganiseerd, krijgen zaden van eerdere clubs). Zowiezo lijken alle dorpen in Phalula EPA dichtbij weg te liggen, ligt aan beide kanten van de M1. Hmm... Erg food insecure inderdaad, zegt AEDC, zijn EPA is er het ergste aan toe in Balaka. Afgelopen seizoen long dry spell gehad, kleine oogsten, nu al zijn er gezinnen zonder mais. Toen we eenmaal 2 dorpen hadden geselecteerd (Msekeni section omdat het verder van weg af ligt, Sanudi en Chikamera villages, waar ICRISAT project nu 2 jaar loopt/ICRISAT groundnuts nu 2 jaar worden gecultiveerd. Sanudi ?? HHs, waarvan ?? FHH; Chikamera 16 MHH, 46 FHH - wat extreem veel FHH in vergelijking met aantal MHH is (Waarom? Vroeg ik AEDC: “Tja..., cultuur, veel ongetrouwde vrouwen, mannen trekken naar stad om werk te zoeken... Vroeg t ook aan AEDO van Nyanyala section (die ook Msekeni onder hoede heeft, due to shortage of AEDOs - 4 in Phalula EPA met 7 sections): wist niet goed antwoord, zei dat t ook een kwestie van definitie is, dat in sommige HHs wel ook een man woont, maar als AEDO vraagt who the head of HH is, antwoordt vrouw dat zij dat is, omdat zij beslissingen neemt enz). Eenmaal daar bleken huisjes erg verspreid te liggen, geen dorpskern te bekennen... Niet handig, me dunkt (omdat: moeilijk voor mij overal langs te gaan, maar wsl ook onderling weinig contact, terwijl ik overspel en roddels nodig heb...). Eenmaal in Sanudi (overigens vnl ChiChewa, Yao’s zijn echt uitzondering in Phalula) 2 kapotte banden toen we langs dorpspomp (of eigenlijk kraan!) reden... End of quest for this day... Geaccompanied door dorpsvrouw naar grote weg gelopen - 40 min lopen, echt niet ver, zo’n 5 km rekende Feye uit) (zij droeg Feye’s tas, terwijl ik mijne had, toen ik F na een tijdje vroeg mijne over te nemen, bood zij onmiddellijk aan die over te nemen, AEDC droeg niks, bood op gegeven moment, toen F duidelijk vermoeid raakte, tas steeds van ene naar andere schouders overtilde, aan om tas te nemen. Anyway, vrouw hoort duidelijk last van man te dragen...). Lopend met AEDC gepraat over de verschillende (landbouwkundige) projecten in zijn EPA: FIDP (Farm income diversification project of overheid/EU; Blantyre synod, ik geloof beide involved in promoting agro-businesses). Interessant! Tijdje op minibus gewacht, in donker in Balaka boma aangekomen, slapen in Mlambe motel (1900 MK voor 2 persoonskamer, zonder tv, met eigen badkamertje, incl ontbijt).

Avonds in bed: misschien beter richten op zo’n agro-business project, real income generation rather than just groundnuts. Ik vroeg AEDC of de ICRISAT groundnuts een impact hebben op de food/livelihood security van villagers. Hij zei, mensen die geen mais hebben maar wel 2 zaken pinda’s voelen zich hoedanook food insecure/njala...

Woensdag August 13

Gray stond zowaar om 8 uur bij Mlambe motel, met 2 nieuwe banden. AEDC opgehaald, naar Sanudi gereden, binnen uur zaten nieuwe banden erop - Gray had in Balaka jongen geregeld om met ons
mee te gaan om t werk te doen. Ondertussen met AEDC [Phalula] gepraat over de agro-businesses [FIDP] that he mentioned yesterday. Bee-keeping for honey, livestock production, casave. Niet erg indrukwekkend, was indruk die hij gaf. Misschien nog even verder met DADO bespreken. Als research question iets is van: “Impact of income-generating project for women farmers on HIV risky behavior”...

AEDC beloofde gisteren om ’s avonds nog over geschikte dorpen voor mijn onderzoek te denken/bellen. Had hij duidelijk toch niet gedaan. Stelde wederom Kumkwawa voor, waar ICRISAT project begon. Wel dicht bij weg alleen. Na wat doorvragen blijken daar veel projecten te zijn, ook FIDP, Blantyre Synod, en ?? Maar geen groot percentage FHHs. Mthengomwacha, naast Kumkwawa, same story, maar kleiner en meer FHHs. In beide dorpen even gaan kijken toen auto gemaakt was. Ook erg verspreid, en idd dicht bij weg. Kumkwawa iets beter, qua verspreiding. Zaten veel mensen om een open plek te wachten in schaduw van bomen, hier en daar. Op open plek 3 stoelen. AEDC ging even de auto uit om uit leggen wat wij er deden (“om roddels te vermijden” ??) en vroeg gelijk over aard van opkomende meeting: een afgevaardigde van politieke partij zou komen - we hadden even ervoor idd een mooie auto met vlaggetjes over de dirt roads zien gaan. Want verkiezingen coming up (mei 2009). “Geven ze dan spullen, om mensen naar meeting te trekken?” Ja, e.g. blankets voor de elderly.

Phalula gewoon niet echt geschikt, besloot ik. TE food insecure, te nabij de grote weg, charcoal sale grootse overlevingsstrategie. AEDC weer naar kantoor gebracht en zelf terug naar Balaka waar we bandenspanning in nieuwe banden gingen verbeteren (in dorp gewoon met hand opgepompt). Benzinestation bleek naar DADO etc kantoor. Even naar binnen om Ms Mattiya (Crops Officer) te groeten. Had al via via vernomen dat ik mn plan had veranderd, even though in Mpilisi section de villagers al gesenstized waren over mijn komst, en er een geschikt huis was gevonden (bij katholieken in Utale, ofwel NIET geschikt volgens mijn criteria, maar de hunne...). Situatie uitgelegd, en DADO gaan begroeten. Bleek ik toch nog niet ontmoet hebben, eerder alleen de assistant DADO. Met hen beide en Ms Mattiya nogmaals alles uitgelegd. DADO zei dat ik ook echt hun had kunnen bellen toen car strandde, zij zijn dichterbij (“Als je op ICRISAT uit Lilongwe moet wachten, kan je al dood zijn” haha...), “je hoort bij ons” heel aardig! Vroeg waarom professors dan hadden geadviseerd van eerste plan af te zien en toch maar voor een dorp met ICRISAT project te gaan. Gezegd dat ik beter van positie within ICRISAT gebruik kon maken, van binnenuit alle documenten accessen enz. En zowel tegen AEDC als deze mensen gezegd dat ik onderzoek wil doen naar “the causes and consequences of the differences in food sec status of women farmers within one community”. Maar misschien goed om terug naar DADO te gaan en veel verder in detail te treden en zijn advies te vragen over mogelijk geschikte onderzoekslocatie...

Op advies van Ms Mattiya, en met haar, naar AEDC van Rivirivi gegaan, waar ICRISAT ook groundnuts project heeft. AEDC was er niet, assistant AEDC wel, tevens AEDO van ?? en ?? Had keurige lijst van ICRISAT project dorpen, wanneer project gestart, aantal HHs, MHHs en FHHs. Foto van gemaakt om t niet allemaal over te hoeven schrijven.

Ms Mattiya 12 jaar AEDO geweest, waarvan 2 jaar assistant AEDC, in Zomba, toen - 2 jaar geleden-gelijk Crops Officer geworden.
Donderdag 14 Augustus

Naar DADO? Uitleggen over onderzoeksdoel. Aangenomen bij ICRISAT om onderzoek te doen naar impact AIDS on small scale agriculture and food security. Unfamiliar with agriculture and Africa, so first reading of academic literature on topic and documents of development agencies. Found issue well studied and analyzed, saw no potential contribution. Found some mention about other way around impacting: food insecurity in AIDS pandemic. Fact that pandemic is so enormous in only part of world where poverty and hunger have increased. Mention of poor women resorting to transactional sex for survival. High awareness of HIV and AIDS, but distant threat compared to direct hunger and starvation. But little researched. Advocated that women should be empowered and have independent income as way forward. Want to understand whether increased livelihood security for rural women indeed leads to safer sexual behavior. So, need community where women have been able - trough project and other means such as beer selling - to increase independent income...

Dinsdag 19 August 2008

Harry Msere komt zelf uit Phalula EPA en vertelt dat zijn officiele dorp, in Mtengomwacha Section, slechts een onderdeel is van een grotere conglomeratie. Maar geregistreerd als apart dorp ivm fertilizer subsidy coupons!

Vrijdag 22 augustus 2008 [hopefully meeting DADO and select research site!]

- Will not be explicit about the HIV/AIDS aspect to avoid stigma, as main part of study will be on understanding “causes and consequences of differences in food security status within one community” hence, need community where some have benefited substantially from project while other have, for some reasons, not participated or benefited.

- Make clear that this is a research, not a development project, hence no direct benefits!!!

Village criteria:

- Successful agricultural development project that benefited part of the women
- In relatively food insecure EPA & section
- Relatively high percentage of FHHs
- Average population size/total number of HHs
- Nuclear /conglomerate - not too scattered
- Mobile phone network
- Average distance from tarmac road
- No GVH
Preferably female VH

Met with DADO who had read my email with detailed description of research plans and need for community where agricultural development project had been/is successful - to gain insights in relationship between increased food security and risky sexual behavior. He had thought of a potentially good village - “hope you can not decline this one...”. Sent Ms Mattiya with us to visit it. First passed by AEDC of Bazale, based at other side of Balaka boma, Mr Stone. Had himself just returned from field with JICA visitors, but gave green light to go there accompanied by Ms Mattiya. Already informed me that is was a very small village: 28 HHs, of which only 9 FHHs. Many projects going on, FIDP and ICRISAT, among many others. “Why so many NGOs and project in such a small village?” I asked Ms Mattiya and Gray. Because of active (female) village headman. Plays important role in effort put in by community, which attracts NGOs. Gathers community to attend meetings/demo’s etc, tells them how to behave, orders them what to do, when to have things done etc, leading role, sets example. If he or she is not interested, little will happen, little villagers will put in effort.

Village looked prosperous indeed, at the middle of the day 2 men where actually building a brick wall! When I asked whether there were also food insecure HHs - for me to compare, to understand the differential impacts of a development project - the village head(wo)man assured me there were. According to her only 6 HHs (including her own) are currently food secure. To proof we visited 2 “food insecure” HHs. One, she told me in English when there, had 7 children and their maize was already finished. However, they had a khola full mbuzi, I saw. Every HH had received a goat through the HIPC project. Aaah, but a goat sells for 3000 MK, they cannot feed their family with these up to the next harvest! Only short-term relief... Nice women though, felt ok. The other HHs of 3 had only little maize left in their nkhokwe, and a bright new one, different model, like a basket up side down on a cement platform. Were also building a new house. ? Yes but - protested VH and Ms Mattiya - that you’re food insecure doesn’t mean that you should just sit around and do nothing, you can just continue building a new house, for example. Burn bricks themselves and husband is a builder. “Some burn bricks, some do ganyu,” VH said later/earlier, about HHs that find themselves without enough maize to get them to next harvest. “Food insecure” does thus not necessarily mean that they will suffer, will go hungry!!!! Only that they currently have no large enough stock of maize to last them till next harvest...

In this village, Nkomba (also described in FIDP newsletter) in Sosola section, no pump, but tap to get water. I could stay in house next to VH, big and luxurious, property of VH, surrounded by brick wall - not pleasant. And only 2.5 km from tarmac road. And signposted from tarmac road as “model village” - nowhere near average thus.

Next village, also targeted by both FIDP and ICRISAT, called Kanyoza, also in Sosola section, male VH. Very large, endless houses, not possible to get to know all of them. 219 HHs, of which about 60 FHH. Really to big. Pepani, I feel I am becoming a pain in the ass to government staff...

AEDC Bazale looks through his list of villages and suggests Mudzi A in XXXX section. 74 HHs, of which 48 FHH. Targeted by FIDP iig. Quite far from tarmac road, but still mobile phone
network. We get off to check it out. Looks good, kind of conglomerate, not as unrealistic upgraded as model village Nkomba. Had to walk a bit to reach house of VH, a friendly looking elderly man down with pneumonia. Not much later female GVH shows up - also lives in village... I could stay with her.

In Mudzi A I wanted to verify that there were certain projects going on. Ah no, said one young man, there was a project, he then admitted, but left. Only when he understood that I was looking for a site where a project was indeed going on, did he emphasize there actually was. Without any shame oid. I later asked Ms Mattiya and Gray [ICRISAT driver] why he had first denied. “Because of you!” Ms Mattiya laughed, he thought that I would come with another project, wanted to look deprived, in need of more assistance. “That’s what keeps Malawi from developing,” complained Gray (something he says about many things), “also problem that ICRISAT often encounters, you give out seeds, and when you come back they say that there had been a drought, had been ill etc etc - make up reasons for not being able to give back loan.”

According to Ms Mattiya three quarters of villages in Balaka district targeted by FIDP. Gray says later that FIDP approached ICRISAT for groundnut seeds and seed revolving funds activities. Will start with 300 villages this year, more next year. FIDP had requested enough seed for 3000 villages, but impossible, especially because of long dry spell last rainy season.

Want to check out Mpilisi EPA tomorrow, as Bazale is least food insecure of Balaka district, while Mpilisi is one of most (Utale and Phalula most, but disqualified because not reachable in rainy season and too scattered respectively). And densely populated, thus villages more nuclear. Passed by AEDC Mr Ntawanga’s house to request his assistance for tomorrow, although it is Saturday - no problem, he said. He was only temporarily replaced by Ms Chikwathu while he was in school, taken back his position now...

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<td>219</td>
<td>60% (48) yes 10-20</td>
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<td>71% (153) yes 5-10</td>
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Saturday 23 Aug
Met with Mr Ntawanga, AEDC of Mpilisi, kind & intelligent young man. Had already thought about my criteria, but had overlooked criterium “average size”… Village he selected, based on largest impact/most FAO activities, holds over 400 HHs. In Mpilisi FAO and FIDP target villages were partly chosen because of large size (19 villages in total planned to be targeted by FIDP, although not all have yet, or only recently) - and here policy that in each village only one project, for new project villages are selected that are not already targeted by other projects.

FAO focusing on food sec, FIDP on income generation

Monday 25 Aug

Chosen Mudzi A village in XXX section (total of 2181 HHs: 1248 MHH, 898 FHH) in XXX EPA. Mr Stone is AEDC of XXX, Mr Chikombo is the AEDO of XXX. Ms Mattiya and I passed by his house on Friday 22nd of Aug late afternoon to inform him about our visit to Mudzi A, but he was out. Small lonely house on sand road from Balaka boma to Mudzi A.

People are already preparing their fields, as rains may start as early as October in the South. And because of last year’s dry spells, yields will be finished early this year. Already now some HHs are out of maize, and others have only little left, as I saw in Nkomba. Gray said October, Nov & Dec are worst, if rains have been good, first crops can be eaten from field in January (pumpkin, groundnuts)

Called with AEDC Mr Stone when Mr Chikombo seemed to understand very little of my question...

FIDP activities in Mudzi A: soya beans & chili production, goat rearing

AEDO: Already 50% of HHs in Mudzi A buying their maize, no own produce left because of dry spells last year. AEDC expects by end of September almost all HHs out of own maize, having to buy. Cassava is only grown sparsely, and all sweet potatoes have already been harvested and eaten. Ganyu will be available, but is sign of desperation, keeping farmers from attending own fields and so perpetuating poverty.

August 27, 2008

Last preparatory visit to Mudzi A village, this time to select house. Village headman had already been informed by AEDO Mr Chikombo, and identified a house where we could live in. Two bedrooms and a living room, front and back door, iron sheets roof (which is very convenient in rainy season, grass thatched roofs will leak, says Gertrude), a brick kitchen and toilet outside. No bafa [bathing place] yet, no tree nearby for shade... Bafa, kitchen roof en holes in house wall will be fixed for 2000 MK, monthly rent is 1500 MK. Owner is man who left for South Africa 2 years ago, in case he would return in coming months he can stay with his wife who moved to her home village after he left.

Majority in Mudzi A is Yao. Today the initiation of girls, which may take several weeks during which they sleep together in one house and are advised about respecting their parents and future husband, and not being afraid for sex with men, ended with a parade of drumming, dancing and singing villagers. Usually/traditionally the girls are now advised to practice what they were told about: sex. For some reason the age for girls to become initiated is younger than before. It used to be 12/13 years, now sometimes girls of only 7 years old are already initiated.
Gertrude is from Ngoni tribe.

Call Mr Stone (very active AEDC, according to Oswin Madzonga and Albert Chamango [ICRISAT staff members], are clearly very positive about him) to ask about neighboring village to Mudzi A Mudzi B: FIDP/other dev projects? HHs? FHHs?: No dev projects, 64 HHs, 52 MHHs, 12 FHHs.

Dimba vs dambo: Gertrude explains that there is a difference between dimbo and dambo gardens. One is dampy, humid, swampy soil near river; other is near river, but watered by farmers with water from river...

August 27 2008: Car ride with Gertrude Finyiza from Lilongwe to Balaka

Born in 1985 (11 july) in Mangochi. Mother originally from Dedza, father from Mangochi. One older brother, 3 older sisters (triplets), Gertrude is youngest. Father died when she was 5 years old, does not know reason of death. The Roman Catholic Italians running the orphanage that her father helped starting up (?) offered to pay for Gertrude’s primary and secondary education. Yao’s like sex, and marry several wives, only think about marriage, not education. Even though Ngoni themselves, sisters where affected by Yao friends they hang around with, also wanted to marry young. Both mother and Gertrude tried to advise them against it, but to no avail. Sisters only went to primary school and married young. However, when one of their husbands (a Yao) wanted to indeed also marry another wife, the mother took her daughters to her home village in Dedza. Their land was occupied though, but as the mother was the sister of the that-time-chief of the village, the occupiers eventually left and the family could take it again. Sisters quickly remarried. But in the village, people don’t do much, just stay. Work the land a little, but need fertilizer etc. Gertrude was only one better educated, but even after she left for Lilongwe to work there she only managed to financially help her mother, not also her sisters. The sisters grow Irish potatoes, and go twice a week to the market at the M1 between Dedza and Lizulu (from that market Gertrude takes bicycle taxi for half an hour to reach home village, 50 MK). One of the husbands makes and sells mats. Her mother used to work as a midwife, but not anymore, is old now, wants to rest. Does keep chickens for a widow-chicken-rearing-club she is member of. Told Gertrude she cannot work as hard as before anymore, expects more support from Gertrude.

Gertrude left Dedza 3 years ago, to become house girl at a Malawian family (nanny, cook, clean etc). With the money she made there she bought a telephone with which she opened a telephone boot. She also worked at Monsanto from 4 months, growing their maize seeds and recording the growing of the plants - was only a temporary job. Before I hired her, she worked as a teacher at a private school run by someone from Gertrude’s church (Seventh Day Adventists, although parents Roman Catholic, but where she grew up no RC church around, hence joined SDA, only difference is that the SDAs go to church on Saturday ipv Sunday) who saw Gertrude was just staying, and asked to come teach. Taught knitting, English, ChiChewa, mathematics. Earned 8000 MK per month - quite good money actually! Pays 800 MK rent per months for a small 2-room house in Area 25, cooks on charcoal. Has in house one small side table and chair, some pots and buckets, cutlery, plastic flowers, bed & mattress, clothes hanging on wall, row of shoes, (cheapest Celtel) cell phone. Helps mother with money for fertilizer and soap etc. To do this she sends money to bank account of cousin who has proper job and travels to Dedza every now and then, or goes herself.
When I asked if she can go back to her job as private teacher after this temporary assignment ends, she said in resolute voice: “No! I will get more education” Has been looking for money for further education in the last year, this is her opportunity. She will earn 25.000MK per month (Sept - March is 7 months = 175.000MK), and have little expenses while working (accommodation and food are paid for), so in the end - she had already calculated - she can pay for the one year training needed to get a diploma (costs about 75.000 MK excl examination fees and living expenses). Wants to specialize in Rural & Community Development or HIV/AIDS Counseling - [both fit in well with the current research project she will work for, wonder why she mentions these, strategy to increase chances to find job, as these go well with work experience, or to please me?].

Gertrude Has no boyfriend, “next time”. So she will not get disturbed, see she can take care of herself. How will boyfriend disturb you, he can help you take care of yourself, no? Because of sexual behavior, can get pregnant and wants to be educated first.

Gertrude’s Opinion about risky sexual behavior of rural women: Need more knowledge, enlightenment, have not been educated/been to school, backward [not word that she used].

Leiden, 24 juli 2008

Wilde niet promovere for sake of research: hands on werken, praktischer, in direct contact met mensen voor wie je het doet. Maar nu, na wat meer te hebben gezien van ontwikkelingswereldje liever ‘begrijpen’ ipv/naast aanpak. Met name: waarom werkt het niet, waar gaat het allemaal mis? Dus toch wetenschapskant/beschouwend, maar met praktische inslag, gericht op verbeteren van praktijk.

Op ICRISAT praten over deze vraag. Opinies/inzichten over waarom nog steeds zo grootschalige honger ondanks werk van oa ICRISAT? + specifiek over project in Balaka. Dus toch ook inderdaad maar project van ICRISAT, met enquiry into effect on “women empowerment”-idee: aan de kaak stellen of toegenomen oogst/winst/onafhankelijk inkomen leidt to enige verandering in veiligheid van seksueel gedrag.

Sept 1, 2008 Lilongwe to Mudzi A village

Fluffy furniture at ‘meubelboulevard’ Lilongwe cost between 80.000 - 100.000 MK for set of ¾ (couch & chairs), estimates Gray [ICRISAT driver]. But bad quality, he adds. He bought his at South African import shop, in 2000 for 70.000 MK and more in 2004 for 100.000, “but this set now costs 300.000!”. Indeed he has the walls of his spacious living room fully lined with big couches. “Still in good chape, and can be replaced by new ones whenever wanted if some top up is paid.”

Late arrival, women said they had been waiting for us around 12 AM, started singing in house to welcome us anyway, agreed to meet tomorrow for real welcoming and introduction.

Settled in house, bafa was made, roof on kitches, holes in wall repared for 2000 MK. Houserent 1500
MK per month. House of second born son of GVH, who has been in South Africa for 2 years now, wife moved back to home village, his son seems to be living in simple small house next to our iron-sheet-2-bedroomed house (why not in this big house??). Currently stays with grandparents to help take care of sick grandfather and because grandmother cannot manage to bring him food before dawn (Ramadan!).

GVH is mother of owner of house, came to check on us in evening, saw her coming through bushes with paraffine lamp (difficult to get paraffin, as there are no filling stations near, people will have to go to Balaka boma). Saw no other lights in dark: some people simply have none, said Gertrude, only light a stick when they really need to see, for example where they will lay down to sleep. Others have fence around house, blocking view on lights. GVH told about sick husband, had taken him to hospitals (go to health clinic nearby, otherwise Balaka hospital or Liwonde hospital), but to no avail. She was born here, divided Mudzi B village is several villages with each their own headmen, whom she appointed. Chief of Mudzi A village is her younger brother.

Gertrude speaks with girl walking back from borehole, asks her whether she goes to school. No, mother doesn’t send her, waiting to be married. About 9 years old… Gertrude also surprised/appalled. Had earlier spoken about Yao initiation rites for girls, saying that these are now for younger girls than before.

Muslims, including GVH, are now fasting.

Gertrude: women usually get up at about 5 AM, sweep, wash body (if there is water, otherwise first fetch water), make tea for breakfast.

September 2, 2008

Gertrude was up little after 5 AM, put mkeka [bamboo mat on which she sleeps] away, swept outside. When I got up around 5.45 she lit fire (anayatsa moto) and put on metal bucket with water. When I washed she went to fetch more water - were not as many women at pump as yesterday afternoon, told her now that yesterday the tap in [nearby village] wasn’t giving water, so then these women all come to the borehole at Mudzi B village to pump up water. Tried to sweep ants away again - to no avail. Warmed water for herself to wash too. Put pan with water to boil for tea, which we drank at mkeka on veranda, by then was already 8 AM, while GVH had yesterday villagers would be gathering at 7 AM at our house incl chiefs under her group village headmanship. We went to house of Mudzi A vlg (on way Gertrude pointed out a group of young girls playing --> not in school...), he indeed said he was late. Chatted there for a bit.

He has been chief of Mudzi A for 1 year now, before him the first born son of GVH was the first chief if Mudzi A (second born is owner of the house we are staying in). Last year also this son decided he was still young and wanted to try his luck in South Africa [WHAT ARE THESE BOYS DOING IN SA???], handed over chief responsibilities to uncle, brother of GVH - probably in consultation with mother GVH. Man himself was born in Machinga in 1949, shares father with GVH but different mothers, his was amayi akulu [“big mother”/first wife], hers was amayi ang’ono [“little/younger mother”]. Which explains why he was born elsewhere than she (she born in Mudzi B village). Father was businessman traveling around, having various families at various places, and being Yao, that is permitted. Current chief had first son in Machinga, when he was still
very young. Later married a woman, had 7 children with her. Came to Mudzi A about 7 years ago when he was ill to find medicine, without wife. After he got better, GVH urged him to stay here, leaving wife, which he did, remarried 5 years ago (with Hamra) with woman with 3 kids of whom youngest is still in school. Have no kids together. Children come to visit him sometimes, from Liwonde. First wife also remarried.

Mudzi B village was subdivided, he explains, because the government (boma) ordered so, does not know when, did not stay here at that time.

His [chief Mudzi A's] house is relatively small and simple, compared to some others in the village (although all of them have grass roofs, some are just bigger). I was surprised by this, and questioned Gertrude about it. We will find out when we wander around, she said, can't ask him directly, some people just work harder...

When we came back home after seeing Mudzi A chief, we found GVH with 3 other women sitting in front of our house. Were the chiefs of surrounding villages, all under her GVH, wanted them to know me and Gertrude (alendo athu – our guests) and other way round - in case we meet each other on the road, and for safety purposes. Mudzi A chief mentioned word “chipongwe” several times - means something like misconduct, are they apparently scared of, that we will be bothered by drunkards, are stolen from by lazy poor. Chief also mentioned during this meeting with other chiefs (Mudzi A has the only male chief! came with other woman) that we should be given precedence when drawing water at pump. Another man also joined this meeting, he was also called when we visited to select house - was called mlangizi by others. Gertrude translated it as Leader and Adviser - appointed by government, advises also other groups of villages? Headed meeting, addressed by chiefs with “chairman”. We were asked to introduce ourselves, signed visitors book of mlangizi (first date July 2007, exactly 1 page of big notebook = A4) only Malawian names, seemed mainly extension people, oa also for FIDP, saw mushroom project mentioned, which had failed, according to Ms Mattiya - too dry, need moisture...), then GVH spoke about how we were her/their children (grabbed one of her breasts to symbolize motherhood/own child).

On our way to grocery shop were called for chatting by woman walking behind us with bunch of young girls around her, three of whom carried usipa on their heads. Woman told us she is from Mangochi, came to visit grandmother in Mudzi B village and as he is not used to not making money on a day, she brought usipa and other fish to sell. Other fish was already sold, usipa apparently not liked here, not sold any yet. Now went to market (said msika) to try sell there, girls showed here the way. Where she eventually settled can hardly be called market, 1 grocery store (cookies, soap, sweets, ant poison), someone selling cassava, and a bit further down the road a young woman selling tomatoes, in between a bicycle repair shop. Behind the cassava and now also hips of usipa on a empty bag a whole bunch of young girls and some women sitting. Usipa business woman is married, but husband works in shop in SA. She had been there with him, also doing usipa business: selling the Malawi lake fish to Malawians working in SA and missing their home food. Would make trips from Lake Malawi to South Africa, up and down to sell, sometimes with bus, sometimes in lorry. But bus is easier, she says, because there is place to put all her merchandise. Fell ill, had to return to home in Malawi...

Some people already clearing their fields now. Everybody should do that, according to Gertrude, better to have the fields prepared before rains come, so that you can plant at first rains. Others wait until first rains before they start clearing and making ridges. Chief said this morning that most villagers are gone to their fields. Indeed early in the morning when I got up, I saw someone far away working on his/her field. [--> should take pictures before all starts to get green and lush, or at least cleared and
Meeting:

Agreed with chief this morning to meet at 2 PM today, which would leave time for him to gather his people. Meeting should not be held at our house, he had said, because it should be clear that we are here for Mudzi A vlg only, and not Mudzi B vlg. Went towards his house at 2 exactly, fearing that it would take long for the others to come. Indeed were among the first - an elderly man and woman were sitting there already, chairs and mat were ready for us. From then on people quickly started to come over to house of Mr Ntawanga - the selfproclaimed extension worker of the village (volunteering, out of interest, finds knowledge from other alangizi/demonstrations/projects). Chief complained and joked about “telling people to come at 2 and you can be sure they don’t show up until 3.” When the big mat was full of women (about 30, some still came after we had started; there were only 5 men: chief, Mr Ntawanga, leader of goat club, the elderly man who was there even before us, looking well-to-do with nice socks and shoes, and an old man who looked poor) Mr Ntawanga asked us if we could start. He then asked one of the woman to pray, and spoke himself, introducing all leaders of the various clubs that exist in Mudzi A:

Mushroom club, led by Mr Ntawanga
Goat rearing club, led by Mr Tulipesi
Groundnuts club, led by Victoria
Soya beans club, led by Kima (very old woman) Village
Development committee (VDC)

Then I gave speech, introducing myself, Gertrude and research work. In speech I said that I would want to start with a group discussion in which they should explain differences between poorer and better off HHs:

Poor (Ovutika): Lack of food (“akugona ndi njala” – they go to sleep hungry); poor clothes; leaking pots; plastic spoons and plates (melt on fire, wind can take them); no blankets (small cloth/only mat); have to fetch water very far; difficult to get fertilizer (get coupons, but still difficult for them to find enough money to buy); not enough maize seeds to plant; cultivate late because have to do ganyu [osalima mwachangu chifukwa cha ganyu], are old/weak/ill; having many orphans to take care of besides own children; many children (5-6) in general as compared to better off HHs that have only few (2-3); difficult to find money for school fees for secondary school; appearance of the house (thin grass roof, holes in the wall, without doors). Chief concluded by mentioning that some men are just lazy, having their wives do all the work, themselves just waiting to be fed, and they will be the first to start eating! (laughing). Does not help on the field but is first to demand food (blijkt later ook op hemzelf te slaan! hoewel hij misschien excuus heeft dat hij andere verantwoordelijkheden als chief heeft?).

Better off HHs (Olemera): enough maize & goats which they may sell to find money; enough clothes in different colors; nice plates = emaille, with flower print; good looking blankets & bed; fewer children (2-3); enough soap & body lotion; Iron sheet roof; bicycle (own or taxi) to go to maize mill (instead of walking with maize on head); have jobs themselves; high quality cell phone; do different types of businesses such as goat or cotton selling, after selling can get enough food for family. Maybe get financial help from relatives in town to buy soap, sugar, clothes. NB Some stay in good house, but still have no food!

Ellis et al 2003, 1500:
In the context of the Malawian customary tenure sector, the term “better-off” is relative...
and does not necessarily signify wealth or income status much above the poverty line. As revealed by the wealth-ranking exercises conducted in the eight case-study villages, HHs described as well-off are distinguished by having landholdings of 1.5-2 ha, up to 5 cattle, 3-5 goats, hiring nonfamily labor seasonally, owning bicycles, sometimes owning nonfarm service sector businesses, and normally enjoying year round food security. The middle wealth categories to which most HHs were assigned have correspondingly less of all these assets, and shade into increasing reliance on selling labor, and worsening seasonal food insecurity. The poor possess little or no land, no cattle or goats, rely on casual work (called ganyu in Malawi) or safety net transfers to get by, and are food deficit most of the year.

Why differences in wealth status within one community: some have to do ganyu - making them food insecure next season; number of children; marital status (widowed, not married); having relative in town to help financially; God himself makes some poor and some better off (laughing).

Why differences in food security status between villages: Different type of soil (is good in Mudzi A, so even with little rainfall, harvests can be good, clayish soil, still fertilizer is necessary & problem); some make ridges while others don’t.

FIDP activities in Mudzi A vlg: Making ridges; growing mushrooms; making manure; planting trees; goat keeping; soy production. Most impact from goat rearing. FIDP started in 2003 (all people looked at Mr Ntawanga for answer on this question), but is continuation of PROSCAP which started in 2000. Activities are considered to benefit some, those who are willing to participate, used to working hard. Others do not participate because they are too busy: have to take care of husband and/or children [hence, mainly women who participate?], or cannot /do not want to contribute the required amount of money? [how much??].

No clear answer was given on question why some many more FHHs (female headed HHs) than MHHs (male headed HHs) in Mudzi A. Some husbands died... [maybe many elderly women?]. Mr Ntawanga suggested that there had simply never been many men in this village, but many women...

Mr Ntawanga adds at the end of the meeting that food insecurity in Mudzi A is partly a result of the fact that there is only one pump. Women have to wait long time before they can get water, thus come late for meeting [and miss crucial information?], and cannot work on field sufficiently. [+ just used to delaying, adds chief: going to market, cooking etc]

Meeting was closed with another prayer from same woman. Then they continued to discuss the upcoming new school (for which black boards were brought by a big Toyota Hilux pick up with EU sticker during meeting). the chiefs this morning also shortly talked about this issue. Not government school but private.

Gertrude did very well in leading the group discussion, experience as teacher became clear: not afraid of talking in front of big group, looking at them, starting with some chatting, good in explaining what I meant.
Mr Ntawanga: Njala [hunger] worst in Nov, Dec, Jan, Feb: because of heat in Balaka by early March
first green maize can be eaten. In Dec most yamu, in Nov only little, in Jan & Feb none.

PROSCAP concerned with soil improvement --> making manure, planting trees, catch rainwater. In all
surrounding villages. In between Proscap and FiDP half a year "kabridge" project. FiDP only
continued in villages where population was eager/interested/motivated/participating, which was
only Mudzi A. "How come? Why other villages not?" Because of leadership, if leader is not
interested, others do not mke any efforts, and Mudzi A has a passionate, active leader = him, hence
not the formal leader, but someone who stepped up himself...

New school indeed for adults, today first day, students very interested: "By the end of the week I’ll be
able to write my name!" Do not need to pay contribution. Gertrude does not know who finances it,
heard on radio that teachers work voluntarily, but doesn’t know whether it is true. Not a real school
building, just a fence.

weinig zeggen/vragen (Hoe oud is je kind, is het je eerste, komen jullie uit Mudzi B? 6 mnd, 2de, ja),
dus veel stiltes. Zij zeggen onderling ook weinig, merken alleen af en toe op: "kind lacht," "hij is
vrolijk." Tehen half 6 komt Gertrude terug van hout sprokkelen met 2 meisjes, er wordt dan iets meer
gesproken, maar nog steeds niet veel --> Waarom gekomen?? Gertrude: voor eigen lol, en uit
interesse. Zodra ze weg zijn vertelt Gertrude dat 1 gesprekje ging over 1 vd jongens (17-20 jr) tegen 1
de meisjes (die niet meer naar school gaat, uit zichzelf gestopt in St7, 15 jaar) dat ze toch heeft
gezegd te willen trouwen? Man kwam haar vandaag zoeken... Vrouw met baby (Pamela) zegt dat dit
geen gesprek is voor hier, bij vreemden/gasten. Later grapt 1 vd jongens tegen zwangere vrouw (Ada)
hoe het toch komt dat al haar partners verdwijnen: 2de zwangerschap en net als bij eerste is man nu
verdwenen. Wederom zegt Pamela: geen onderwerp om hier te bespreken! Ook zwangere vrouw zelf
zegt dat hij dat maar bij haar huis moet vragen, is geheim. Jongens grappen verder dat beide mannen
misschien straks met een cellphone voor haar terugkomen, en fiets. "Ik kan voor mezelf zorgen, als ik
iets wil koop ik het zelf wel." (Ik heb heb niet horen bitsen, maar was ook wel even weg om me te
wassen). Verdedigde zichzelf/man wel even door te zeggen dat hij gateman in Balaka is, dat ze nu rijk
zullen worden.

Een vd geinterviewde vandaag (Charity) zwanger maar sinds Jan gescheiden. Zullen andere mannen
nog wel proposen, als ze al kind van ander heeft? Gertrude: Ah, sommige mannen hebben daar
helemaal geen moeite/problemen mee.

Young girl passed by with 5 MK in hand, group on porch said she begged that money from a boy.
They asked her where she was going: grocery. "Ah, you are going to buy sweets, you begged money
from a boy!"

One of women chatting/hanging on our veranda came back just after departing to ask, down on
heels and with soft voice to Gertrude, whether we want to buy a chicken - asked for the other
woman who had been afraid to ask us herself... According to Gertrude here much cheaper than in
town: in LL 700/800, here maybe 300/400. Also tomatoes etc.
Sept 3, 2008

GVH took me to accompany her to first house after ours where she was going to borrow a bag (thumba) for maize that she bought (?). I think the woman of that HH (which looked fairly good, a number of well maintained structures, with grass roofs though) told me that both she and Group Village Headman joined the FIDP activities undertaken in Mudzi A: Mbuzi & tree nursery. “Chitukuko!” old bleef u herhalen [progress, development]. Was grinding maize in grinder (mtondo) by hand (kusinja chimanga) to make porridge, after that kupeta: separating bran from kernels.

Where do I want to go?? It’s clear from MDICP journals that transactional sex is quite normal aspect of courtship / relationships especially for the young thus not necessarily related to poverty. Also few comments that I have heard here about topic confirm “Yes happens (girls like money too much - not like old days when they behaved appropriate), richer boys / men try to seduce / attract poor girls with money, but not only poor girls behave this way. Question whether increased independent income will lead to safer sexual behavior does make sense to me … Although this exchange of sex for money/ gifts is mainly among younger (school) girls, I got impression. Although Eveless (old woman) said it also happens among adults and even the elderly. Met today a young woman (25) Livia: divorced and with 6 months old baby from man from other village who is married to other wife. She has own little business of buying tomatoes and masamba [green leafs] at dambo [river shore] near Balaka then selling in Mudzi A village. Besides cultivating land to get food (local maize and nandolo [legumes] for ndiwo [relish]) and money through cotton. Does he support her / child in any way? Why did she sleep with him? Does he still visit her / do they still slept together sometimes? How &When did she find out if he is married elsewhere? What did she go to do when she visited him in his village? Maybe he hid from her that he was married in beginning says Gertrude.

FIDP does not really seem to have substantial impact. Goat project is named by women in meeting as activity with biggest impact --> many people have goats now. But are not allowed to sell! Only to government/FIDP people who will come one day especially with this purpose, said Agnessi Musitafa (don’t know if its true). Too bad that there are no honey and eggs activities! There are in other village XXX. But the wealthy house of the village head did not feel good. And only honey: poultry house was only being built now. I should await interviews. Maybe other small scale businesses? But also soy production has not given women any benefit (but knowledge) as it is only grown on club field, and sold to pay for rent of field and partly kept to plant coming season. Shit, that was main criteria; a project (agricultural) that benefited women’s income..

Mr Chikombo shortly passed by with Mr Ntawanga. Said that tomorrow there will be a field day in [small crossroads market] village on manure making - but not a FIDP activity / rearing is initiated by FIDP - Yes, Bruce village, poultry rearing is just starting, but bee keeping since year before last, honey being sold now commercially. Why not in Mudzi A? Villagers not interested, all activities initiated only after interest by villages is expressed. Then asked Mr Ntawanga why villages of Mudzi A had no interest in honey or egg production. Ah, problems in communication - he answered (?), Vague, unclear.. Mr Chikombo said : May be because there is no forest near where bees can find food.

B. [nearby village] where honey is produced and sold - less than 3 km away. May be visit honey - club? What kind of women participates? What happens with income? Does it in any way change gender relations? Would need longer term project to really see any impact.. Can even be opinions of
participating women. Any women in Mudzi A village with substantial, long term business? Or in surrounding villages? What is their opinion about impact of independent income on gender relations / their position or behavior vis-a-vis men? “What is impact of rural women running small scale business on their position/behavior / relationship vis-a-vis men? “gender perceptions/relations ((riskiness of sexual behavior?)

Other interesting possible questions for interviews (to at least give everyone her soap & salt):

- Knowledge of HIV women under 50?- this info can be retrieved from MDICP... (differentiated per district?)

- Condom use

- Sex with how many partners? husband? But come on, how honest would people be about this??

Thursdays are market day in [small crossroads market]. Can maybe find business women there!! What kind of business there? Ask all of the selling women

- Name age, where do they live?
- Is it their own business or employed?
- Since when in (any hand of) business?/ employed
- Where do they get product?
- Sell only in [small crossroads market] on Thursdays(each?) or also other markets/
- Married (Yes: first? - No : ever married?(why divorced)
- What do they use money for?
- (In what way) Are business women different from other rural women?
- Opinion or How has business changed your life? Did relationship with husband change?

A whole bunch of girls came on our veranda again, Gertrude was there knitting and just listened to what was being said. They spoke about a woman who came yesterday to the [small crossroads market] with only a chitenje on, she then opened her chitenje and asked “Who will sleep with me for some money?? “ Also at borehole today this story was discussed. I asked whether she is a mad woman, but women girls said no. husband is South Africa.

During Ramadan all Muslims here go to Mosque at 6 PM - good chance for girls to chat with boys, they said themselves. Girl of finding firewood - who stopped school and wants to get married - was seen with a certain boy. Other girls said that this is a good time for her to find a good husband because of Ramadan and all muslims meeting every evening.

A woman passed by with tomatoes. Girls & women on veranda commended: That one, she is going to sell tomatoes rather than take care of her husband- Always goes to same place/village to sell, where she is seen with a certain men.."

Meeting on registering for receiving fertilizer compons. This year only for the very poor & lame. Fert now 800 MK per bag. Chief is probably the one deciding who deserves (falls in categones “very poor” or “lame”) - but to keep friends could say every body falls within these categories.. Gertrude
agrees, Laughing

**5 Sept - Notes**

- In Dec weeding ganyu - will have to keep track of frequency: do same spend more time on field of others than own? Whole days? Does own field indeed suffers?

- Why is it good to have a bicycle? By HHs with only blanket, no maize left, but bicycle.

- Many people get quite large amount of money after selling cotton (app. May 2008) and now face the problem of lacking food, must do ganyu for only 100MK a day!

- Who participate in which FIDP activity seems to be decided / ordered by chief. Only 10 people are to participate per activity, some in multiple activities.

- Received twice 3 eggs, plate of g/nuts, tomatoes, papaya, cassava root from various informants. Wife of chief on GVH brought firewood.

- Today 2 interviews with women who very quickly married after meeting. Chikondi (28) agreed to marry second husband when he proposed to her at the market where she was selling veggies at first time they met. **Wanted husband to stop jealousy / gossiping/ suspicion of other women in village that she was receiving their husbands**, didn’t even want to talk with her at pump. Further no other benefit to marriage! (doesn’t bring money old, only sometimes ndiwo). Nelia married in March 2005 at age 17 after meeting 21 years old man at Balaka Market where she was selling “freezes” (lemonade in small plastic bag) on January 25 same year.

- Many of the women we spoke to are listed as FHH but are married, have been married for a long time usually … husbands at least sometimes listed separately, as other HH. From now on have to ask both name of woman and husband, to Check on list.

- Visit to GVH in Mudzi B to give some gifts to thank her for letting me stay in her group (salt, sugar, candles, tea, soap), had told us already several times to pass by. Fenced compound, not very big, round with 3 houses: 1 with iron sheets, but because of termites moved to house with grass roof. third small house was of son that departed to SA, just like 2 brothers. Ah, doesn’t know what they are doing there - is often kept hidden, ashamed. going to SA is status, but to have simple job also hekman or even burning bricks! (Laughing) prefer to keep it hidden...

- Became GVH 15 yrs ago, divided Mudzi B in 6 villages 14 yrs ago because ordered by the government because too big, too many people, over 1000. Big size of population caused many problems e.g. when maize hand outs came e.g., not enough for everybody. Enlists herself in Mudzi A village (indeed during first visit she said she stayed there), couldn’t say why, I indeed understood well yesterday that she participates in the FIDP projects in Mudzi A: Mbuzi, tree planting (we later saw the trees on her field next to her house.” Ah, for firewood!” said Gertrude, yes confirmed GVH), soy, mushroom.

- Husband has already been ill for 2yrs … But not very, was sitting outside, looked ok. Have been together since very young, GVH said.
We asked about the subsidized coupons - meeting of yesterday. First she said, when asked, that coupons are meant for the very poor (ovutika), but later added “and for all who want them, as long as they indeed have a field to cultivate” It is indeed the chief who lists the people who according to him, deserve to receive. GVH also mentioned people who are ill; which Gertrude translated also AIDS (matenda) [But when distributed on Monday Nov 3, everybody who registered received but at [small crossroads market] through people who came from Balaka. This year not through chiefs - too much stealing. Those people also asked all attendants to report on any bad behavior of their leader (chief /GVH). Most kept quick, but one spoke about GVH Mudzi B, saying that she shared handouts etc among relatives and not other people. People were also angry with her when she recently asked for a football & football uniforms from one of Muluzi’s MP runners who came to campaign at Mudzi B. Could not think of something more useful??]

On Friday market in [nearest tradingcenter] , not too far, further down road,” many people.” On Thursdays market in [small crossroads market] at Jasmine junction coming here from Balaka is a smaller market.

Many women washing now at pump, said Gertrude. You have made them very happy by giving them soap. Gertrude says we should double check with Mr Ntawanga about exact procedure of FIDP activities & selection of participants. Especially story about only 10 participants allowed per activity club - interviewees may have thought I was to start another development project.

Ms Eveles said its good to vast during the Ramadan, teaches you to deal /cope / stand hunger.

Gertrude noted that Ms Ntawanga passed by as early as 5 AM to draw water, and did not return till about 7 AM. Herself she likes to go during hottest hours of day, when there are few people at njiko [pump] and ask doesn’t waste much time there...

Started teaching me to knit, outside on mat with young girls (who have been thought ‘needle craft’ at school (before this used to be taught both at primary and sec school, now only at first - if there is someone knowledgeable, I guess). Said that for a full baby outfit (=pants, shoes, hat, vest) one can get about 2000/2500 m LL, with big shawl to wrap baby on back about 3000. Jersey for school children 700-900 MK. Croching even more, for set of about 10 kleedjes for on tables and chairs (with flower, apple, pineapple etc) up to 7000 MK. She can finish in 1 week - big money!

Pregnant woman Ada was also at mat, said she hadn’t come earlier because saw headmaster sitting with us. She had decided to leave school last year because she wanted to get married, ashamed to face him, Headmaster had indeed spoken to other girls on mat, saying they should come back to school, to learn English so they could speak with me. Girl who stopped to get married said she would come on Monday.

Sept 6 - Notes

By today we have finished interviewing all Mudzi A HHs on this side of this side of the road (22 HHs). For some reason the rest of the Mudzi A HHs are quite a distance on the other side of the road. One
even first has to pass another village to reach the rest of Mudzi A. This was done so by the GVH, she decided those house over there should fall under the chieftainship of Mudzi A. Indeed the inhabitants of those houses participate in e.g. the FIDP activities that - as far as I know - only Mudzi A - Villagers can join in to. (and the GVH..) And came to the meeting organized for my introduction. Some were in the fenced enclosure next to Mr Ntawanga’s house busy with filling little black plastic bags with black soil - the tree planting club.

In that other part of Mudzi A 13 HHs, all of them Christian, hence go to church tomorrow. Nonetheless, Secretary Victoria (2) of tree club (from other side) said we could go, no problem. Mrs Ntawanga will escort us. Twelve are kind of together, 1 further away.

So in total will interview 35 women... Unless some daughters live apart but are counted as 1 HH. Maybe include Mudzi B, where we live. I have enough soap and salt, brought 80 of each, assuming that Mudzi had 76 HHs, as claimed on the DADO’s list. Or actively look for business women...

**Gertrude when I am gone**

- Keep an eye on MASAF, coupons + FIDP activiteiten
- Record agri activities, especially ganyu
- Gossips about sexual behaviour, adultry, pregnancies
- Strategies to find food / money for food
- More market interviews?
- Missing info interviews
- Check list with Mr Ntawanga to see if we have missed any HH
- Own expenditure + where

Chief Mudzi A came by to bring broom which he bought at [nearest tradingcenter] market today (went for ndiwo), because in town are expensive (30/90 MK) here only 10mk. Found some boys chatting at veranda, then he chased them away, saying that they may have come pretending to chat but actually checking what we have inside to later come and steal. May be their mother had given them some task to do and now they’ve run away from it. After they left, I asked him why he chased them: “I know my villagers…” he said, knows exactly what goes on. Boys and girls may come here with the excuse of chatting with us, but actually just to be able to meet each other. We should send away send all boys that come to chat here … - May cause quarrels from wives married to the visiting boys: “My marriage is not working, because he goes to meet girls there instead of talking with me.” + potential thieves. “I know my people … VH said.

After dividing Mudzi B village into 6, some houses were left out. VH of Mudzi A offered / decided to take them in, so that all 6villages had more or less equal size about 50 - 60 HHs

Girl [Thokozani?] that was chatting with 6 on veranda when chief came by, complained to him that she
had asked her GVH to give her some land, a while ago, but still nothing had happened. Wanted him to interfere / help her out with some land. But he said that it could cause trouble if the VH of Mudzi A would give land to someone from Mudzi B. She should just wait some more time, be patient - if still nothing happens they will see what to do.

In NL – check literature on impact of independent income on female sexual behavior / gender relations. Is village right place for this research ?? - business women at markets ? Or e.g. second hand clothing traders in villages, such as mother of Teleza, to compare, assess change, impact. Get impression of non-business village women, especially financial situation and gender perceptions – retrieve from MDICP. Ask same questions here? Also indepth questions as Waht is/does a good man/husband/woman/face? Can you tell me about how you & husband came in relationship? Can you tell me about one such a quarrel?

Solar op dak voor 2 full days - charged to 14 Volt. Connected to laptop to charge at 5.45 pm, at 12V. Red light of laptop constantly on. = 1 hour charging - battery 80%

Am thinking of perfect situation in Central America : knew where women were coming from through Master research, found impact of new imagery - perceptions changed. But financial dependence remained all the same, hence no real change. Now what if such women get independent income? - maquila’s. Speak language + maquila workers are concentrated in one place. Could just hang around like with them, wait for insights in their gender verholding ment mannen

So : - weten waar they come from (financially + gender perceptions / relatiess) -

- Change in income (rural business)

- Concentration of women with changed income to join in daily life - or actively find them because probably live scattered. In - depth interviews + join daily activities/visit a lot

Should see first what will happen in first weeks here. With and without my presence. Leave Gertrude alone here while I go to Lilongwe to help Feye pack out stuff and move back to Amsterdam. Think ita la over in Lilongwe and Netherlands. Possibly look more actively for rural business women.

SEPT 7 NOTES

Other Mudzi A part not very far away, across road, first passing house of a older lady who sell snacks made of fish and flour at the school. Wasn’t in, will talk to her tomorrow before she goes off for her business. Then you pass another village called K. - saw many iron sheets. Ms Ntawanga, who accompanied us, said all these people work(ed) in town. Passing a njiko [pump], cross football field et voila. Interviewed 7 women today (of whom 2 not head/married to head, but 21 yr old orphan staying with grandmother who is the one to decide everything, and 22 yr old who moved in with mother, brothers and sisters after being left by
husband - both are mothers themselves. Should may be come back for grandmother of first as this
girl did not know somethings as not- decision maker. - Makes me realize that probably reason why a
number of HHs are tested as FHH while married is that when asked who makes decisions, is
answered that woman does - as in my interviews...

Ms Ntawanga passed by to say that they have checked their books too, and GVH is indeed not
registered as inhabitant of Mudzi A - Although she had said to us she was. Also to Ntawanga’s she had
said she was, which Ms J came to tell us earlier today. (may be she wants to interviewed? Or at least
included in any project that may come from this..) We than told Ms J that we had already checked
our list, but GVH is not on there. Apparently they then went to check their own books and found that
indeed she is not listed, as she claimed. We shouldn’t mind her, she does this more often , so as to receive too whenever something is given.She also put on other HHs, that are not here
anymore to receive even more (blaming her while also doing it themselves? Said this morning there
were 53 HHs in each of the villages subdivided from Mudzi B. Now only 35 (if we counted well), I
mentioned. Hmm, anachokachoka ku town [they moved to the city].

Interviewed one woman who does a regular business : Selling mandasi [snack] on Tuesdays at [small
crossroads market] and on Friday at [nearest tradingcenter] market, making about 2000 MK profit
per month : Has clearly helped her a lot. Small house with grass roof, but radio playing ! Only started
last month, so very recent (but already radio). Believes she will not have to do ganyu this year. Too
optimistic? Has 1 orphan in house - receives money from Orphan Care project in [nearest
tradingcenter] - or is that only for elderly widowed agogo?

Two women (Pamela + Ada) chatting on veranda (1 with babyboy, other pregnant) said they were
complained about coming here everyday: ‘You want to subscribe for new project!” Strange that is a
negative thing...

One girl we talked so today had her father die through witchcraft. I asked I why this could be. Some
people are jealous of other, e.g. because they have iron sheets, or rich with livestock. Can be
dangerous thus, to be / become better off...

Gertrude says: soon people will all be busy in their fields.

Two women I directly asked about impact of business on their lives / difference between bs / non -
bs rural women (one beer Brewster, mandasi [snack] seller at markets). said difference was that
they can buy their day to day needs like soap, salt, relish while others can’t.

I think that here, among these business women, independent income is there, but not the mind set
change ; like what I found in EL Remate- televolas changed the gender role perceptions.

Were marriages indeed different in earlier days ? Or also : proposed without really knowing each
other, simply because “ wife needs husband, and husband needs wife “ - ask older ladies ! Then no
exchange, like now ? What may have caused change?
- 30 Mk for phone battery charge at grocery

- Gov teacher salary 9000 - 10 000 MK / month

- Saw Saibi with baby on back and dengu [flat round basket] full of masamba [green leaves] and tomatoes on head in other part of Mudzi A to sell. Bought 6 tomatoes for 20 MK on bundles of masamba for 20 MK

SEPT 8 - NOTES

Still to be interviewed: Wife of son of Eveles + Woman across the street making kanyenza: small dried fish fried in dough. 2 MK /stuk)

On our way back from Mudzi A-II crossed paths with old woman with dengu full of green maize on head. Sold for 15, 20 and 25 MK / stuk. Quite expensive, same price as in LL, says I. Buys at dambo were they are surely much cheaper, thinks Gertrude

Interviewed one older women (56 yr, Meriam) who stays with husband even though he also has another family since 2000 [how did she find out? -- some nights not at home, people told her he went to a certain other house. She asked him, he confirmed] and spends the family income (selling cotton, doing ganyu) on beer. (last yr they couldn’t even buy subsidized fertilizer (she couldn’t get new money through MASAF because of ill -for 3 months.. Seropositive ??). Say she doesn’t want to leave him because of children, has never been with someone else, is getting old herself, she will not be respected …. Has no independent income, when asked why she says its difficult for her to start a business because husband takes all their money for beer.

Interviewed another woman (46, Belita) who decided to leave her first husband in 1986 because he had many zibwezi [girlfriends] and already then people knew about HIV/AIDS and she feared she could become infected. I find it difficult to believe that rural Malawians indeed knew about HIV/AIDS in 1986.. Gertrude agrees. Married second husband because “better to be with 1 than have several boyfriend.” After probing: (“If you have several may receive more help than from only one?”) better I than several because of danger of becoming infected with HIV. Was therefore happy that one man proposed to her. She made this sound as if he gave her a very special great gift/favour, fact that he was willing to commit himself to her. Wiling to help her, stay with her, not only after sex. Also proposed by another, brought soap, but had another family she saw, so she refused. She had own business (beer brewing) but still wanted husband for example to build her a house, to help each other (indeed husband sometimes fetches firewood and sells, and was at this very moment building a small structure near their house). This one is faithful she believes, can see that he is not moving around, goes to drink beer, but always back before dark. He is Muslim, she Catholic. She says this one is indeed a better husband than her previous. Spending of the money of her business she decides, she says, as she is the one to know what is needed at that time. But the purchase of radio and bike were decided by him.

I must get familiar with these women, so that eventually we can also talk about more private issues with reasonable chances of honest answers... How??
SEPT 9

Continue writing in English so that it can be typed into computer here!

Also interview HHs of Mudzi B (according to GVH 53 HHs - according to Ms Ntawanga less than in Mudzi A) to get know them, to know all women at the njiko [pump] and all women who may visit us here.

Do 2 last Mudzi A interviews today (+ ask Eveles about proposals & marriages in her younger years). Wash clothes tomorrow, may be some farming ?? Thusday + Friday interviews with business women at market. Weekend to Lake & Thukwi. Next week type and print revised question list put all interviews in Exell + pack home. Team 2 more weeks in Mudzi A : interview Mudzi B !! farm + chat +Follow up interviews with selected women. - NL

Also young man washing clothes at pump.

Paul Famer 2008 “Women & HIV/AIDS.”

Different kind of rural business women : (on compu list of business of interviewed women)

- Selling home grow products (no buying involved)
- Buying and selling crops (tomato, masamba, bananas etc) (“kuoda”)
- Process (e.g. mandasi, kanyenya), value - adding
- Initiated by external org’s vs own initiative

Make inventory at markets : - gender balance : more men or women traders ?

What kind of business ? Which mainly men vs women?

Soap: with 1 bar family can do 1 or 2 cloths washes, usually once a week, so need about 3 or 4 bars per month. About 30 MK / bar.

I bought wholesale 10 bars of soap for 275 MK and 20 bags of salt for 1100mk. Meaning in total the gifts add up to 27.5 + 55mk = 82.5 MK only...

Previous interviewed woman (Nr 20 Filimona) is daughter - in -law of Eveles. After interviewing her (husband taught himself to repair bikes, so runs bike repair shops now, had about 9 of them standing there, but still struggling because big family with grandmother and 2 children in secondary school) asked Eveles about proposing and relationships in the past, when she was young. In those days indeed proposing, but usually man would go to the parents of the girl. Tell them he wants to marry her. Then the parents call the girl and tell about proposal, sometimes she wouldn’t want. If she agreed than further agreements were made. Not like now right away sleeping together. Nowadays men just propose women without going through parents knowing, sleep together, so many young girls get pregnant before getting married (But don’t these people know about the danger of HIV /AIDS?) Ah, they know ! They speak about it on the radio all the time ! But here they say : “Its our time “ (and I can choose what to do with myself!) “Ndi nthawi yathu !”. She even
doubts whether her own granddaughters will reach Gertrudes age without already being a mother (graps her breast). She is proud of Gertrude not having children yet. Do men not propose to her? Amandifuna! laughs Gertrude [they want me!]. How come she doesn’t have children yet/ isn’t married yet?. Not my time yet, later. I want to be able to find my own money to provide for my family. I ‘il but here many people dying of Edzi, because of few men with money (e.g. after selling cotton) and girls that are after that money. Nowadays it’s more important to them whether their future husband has a lot of money or not. In past it was about love, chikondi. And people didn’t sleep with each other so soon. Herself she even ran away from her husband the first days after marriage want to sleep in the nkhokwe [maize granary]. Then after some days her husband went to complain to her parents who then called her and told her not to be afraid. But these days, many orphans, many orphans …. Feels blessed that we have already visited her 3 times (of which 1 was just greeting + quick talk when we passed by after buying out poison at grocery).

0436 When asking the kanyenya business woman Serena (very proud of being a business woman, of what she has accomplished) whether the business has changed her relationship with her husband, she says defensive “Ah no! We no! We still stay well together.” But admitted that she decides what to spend money from business on.

0437 Washed clothes at njiko [pump] this morning, many women there, and young man washing his clothes. Most just waiting to draw water, sit on bucket while waiting, some chatting.

0438 Several women brought us firewood already, very sweet (only free gift they can get hold of - or water, as I saw in Thukwi, but pump there was not as far as here). By old lady Chenawe came to greet, but did not want to come empty handed she said.

0439 Keely came yesterday afternoon, spent evening and morning chatting. Sometimes embarrassing. Where have you been in Eastern Europe? What place would you like to go? (New York & Thailand) Doubting whether to become medical doctor or public health specialist? She slept in bed, I on mphasa [mat] with only blankets - did not sleep well, cold (but malarone also keeps me awake), and this is not even cold season..

0440 EVELES: Women with own business have their own money don’t have this behavior of going around sleeping with men for money. Why are some women starting business and others go after men?

Read for methodology:


0443 Keely : Many feminist theories (Dc Behavior, Butler) that say economic independence is the (sole) requirement for emancipation, for gender relations to become more equal.

When we went to give plastic bag with gift to GVH, she asked whether we wanted the bag back

0445 SEPTEMBER 10

0446 Went to the dimba this morning. Just to see + maybe buy some tomatoes and masamba from
people working at their fields there. Were escorted by the 15 yr old Dorica girl who stopped and wants to get married. Quite a distance (20 - 30 minute) through field mainly (maize & nandolo). At dimba soil suddenly black and humid: banana trees, fields of tomatoes, maize, nandolo, pumpkin and "Chinese (green leaves growing from earth). Man digging in a well (may be making it deeper). But no one in the fields from whom we could buy. are usually there in morning and afternoon. Have to water their crops, but only about once every two day. This is also where the Musitafa sisters go to buy their merchandise.

0447 After walking back to Mudzi B girl brought us to her sister who has a tomato field at the dimba, and sells in the village at 10MK per hip. Was playing bawo [board game] next to her hips of tomatoes.

0448 Asked girl who accompanied us whether she had already found a man to marry. Three had proposed, from other villages, came to her house (without gift) to ask her, but she told each of then she didn’t want them, Couldn’t describe to me what kind of man she is looking for, when asked she said she would prefer one of about her own age than older, but boys of 15 usually not ready for marriage while girls do. Said she refused them because she didn’t like them, but also because she reconsiders going back to school (or says this because Gertrude pushes her that its better to finish at least primary school, do some ganyu to buy soap do wash school clothes)

0449 Eveles passed by, brought some eggs, tomatoes and a mango - for me to try, didn’t know it I liked.... Gertrude excused herself: pots on fire. Then agogo left again, saying we should eat but not worry about her, she is fasting. Is going to visit a pregnant lady in Mudzi B and on her way back will pass by again. May be them I can ask her about the small black stripes that she has carried in on her temples, (and for chitchat whether the woman she visited is relative). Is middle of the day, sun at its highest, and then walks all the way over here, slowly...

Sept 11

0450 Ganyu has bad reputation - “sign of desperation,” keeps poor from working their fields and thus perpetuates hunger. But running (daily) business also means women cannot work own field, because busy selling But: some can afford to have ganyu labor to cultivate their field, or some work early morning hours before going to sell. (ganyu workers can do this too though ...)

Sept 12

0452 Market day in [nearest tradingcenter] (5 km distance from Mudzi A). Many clothes, “software“ (torch, batteries, knives, scissors, little locks, brush, mirror etc), veggies, chips, bike parts, chigayo. Ook ‘inside’ market – small shops in corridors: lotion, mandasi, Chigumu, matemba, beans, potatoes, cooking oil in small bags.

- Remarkable answers interviews market women:

0454 Question to BS women: Do you know microcredit orgs? Why not borrowed to enlarge BS? One woman activity remarked that she knew several microcredit orgs (MADEF, Concern Universal! FINCA), had gone there to inquire, but decided not to loan, because “have to pay each week, and I’m not sure I could right away in the first week, and if you don’t, they may take away your business. “ - After marrying husband found out she was his second wife, by now has a ‘big zitenje BS (had small silver
Several other (Smaller : Veggie) BS women remarked that difference between them and not BS rural women is that these can easily resort to prostitution to find thing they need.

One (older) woman told us she had been married to 6 men, who all impregnated her and them other left or were sent away by her because they were lazy. And each time again she hoped this one. would be different. Despite independent income (masamba) wanted to be married, as she saw her neighbours were, exchanging gifts, husbands buying clothes for his wife, working together on the field... [and as she got more children, des te higher the need for a supporting husband)

Another older woman was temporarily selling for her two divorced single - mother daughter- one of whom had been impregnated after divorcing by a man who had quickly left her (“ran away for his responsibilities”). Yes, they would like to get married again, are still young ! Why I asked, if they have an income - whats the advantage of being married ? Hmm yes, by now they have come to realize that it may be better to stay alone : marrying will only disturb them - leave them with extra months to feed..

Most of the interviewed women (total 8) simply got their start up capital through other doing ganyu or selling maize or cotton. Nothing extraordinary about them; equally low education like other rural women interviewed. Are proud to be able to buy their daily needs like soap, salt, ndiwo. Part of them started after divorce rather than divorce results of getting an independent income

While some BS women can now hire ganyu workers to cultivate their fields / help them on field, others still have to do ganyu to feed family / keep BS running (even within some merchandise eg veggies which seems low at BS hierarchy)

Thus so far, what is it that makes women want to marry if not for financial support : to be respected, to follow conventional female behavior, not to risk being portrayed or perceived as prostitute, as threat to several cohesits / equilibrium /order

Several women answered defensively that their independent income did not change their relationship with their husband - No! Still staying ok together. None of the women I asked this question said it had changed anything in their relationship with their husband. May be wrong question / bady formulated? Interesting nonetheless that they feel that it should not change their relationship..

Why do men propose / want to get married ? [JEneti was proposed by man wanted to find new home before divorcing his wife with whom he quarreled a lot. Did not want to have to go back to stay with parents.] Do they just pretend at that time they are interested / looking for serious relationship or simply get bored quickly after having been together with one woman ? Why do some of them spend HH money on beer? Why are some “lazy ?” Divorce : oa no kids (husband Rosemary, Jeneti, Emra)
Why is soap so important, nr one (or at times of njala may be ur 2) of items for which cash is needed? Shamefull to walk around in dirty clothes?

Try to record whether HHs in Mudzi A sell / exchange HH items (radio, bike, blanket pots ed, or livestock) during coming months to get maize (+ soap). What do they eat when they have no maize? (Cassava flour)? zikhawo? - no one has mentioned this as survival strategy!

Do HHs who did ganyu last season have lower yields than with same size field others? Do own fields indeed suffer from ganyu?

“Hunger season,” does not mean I will be going hungry too while in village during this time: more people trying to sell food! Trying to find some money, e.g. masamba & tomatoes from the dambo, Chicken eggs, groundnuts

Sept 13

Beside the road bundles of grass and bamboo poles are sold: this is the time to put a new roof, before the rains start - brings business for others.

In Thukwi a grass structure: Orphan Care school + milk feeding program. Another grass structure: tree nursery initiated by Total Land Care

Malita gave birth to a health son one week ago in hospital, called him Davie.

Dayson’s brother Jerard has left his wife and 2 children for another woman with 9 kids. He wanted more children but his now ex-wife was operated so couldn’t become pregnant anymore. Dayson and his son Anderson now ran his Tea Room.

When women have period in village, use piece of cloth which they either wash or throw in pit latrine after use. On condom instruction is also indicated that the condoms should be thrown in pit latrine after use.

Comments Siambi on first update f! (+ foto’s by interviews...)

Was impressed. Said he had told Moyo about the update, and how there were many interesting issues that also are of relevance to their work. He assumed that the insights on women wanting to marry men (even though they may have independent income - which Isaac rightly suggested can still be small and therefore not necessarily makes women completely independent from male economic support) because of peer pressure from other women - those married and fearing the competition of a single woman. Had to laugh hard when I told him about woman explaining that although she had her own income through kachasu brewing, she still wanted a husband to build a house for her cant do that herself. Haha, a good reason for marrying, haha! (sarcastically). Mentioned how this is all of importance in the light of my health / AIDS research. People say / expect that these HH list are frauded, but now you really found evidence! Anecdotal! but still!

Sept 22
Gertrude kept track of some relatively big events, but talking to her I find there is much more in her head. By she saw Saibi working on the field when she passed going to church. (so works on field before going off to sell veggies). When passing Aisha’s house Aisha asked her where she was going: looking for tomatoes. Then Aisha asked a man from a nearby structure that is going to be her new house to come with tomatoes and fish! Ex-husband returned? New husband? Secret money? I had indeed seen iron sheets inside her house when interviewing --> Ex-husband paying to build it, doesn’t want to been seen as bad man.

SEPT 23 NOTES

Today meeting under the big tree in Mudzi B for registration for fertilizer compons. row of chairs in middle (Mr Chikombo, GVH, chief Mudzi A, some other men - one standing, reading out loud), next to them the female chiefs, then a group of men and besides a bigger group of women (+kids). Speaker was saying how one village with app 30 HHs will get only 15 coupons (“Ohh” want through crowd). Mudzi B village with 60 something HHs will get 29. Mudzi A didn’t hear, will ask. Then all chiefs had together their people and start registering them.

Eveles came again, bringing mango’s and eggs. Pretending to be angry about me having send my husband away again, that I am jealous because my husband wants to marry her. A white man who farmed for her… She had also brought eggs and mango’s earlier for Gertrude. Feeling sorry for her not eating them herself or giving to Kids decided to give some money. Not paying, not calculating price, but just give her something and say “ to buy some soap or salt “ But she saw through it, it now fill like an exchange, she said doesn’t want this again. Then said she would be happy with some salt, because here the groceries only sell at 10mk, small quantities. Only in Balaka sell affordable big, but cant go there easily. Hands for eyes, laughing, ashamed to be begging. Didn’t like her picture, looks like a man, even as if she had beard, didn’t like clothes, told me she had wanted to change at that time! made new picture now happier.

Last year Mudzi A chief+ wife and her son in adjacent house did not receive fertilizer coupons IGVH decided who should get them.. There seems to be quite some animosity between them.. GVH complained to people that we had interviewed wife of chief “ though she not were from that village “ /here.” Wife of chief, at her turn, came to say to I that GVH is not unrolled in FIDP activities, so should not have been interviewed / brid about them in interview.

Less people come to chat, says Gertrude, others who said they wanted to learn how to knit now say they are too busy. On field or making bricks to make new or stronger house before rains start. Gertrude heard people from other village passing by to attend funeral of young boy in Mudzi B say: “ if they (me & I) would come to us, we would say we didn’t harvest anything.” Indeed, interviewing both granddaughter and grandmother in same HH (Ganizani showed that either one of them is lying about whether or not to receive support from a relative in town, the nr of blankets they have and nr of fertilizer bags they applied. Gertrude heard people passing who had been registering in [small crossroads market], saying that this year each coupons is meant for 2 HHs. In past all HHs received a small bag of fertilizer for free. At least than everybody got some, also the very poor who now cannot afford 800mk for subsidizes fertilizer (but may have sold at time of reception to buy food?)

Wouldn’t want to miss the actual distribution of fertilizer compons, nor the buzzing of activities after
the first rains, MASAF project...

Mfumu [chief] Mudzi B 65 - 26; Mudzi A 76 - 31; Chagwa 36 -15; Kambaula 74 -30; Juma 78 - 19; [tiny crossroads market] 72-29 (nr of inhabitants - nr of coupons)

After registering passing by people on mat say those not enrolled in FIDP had difficulties registering - “lazy.” Benefit of participating thus easier registration for other projects / hand outs.

Tailoring training in LL 6 months : 1000mk / month. Machine + 12 - 15000 MK

Jane, friend of Doris came to chat in afternoon with Gertrude. Told Gertrude that Doris told her she is now doing ganyu in order to run away to relative in Blantyre. Hamra is elder sister to Ester’s deceased mother, advised Doris to go to police to report people who called her a prostitute.

NOTES SEPT 24

Wife of owner of this house left to her mothers while husband still in SA - left nice, big, iron sheets roofed house. According to Jane (who told Gertrude) because the GVH (mother in-law of this woman) spoke with another wife of her husband. As soon as the woman heard this, she went to the GVH’s house and started quarrelling, even beating the GVH. According to GVH, however, there was indeed a fight, but she sent the wife away because she was sleeping with other men. [November; woman now pregnant from other man. But man has also other woman waiting for him where he can go to when he returns. Has countless children, said Jane, with numerous women]

It is now really getting hot

With first woman we spoke today (Madalitso), I got impression that she was pretending to be worse off than in reality. At start of next interviews stressed harder that this research is only for understanding. Not to inform an upcoming project. Therefore brought small gifts to compensate for time, because there will be no other benefit. First woman said e.g. that she had absolutely no other source of income than ganyu, and said that husband drinks all his money, never helps HH- but when I kept asking why she still fed him, she said he does contribute bits, he helped build their house, helped pay for a her grass roof recently. That she did not apply fertilizer, had not received a coupon, only harvested 1 bag of maize, can’t take care of granddaughter who lives with her. - Then why doesn’t mother take granddaughter back? Ah, the child is used to staying with me.

Gertrude said this morning that she found that the GVH has plenty of land (people tell her, or she seen the GVH on some land working or collecting firewood, and then GVH says it is hers). Definitely more than the 2 acres she claimed to have.

Interviewed several women whose husband works in South Africa, all seem to do well. Are in regular contact with him, he sends money and items (such as cell phone and even television! Are not lacking food anymore. One departing husband decided that his wife’s brother should move in with wife. Sends money and sometimes also tells her what to use it for (eg bed for children). One woman had gone to SA.

One woman, Jeneti, was proposed by a man who was married in Ulongwe but quarreled a lot with that wife. Wanted to find a new “home,” before divorcing so that he didn’t have to move back to
parents. She agreed because she needed help to take care of her and her child. Initially took well care of her, but later even took some of her maize under the pretext of having to work on mother’s field; but gave it to another woman! Divorced him and now bought herself 20 iron sheets. Just needs to wait for next year to get the money needed for putting it on roof (tree, nails transport, laborers). Is alone now, but does hire ganyu - harvests a lot of maize. Would have enough till next harvest if she wouldn’t have to sell every now and then for ndiwo, or school fees for her daughter in form 1 (temporary last husband did supply for her, but did not help to pay school fees). Another woman, Tumanene, decided to marry an unknown man who proposal her to relieve her parents from taking care of her: “Had to buy soap for many people.” Although village of potential new husband was not far, she did not go around asking about his behavior before agreeing; “Villages too far apart, difficult.” & “People can cheat you, saying he is not a good man, boy because they don’t want you to marry him..

Salika stayed in Limbe for some time and said difference was that in town people drink tea in the morning, while here in village they don’t - lack of money. This same woman has worked several years in a HH in Area 97, Lilongwe. She definitely prefers to live in the village though, because (as Elba in Guatemala) : in town everything needs money : firewood, ndiwo, maize, land for rent.. Same woman attended a seminar to learn how to teach the blind to find money for her husband to travel to South Africa, haha. Two women today said they haven’t grown cotton for a while / never because didn’t see benefit, prices decreased. Now however they heard that the price will increase from 70 MK/kg to 100mk/kg. Salika will start this yr now that kids are big enough to help her, couldn’t manage alone..

Most people we have interviewed in Mudzi B now participate in the tree-growing project even though they don’t see or don’t get benefit now. Continue because there might be a benefit or even handout in the future., don’t want to miss that! One woman yesterday, Rosemary, participates both in the tree nursery and the adult school project (already received notebook, pen, pencil en gum, for free!) because some people speculated that those participating may get free maize handouts [Already a car had come with watering cans for use at the nursery, so … (Elube)]. She doesn’t think that’s true, but just in case, does participates. (In a way it makes sense, considering how Julia said after coming back from registering for fertilizer subsidy yesterday that people who were not enrolled in FIDP had difficulties enrolling because they were perceived “/ said to be lazy).

First four houses we went to this morning empty: people had gone to field (Sept 24)...

Blessings told us about a “CBO” [community based organization] where she got herself registered. Doesn’t know the activities yet, organized by people from Balaka who promised they would come back to explain but haven’t come yet.

Who is that man that often comes with chief ?? grandson to chief.

Saw a a chitenje with computers on one of women who come to chat yesterday.

One women yesterday, Jasmine was proposed to via parents at 7 yrs old. Parents agreed, waited till 12 to really get married (she cried and tried to run away). First child however wasn’t born till 5 yrs later (trad med to get pregnant)… After child birth husband couldn’t sleep with her for some time and found another women to sleep with. He would leave during day, be back at night. One
morning she followed him and saw him with other woman. warned ankkoswe after which the man stopped, after six months of affair.. left woman pregnant, but baby died. Parents agreed because he wasnt moving around, and families were already related through grandmother. BS: Jasmine sells zigumu at Balaka market app once a week. Profit 200 MK, if she sells all (Balaka big market so that does happen sometimes, left overs she takes back to grandchildren). She saw the problems in their HH, husband didn’t work so decided to start BS in 1970. Also buys pumpkin leaves at the damba and sells in vlg. husband runs little shop in front of house (simple 1 shelve on sticks). Gives her money when HH needs. husband works in field a lot - next to our house. She doing ganyu now, will also start hiring ganyu this year, because their bodies are growing old, hurting. [Jasmine] Used Concern Universal loan to buy fertilizer and zigumu BS, has finished paying back the loan. But difficult to pay back, at least MADEF easier: payback after 2-3 months, while Concern after 2 weeks...Says she only harvested 5 bags of maize, because was difficult, already finished (but Gertrude heard her say in mid Oct to daughter Innocent later: when we finish eating the maize we harvested, we’ll buy ufa at Balaka). Had received 24000Mk last July for cotton, bought bicycle to go to hospital and chigayo. Didn’t mention being part of the pig group with Kima in interview... Participated in FIDP goats, mushroom, manure - but in Nov told to stop, people of group say she can’t participate in their vlg Mudzi A. But was initially included by Mr Chikombo.

0503

Livia had only one dress to go to school in, was difficult to wash (would be naked then) decided therefore it was better to marry. Parents refused for a yr though, saying she should continue school. But man [22, first marriage] kept on proposing and she wanted to continue seeing each other, but not sleeping together, she says, because her parents were against their union, and she stayed with her (protective) brother in Balaka (selling diesel, took her in to take care, she helped his wife in HH) - didn’t want to get pregnant. After marriage moved to Nkhata Bay (he sold handicrafts to tourists) where they had good life because husband earned money for soap and food. But quarreled a lot, he beat her e.g. when baby urinated on his trousers, she went back to home village sometimes but always returned to husband later, until he told to sell their child (1yr &8months at that time), then she ran away and never returned. When husband came to get her back, he found her pregnant from other man from [nearest tradingcenter]. She had quickly agreed to marry this man hoping it would be a better marriage with somebody from a nearby village instead of Balaka town. Found it difficult to take care of her child alone. Soon, however, she heard he was already married to someone else. He left her even before she gave birth to their child, but does come to see child. He is still young, she excuses him, he cannot manage to take care of 2 families. Sometimes goes there to begg support. BS, recently started selling mandasi [snack] in other village (brings there and comes back 3 days later to pick up money. Profit 200/300mk for 3 days. Nonetheless, eating only once a day (cooking twice for child) - last season didn’t work on land sufficiently because party in Nkhata Bay with husband,.

0504

Elube was left by first husband two days after childbirth. Had to wait for 2 yrs for next proposal Accepted because “was begging her mother for soap, wanted to marry to find soap on her own “ However, he only plays cards. Spends his money there, whatever he earns through ganyu, and when he wins gives about 10mk to wife for salt, rest buys matemba [dried fish] for herself. Was advised by parents to stay with him : maybe he will change.. He has several zibwenzi [girlfriends]. She told him to go back to his home village because she is afraid of matenda [diseases/AIDS]. But he refuses, says he stopped having zibwenzi, but still comes home late. Because his mother died there would be no one else to feed him, wife feels chisoni [sorry/pity] and continues to feed him. He doesn’t help on the field, she spends more time doing ganyu than work on own field, therefore cant manage to grow cotton, and couldn’t buy fertilizer, using all ganyu.
money just for food. Eating only once these days (childs twice). (eat twice when buy maize after
ganyu, till they have little left again). Her next door married son seems to have been doing good (my
first impression from well to do family..) - had bed, bike radio and even phone before marriage to 17
yrs old girl.

Rosemary currently married to 5th husband. First husband at 16 (he proposed via mother, but S
refused because to young. When mother fell ill man said that there would be no one to take care of
her is mother would die, then accepted), 4 yrs marriage, 3 kids, but very lazy, didn’t even buy her
clothes or chitenje (which made her child drop of her back after which she sent him away. Stayed
alone for only 1 month till next proposal, which she accepted because she wanted to live together
(didn’t know him nor inquire about his behaviour "because difficult to find out where he lived to ask",
just started living together, went to ankhoswe and had ndowa ceremony for 3 days, 2 kids together).
Again lazy man, not working in the field, she even made the shelter at field herself... When he refused
to carry some water for her to wash her body after having worked hard meanwhile being ill ["It is not
showing respect to ask this from me!"] , she decided to leave him (reported his behavior to chief who
gave penalty of buying her & kids clothes. A month later, 3th husband proposed, her brothers had
seen him work in the field and therefore advised her to marry him. Stayed together for 6 yrs until man
died: “ amalima ” [he farmed], meaning: he was good one ... Fourth husband 7 yrs, but no kids
so he married someone else when she wanted to leave because of headaches which started when her
brother wanted to sleep with her following advice of a sing’anga [witchdoctor] to become rich
(wanted to buy a car). She noticed that when she was staying with another brother in Mudzi B
headaches became less, hence wanted to move here. At Mudzi B was proposed by the Mudzi A chief,
which resulted in his wife Hamra being angry with Rosemary - therefore accepted the one other
proposal she got, from a man she had seen drinking. To at least
become respected again. Since she and Hamra are on speaking terms again. Stays in small house with
9 people ! Kids don’t go to school because of lack of clothes (last yr were sent back from school
because had no uniform). [Rosemary:] very small field (begs food from son (builder, works hard in
field, last yr gave 3 bags, this yr 1 only) and brother), not big enough to also grow cotton. husband
spends ganyu money on beer [but has cotton field!].

Livia came to learn crocheting a poncho (brought own thread, left over from something (simple
trouser) for baby) when she was called – a boy came with phone - by the father of her last child !
Even though in interview she said he had left her to go back to wife, never came to see baby, never
helps her. 6 heard her say “ we’ll meet tomorrow.” [Sept 25 : Gertrude asks about tel conversation
with father of last child. Livia explains she has been flashing him to ask for his assistance . He now
called back and they agreed to meet in [nearest tradingcenter] today, where he stays. Today
however she decided to send a letter in instead of going herself, Jane was going there anyway, so
could drop the letter asking for assistance.] Other girls joked that we will see her [Livia] get pregnant
again in cotton season : “ Have you forgotten that during cotton selling season farmers have a lot of
money and can chat on you that they’ll marry you and then when money finishes go back to wife ??
- her baby indeed born in march = 9 months after cotton selling ...
Discrepancies: Interviewed mother-in-law and daughter-in-law who eat together, farmed on mother-in-law’s last season. MIL said she had no problems on field, DIL says that because of heavy rainfall they had to replant seeds twice! MIL says they harvested only 3 bags of maize of which 1.5 are still left, DIL says they harvested ½ nkholwe [maize granary] of which 3 bags are still left.

Most participants of the tree-planting concern in Mudzi B projects see the benefits in getting tree handouts which they can grow to get firewood or building material! or can sell for these purposes. Very few say the benefit to them is increasing soil fertility (Chisoni, Mudzi B + Suset, Mudzi A). Many say they participate because the GVH told them to, so leaders role is indeed of great importance. Kondwani (35, left) said she just followed the example of others.

Not all people change their eating during hunger season. Some eat less often or prepare less nsima (or phala = less ufa in same amount of water) others continue eating as usual. After having done some ganyu and found money and brought maize - eat more often (But not necessarily “as usual,”), until it almost finishes again.

Amila (36 married) last yr only did ganyu in Aug & Sept (clearing land, mailing ridges) after which she quickly started on her own field so that her kids could eat green maize asap. husband meanwhile continued doing ganyu.

Kondwani (35 - left) agreed with first proposal she received, at 19 yrs old, because all her friends were married, she was ashamed not to be married yet, Waited eagerly for proposal!

Two HHs will have to share I coupon, which is for 2 bags of fertilizer - different types. Heard some say that they mix the 2 types and each HH takes 1 bag of mixed fertilizer.

Bit by bit I start to understand the quick acceptance of man’s proposal by many women. Salika (the chief of Mudzi B I) said she agreed at very same moment that man told her he wanted banja [marriage/family] with her because “when a man proposes, it means he is seriously ready to take care of you” [See also Belita: Was happy / relieved when man proposed to her after first divorce. Made it sound as if he did her great favour, community himself to her, willing to support her long terms.] (4 yrs later however, he married someone else, stopped helping her so she decided to end the marriage). Next man same story, left her for someone else, Now she doesn’t want to get married anymore because “it just brings more problems,” = children to take care of ...

Several old women they moved from further south to Balaka “because their children kept dying.”

Thandizo (59, divorced) said she married (at app 15 yrs) because she was afraid to get pregnant from an unserious man, better to get married. her husband To be worked somewhere and brought her sugar and biscuits during courtship. Adult granddaughter (Tinenenji) had to laugh about both comments. When he left her after bearing kids, she managed because she worked hard on the field and taught her children to work her field too.
NOTES SEPT 26

Found out that the volunteering teachers at the Concern adult school do get some remuneration - unlike what Victoria said: 1000mk / month. But their responsibility includes watching over the tree nursery. Said Venesi who teaches herself just like Victoria. She also said that she receives loans from Concern Universal, since 2006. But doesn’t consider this a “project” - which may explain why some other participating women didn’t mention this during our interview. Jasmine told us she sells zigumu, but ever since 1970. Amila explicitly said she has no independent income - Venesi said all of the 5 other women who received loans with her are still in business.. Also said that the micro credit project was also initiated in Mudzi A, 10 people got loans (anyone can get loan as long as they are with 9 others -), but some men just used the money to big beer, couldn’t repay led to quarreling and so the project there ended ...

Venesi (36 2nd marriage) wants to divorce her husband because she finds him lazy. He doesn’t want to do ganyu, says it is better to cultivate a larger own field than do ganyu on other field. But she finds it necessary to bring in money in times of need and went to the ankhoswe to complain. Tomorrow they will meet to finalize, have already met with wife and husband. husband first refused, she then said: “But I told you many times to go and do ganyu, but you don’t change!” He them accepted, has never done ganyu ever since they married in 1992, would be difficult for him to change - she says: Venesi says that she would also have divorced him if she didn’t make any money through the tomato BS that she started with Concern money and the money she earns as volunteer teacher at the concern school. If she wouldn’t have had those incomes, she could have done ganyu. Is not part of the reason why she decided to divorce him now. Is only because he is lazy, doesn’t do ganyu. Better to be alone than having to take care of him. [Venesi] Keeps taking new loans over which she has to repay with interest of almost 25% rather than using the profits of earlier business because she finds it difficult/impossible to gather/keep lump sums: somebody gets ill or something like that... Valentine and husband give some of the money they get through selling cotton to her grandmother to save it for them at the time of buying fertilizer + hiring ganyu. Thus: need for saving possibilities...

More reasons mentioned for participatory in the tree nursery project: Molly Mudzi B (chubby girl, 2nd marriage) heard that after this project Concern universal will come to give loans. And “kusilira” - desire, wanting to do the same as others / to admire / to be envious. Valentine (24, first marriage) is one of few who does not participate in the tree project, saying she is not interested: project never last long; come promise & go

Younger sister next door Emra (22, 1st marriage) has a field at the dimba - but hasn’t cultivated it during last months (winter cropping) - because goats can destroy the yield, she says: Who else have dambo fields? - Tinenenji (sister of Dorica), Lovely (husband in SA), Venesi Concern micro credit), Amila (seems very poor, mad husband), Salika (chief Mudzi B),

Extra columns in Excel :- FHH / MHH - reason for participating in projects

I find it annoying, even offending that some women lie to me - but its just relevant info that they do...

Same woman says she & banja some times go days without food, but do have a bike they could sell:
“But bike can take them to places where they can find ganyu whenever they can’t find nearby while selling only provide them with food a short period.”

Several women today said their husband decided about expenditure because he is the *akulu* in the house, which Gertrude translates as the elder one (which indeed they are).

Valentine was selected by the mother of her husband when she looked for a suitable life for her son (because of her good behavior - ‘respecting elders,’ Same as Amila) Edina then demanded to see him first, and at first sight accepted him (“allowed” is literal translation from Chichewa): Blood can be the same, she explained, which makes people feel attracted to each other. She don’t ask him any questions, because he could cheat her anyway, have to live together to see real behavior.

I suddenly realized last night that few of the interviewed said she had given birth to a child before being married, no signs of sex without being properly proposal and married (but: daughter of Rashida, daughter of cassava BS woman at [small crossroads market], Livia). But today interviewed 2: Grace (22, 1st marriage. Says she was cheated by her boyfriend, who said he would marry her, slept together, got pregnant, but he refused to go to the chief to officially inform him/her about marrying this girl. She got afraid, because people say that if you stay together without having gone to (paid) the chief, no one will take care of you if partner dies. It also made her suspect that he may have been married elsewhere, and she decided to end their relationship. Molly in Mudzi B (27,2nd married) got pregnant while still at primary school, in standard 7 (at 21 yrs), boyfriend was at nearby secondary school in form 3. She stopped her school, went to stay with mother while he finished his secondary education. After finishing form 4, however, he married someone else.

Reason for not being happy with husband marrying other wives: have to share resources (says Dora + Salika).

Watch out for: Esther Paulo, Teleza Uleya & Mira Mubsa - have loans from Concern Universal! Many people had chicken but died because of some disease -

Woman who visits more often, with big eyes (will interview her tomorrow, of Tunga family) = Pamela) is enrolled in adult school even though she can already read & write. - because had heard that those enrolled will later be getting loans (but first need to be able to read & write to properly run business). Teachers told those who can already read & write to use left hand, so that when Concern people come to check, will not notice skills. Indeed quite some women who went up to st 6,7,8 in primary school say they’re participating in Adult School project, for “remembering / not forgetting loading to knowledge -,” but maybe in reality not to be excluded for loans, if these come or they are only saying to me they are participating, for same reason.

Phingi (mother of Livia) came to ask Gertrude If rumours were correct on saying that I Went to Lilongwe to arrange maize handouts after hearing how low peoples yields here were. Gertrude denied, Phingi said she just wanted to be sure [people say I am cheating them, can’t believe that I would stay here so long without leading to a project]- since I had told her daughter they can come to me with all their questions (after I asked them a lot of questions during interview). Then she said that people have
just eat too much after harvest big full plates was then complaining about the sudden influx of goats after FIDP distribution, destroying all the crops (indeed several women complained about this in interview). Gertrude suggested they discuss to tie their goats to trees for example. May be people will do that now, Phingi said, as there is a visitor who will otherwise report on them / bad impact of handing out goats - my presence may thus have quite some consequences, changing peoples behavior, calculating the results it can have. Already Phingi has been chased out of the FIDP group when I came and just wanted to speak to Mudzi A people because of FIDP (or maybe they thought I came to check on FIDP execution). At the day we arrived there had been a gathering of people to welcome us / hear what we came to do. Phingi had send her daughter Livia there to hear what it was all about, but she was chased away - (May be the GVH taking me over there & them taking me they both participated too was planned as such, secretly informing me about this). As said, it feels uncomfortable that I am played with like this and that people continue to calculate/adjust their behavior / answers to increase their chances of benefitting from anything I could bring them. But I should just see it as it as interesting and relevant data. Hoping that at least part of it will become more clear / find out truth throughout time, by staying here a long time.

0538 Women at mat were talking about a certain man who had come to Mudzi B last cotton selling season to find a wife. Told the daughter-in-law of GVH that he had so much cotton that he was going to buy 100 bags of maize to later sell - she told Gertrude. Didn’t trust his story, too good to be true, so refused. He then went on to propose to a woman in M. village who accepted: But instead of bringing her maize and BS, he is now very ill and she is taking care of him.

0539 Jasmine tells Gertrude today on mat outside our house that she was among the first in the pig club that Kima showed us. --> Didn’t mention this interview. Also told Gertrude that she had harvested 3 bags of nandolo of which she sold 2,5. In interview Jasmine said that they had finished their maize already in Aug (while she said they harvested 5 bags) - Now Gertrude heard her say to daughter that they should buy ufa at Balaka when they finish eating the maize they harvested.

0540 NOTES 27 Sept

0541 High death rates make that people inherit (some older women said they got most of that they owned as inheritance from deceased children, one woman today saidthey got their bike her brother - the owner of the bike - died)

0543 Dorica (girl that walked us to the dambo) wants to get married, but refused several proposals, Hence not necessarily all proposal are gratefully accepted. But she probably has an OK home/provider (mother), thus not desperate for assistance. And may have a romantic idea of marriage, wants one she is attracted to. Just like Valentine who first wanted to see the man, only see him before agreeing, and said that “blood was the same; therefore attracted to him.

0544 Two women said (today Pamela + one of previous days) that when you are single / have your own income you can buy what you want or need at that very same time, while if you have to beg your husband for it (kupempha) it will take some time before you get it.

0545 Gertrude finds it very strange that people who have sold cotton & received lump sum of money do not own
a blanket. According to her one of the first items to buy if you don’t have any. So may be lying...

Ada (doesn’t know whether she should consider herself married or not husband left last month without saying anything and didn’t come back - before delivery of baby) got pregnant very soon after starting a zibwenzi relationship with her husband, because they only dated for 1 month and she says she got pregnant during relationship = before marriage...

What is exactly difference between ‘zibwenzi’ and marriage relationship ? Ankhoswe ? informing chief ? --> living together

Thokozani just gave birth to her second baby, married since 2005. During our interview her husband comes out of the bafa, gets inside the house to dress smartly (jeans, shirts, shoes, cap, phone hanging from neck) and gets on bike. You’re leaving, asks Thokozani. Yes, will be back Sunday afternoon going to Mangochi ... Thokozani looks very sad, aangeslagen.” Please don’t forget to visit my uncle there ...

I heard her say. “ I ii come back with money to buy trees” for the roof on their new house, he said. [But is else wise good husband, says Gertrude --> provides...]

NOTES SEPT 28

Met Hamra on our way may back from distributing pictures in Mudzi A 11, and told her I ’d like to take a picture of her with husband. No,she said plainly, and continued walking. Chief was standing next to us, we had just greeted him, he was on his way to get some,leaves to cure a wound. We then sat down with her under the next mango tree to give her picture, and I asked her why she was mad, why she didnt want to be photographed together with husband. She spoke softly, but her suppressed anger was obvious. That one, looking ferociously at husband, works his field, harvested 4,5 bag, sold it and now eats my harvest. Doesn’t provide anything for me. Even my blanket was brought to me by my son ! I work my field alone, do ganyu alone, and he just eats it. We cultivated cotton together and sold it for 4000 MK, which he took. She didn’t see one tambala of it. (What did he spent the money on ?) Doesn’t know (is not a drinker, but Rosemary told us he had proposed to her, so possibly spends it on women …) (Why do you choose to stay with him, why don’t you divorce ?) the ankhoswe have been informed..

Two other women who find their husband lazy, said, eventually after me probing for a while, why they stay with a man they clearly see as a burden rather than help, that they WILL leave him - Venesi said after some probing (repeating question, summarizing her answers, putting question differently to understand why they stay with such a man) that the ankhoswe are meeting tomorrow, that she is actually about to leave him – Let’s see what happens... [divorced indeed]. Josephine also fiercely complaining about husband using HH money to drink beer, she taking care of everything alone, explicitly saying it’s better to stay alone when asked about an advantage of staying with this husband rather than being single first said it would be difficult to find another husband who is willing to take care of all her kids. Then said she wouldn’t accept any proposal because afraid of same behavior, then said she will leave him. (Why not done yet?) Already started cultivating now, can’t leave now,… Plus needs money to go to somewhere else, start up new life. Even says she already made up her mind about going where : Chilipa, Mangochi, as there is a lot of land there.

Went to give picture to GVH, and tell her I’d leave today, come back Wednesday. She said that I
should get all the HH necessities that I was told are lacking here in LL. Told her I am not allowed to do that, have to try and understand what life/struggles/decisions are like here, if I interfere I change that and can’t find out. Her daughter was still with her, although she said she was to leave yesterday. Then said she wanted to be "registered" - interviewed, included on whatever possible project will lead from this. I told her we are out of gifts, which is as good as true (2 salt + soap left, and 4 more HHs to interview in Mudzi B, and want mother of Victoria as check on Victoria’s answers as I found that she lied about her remuneration for volunteering as teacher at the Concern Adult school: said there was absolutely no payment for her does it to help her village while Venesi told us they get 1000 MK/month...

0553

0554

Many comments while we walk around after lunch to distribute the pictures and ask some of the questions we missed: too hot! Working very hard! Not afraid of sun! Just arrived today yet already meeting up with people, despite sun! Indeed nobody doing hard labor these hours, nobody in field

0555

Malita (62, divorced) will be able to continue eating as usual, finds all her money through Orphan/Care support - 3000 MK/month because 2 grandsons. After 10 yrs alone after first divorce (she decided, all her 8 kids had died, sing’anga said husband had bewitched them) friend came to inform her about man searching for wife.

0556

Gertrude was right guessing that GVH ‘s daughter had shown up from Balaka just to be “registered.” Came to complain/get sympathy: Rent of her house has been raised from 2000 to 3000 MK/month, please register me, came all the way after mother told her to. Fine, said Gertrude, but there is no benefit. Daughter then said she’d come in the afternoon but never showed up. [nov 6: she [Sofia] was chased out by GVH, even though she only needed shelter! husband married other wife and told her to work his field at Mudzi B (brother of Innocent). She has 4 kids, and husband has 2 other wives with kids].

0557

Alida also asked again today whether we would come with help as there have been discussions. She had said that at day 1 I made clear that it was merely research, no handouts or project would follow. But the many questions I ask everywhere made people doubt that. Probably can’t think of another reason for asking all these questions. Assured her again no project ... When I was in Lilongwe, Gertrude went to funeral and was also asked whether its true that I’ll come with maize, as I asked the nr of people staying in each HH.

0558

Mosque makes people write examination each year to write/read Arabic, who passes gets a gift. Fifty buckets have been sent to mosque. People complain, other yrs there were bikes, clothes. This yr are suddenly told they have to pay small amount (200mk). Again handouts thus, but tied/on certain conditions.

0559

One cannot accept gifts from a man without getting into difficulties if you decline him later. He will get angry, say that he has been waisting his time, demand pay pack. E.g. Ellesi was told by mother not to accept any gift that her admirer would give her because she was not sure yet whether she wanted to continue school or not - Would have caused big problems if she had accepted gifts and later told she couldn’t marry because back to school - they would not have been able to pay back ... Most girls
didn’t give anything to boyfriend but, e.g., asked him what he likes to eat + cook for him (Teleza, Sofia), put water in the bafa for him when he came, if he asks for water -went on knees when giving (Florence Musitafa). (Anderson also wanted 2nd wife, but Malita did not agree, She always is respected to him, he provides).

Sweetness (35, 2nd marriage) started mandasi BS after she choose to divorce her husband who was drinking beer.

After proposal to marry + allowance some don’t marry right away : to find out about his behavior e.g., or because he first wants to prepare = find enough money (e.g. Mwayi, Rebecca).

Some are coupled by relatives. E.g. chatting with girl who then mentions she has a brother who is looking for a wife (e.g. Christina).

Christina (34, 3th marriage) says her husband bought 2 extra fertiliser coupons from GVH Mudzi B!

Rebecca (18, married) & husband bought maize at low price just after they sold their cotton to add to their own harvest of 7 bags - clever!

Teleza (28, divorced) explained that when a man proposes to marry, it means he is financially ready for it.

Nelia (20) explained that some women accept to stay with lazy/beer drinking/beating men because they are poor, cant divorce. And many women take the risks of marrying such a husband (thus not firt taking time to ask around about his behavior) to avoid that he propose to someone else.” Changu)” - hurry, take this opportunity, this offer before someone else will! Some, she and aunt and cousin said, are afraid to marry such a husband and prefer to run their own little BS to find what they want.

Number of people changing / changed eating habits: smaller portions twice a day rather than reducing number of meals (no breakfast, lunch small (less nsima/phala), diner normally/less nsima). Faith (27, married) will not start eating less until mango’s are ripe to fill stomach with.

Livia came chat with Gertrude & crochet poncho : said they will finish maize half Oct, because they haven’t been selling cheaply just after harvest (When people have money to buy whatever incl maize because sold cotton) as many others do: "We sell for low prices, completely forgotten the njala [hunger] that we just went through..." The father of her [Livia’s] last child had promised her he’d pay for ganyu on her field, she hired people for clearing (900mk) and ridging (600mk). Job is finished now, so she asked him for the money, but he says he doesnt have now, so she told the people to wait for their payment.

Saibi still sees the father of last child, but contrary to first interview now say she wants him to stop visiting her. He comes 1-2 x per month, bringing money and ndiwo [relish] sometimes, not always. Stays for four hours, doesn’t stay overnight, back to first wife. She told him to stay away now, but he refuses, telling her she had known this arrangement from the beginning and agreed. Strange all.... Why does she not want him to come anymore now (First interview she said she’d like to marry him, because “amalima” [he farms])? Why had she agreed with arrangement to start with? (Wanted banja, she said - but why not waiting for proposal from unmarried man? What are disadvantages of
current situation? What are advantage of being *pa banja* [married]?

Teleza after I asked why she wasn’t running a clothing BS like her mother did (and then had nice house built, so apparently good BS) : no capital. Concern Universal loan? But max 5000 and pay back each two weeks. MADEF is better, back each month, first payback after. in these village circumstances is difficult to sell enough in 2 weeks to be able to pay back enough that soon. Thus, too make it more effective: Later first payback / smaller ; larger amounts ? (but I think bigger loans possible after first successful paid of loan); Saving opportunities.

Oct 2

Paid rent to GVH who said she had spoken to owner of this house in SA, who had said that 1000 MK was too little, she should increase to 2000mk. I emphasized again that there will be no project following this research. People know she [GVH] said, don’t worry. some people even hypothesized I came to steal blood.

Yesterday when giving his picture to chief Mudzi A he was sitting on his *mkeka* [sleeping mat], sewing his trouser.

Gave 200mk yesterday to mother of Charity as condolence. Gertrude says other usually give 10 - 20 MK, some even only 1.

Rebecca (18, 1st marriage) does not participate in the adult school project (nor trees) “ because she already knows how to read & write.“ husband has clothes + fish BS, they have nice iron sheet house [but not theirs! from Esnart with husband in SA]...

Jasmine says she wants me to bring / start a loan project for women to start gain, big BS.

Amila (very poor woman) has bold circle of callosity on top of head - maybe from carrying so much water? Also daughter of Mery.

Malita (62, 2x divorced) lost daughter today who lived in Blantyre and worked in bottlestore, Had been fine up to now [at least, no message had reached here about disease, being ill], people don’t know what happened, maybe she was killed by a drunken customers last night. Arrival of body supposed to be today, but it is supposedly still in Blantyre because problems finding transport.

Nov 4 2008 Tuesday

Now ... how to proceed ?. Does increased independent income for women lead to safer sexual behavior? Why can/do some women get increased independent income while others don’t ? More enquiry into sexual behavior, e.g. condom use, e.g. at health clinics ? But enumerators passed through villages one day asking questions about HIV/AIDS that were considered inappropriate by some women, says Gertrude - which org, results, who were question, how did they feel about that?? --> Ada was one of the women interviewed. I asked (while knitting outside and discussing what had happened in village during my absence) what they had asked her. Whether she uses condom, has gone for test, how often she has slept with her boyfriend. On second one she asked back to interviewed : Have YOU been tested ?? To which she got no answer. To the next question she answered that she slept only once with boyfriend, *bodza* [lie/nonsense] - she said to us. Bridge project, Gertrude thinks. (Bridge for kit) People complained about the type of questions (“ you cannot
go around asking people such questions! " + no gift while I had given them soap + why them (not everybody was interviewed, only some) what do I have to do with it?" association - stigma.

Pamela & Ada (young girl, just gave birth, husband left for other wife) were here knitting, Pamela received coupon, Ada not (wasn’t enlisted) but mother who she is staying with has. Livia not, although she was registered, but her mother received 2 end will give her one.

Accompanied women to tree planting work shop organized by Concern Universal. "learned a lot today", says Pamela: why it is important to grow trees, why they should not be cut down, a lot! Today was first day of 3 day workshop.

Yesterday coupons were distributed at [small crossroads market] to inhabitants of 5 villages and Mudzi A + Mudzi B. Everybody that was enlisted received. Were called one by one, signed by inked thumb. Gertrude says that today at borehole wife of chief Mudzi A said to other woman that although she didn’t receive a coupon she will work hard and apply manure. But others said the chief did receive .... ?? Said it cannot be that chief did not receive! [but wife & husband different parties, own fields]. As per Friday ADMARC will open to sell fertilizer to those who have already managed to gather enough money, even though planting hasn’t started yet - but the wind has, so rains will probably come soon. --> Accompany woman buying fertilizer with coupon at [nearest trading center] . Some do ganyu, other received money from SA, others told goats MASAF.

I asked Pamela + Ada what happened in village while I was gone. A lot, says Pamela. The divorce, she then mentioned first. Is the current talk of the day. Ainessi (daughter of Rosemary) ’s husband found in bed with Emra (who’s 6yr old son dropped dead last month) by ex-husband of Emra - who had left her not long before because he wanted a wife that gives him children that stay alive. But came back one night, found those two red -handed and got so angry that he slashed his wife’s head with a panga knife. Jane commented that these things are heard often in this village E.g. Pamela was caught redhanded 3 times by an ex-husband who came back to her (see Gertrude’s notes). Ainessi’s husband accompanied her to the hospital where the wound was stitched. Jane says he also proposed to have sex with her when she was taking a bath recently. He also asked Doris, who also refused. Ainessi’s mother tells Ainessi just to let husband be. Others find that mother should not advise this, means she just encourages the behavior to continue. In morning Gertrude heard Ainessi + husband fighting, but when she went to borehole in afternoon saw them sitting at mat together.

Gertrude borrowed various decorative knitted small tablecloths to imitate - she is really amazing in knitting. Copies just by seeing the complex knitwork!

Gertrude found blood on veranda one morning, but no sign of wounded animal, people say it may be witchcraft. Indeed she had bad dreams for 2 nights (somebody forcing her to eat a big piece of meat, and somebody beating her - was maybe a bit afraid, alone here at night). Her mother says she should just pray...

[What else happened while I was away, Pamela & Ada relate: Hyena’s have come to eat goats (which they do each year) + Received coupons, continued Pamela about what I had missed during my absence in village.

Several women have received money from their husband’s in SA. Gertrude heard one say 13000, another
20,000 MK. One woman [Tumanene] proudly showed of the cellphone she received from her husband, hanging it around her neck, telling everyone at the borehole “If you want to be reached, send your husband to SA to work.” Others just stayed quiet. Later commented that it must be a new thing to her as others just keep the phone in a pocket not showing it off like that. Fatima & husband their radio at full volume when they received money from a relative in SA, Innocent told Gertrude. But within a few days, it stopped again.

MASAF project took place beginning of October, just after I left. Took two weeks. Some say that only 20ppl could participate, were enlisted by GVH - but I saw many work. may be from different village groups - ask Mr Ntawanga.

By now most people still have ufa [maize flour], either from own harvest or by doing ganyu, ndiwo [relish] is a problem for many says Gertrude. Not much is sold these days here. So people eat plain nsima without anything? Ah o, says Gertrude, that cannot happen. Some still have nandolo [legume], she says some people eat nandolo with dried cassava. Other may only have some tomatoes with their nsima.

When Gertrude came back to Mudzi B people said they thought she had gone off to get married somewhere (she had indeed left without informing anyone except chief + GVH so that it would take some days for people in other villages to find out house was empty.)

Gertrude answered to Bridge question why she got tested: heard stories at boarding school about men using witchcraft / medicine to sleep with you without you noticing. Pamela also told Gertrude that she had dreamt she had sex with a certain man from this village after which she went to him in real life to tell him to beware.

Jasmine asked Gertrude whether it is true that there is this disease AIDS which kills people - leading Gertrude to answer to Bridge that not many people know about edzi in this village. Gertrude asked Livia if many women here, know about pills for family planning - no even herself only heard via via about it, but doesnt use. Gertrude heard that husband of GVH has 3 or 4 wives, spending some weeks at each to be take care of last time he was ill. Gertrude has seen 3x condoms wraps on way to borehole. Pamela also told I some people here do it in bush. Many women are making zigumu these days, especially during MASAF project - Secondary income stream. Others sell in village, at [small crossroads market], at [tiny crossroads market]. Jasmine asked Gertrude: I saw some people sell bread, do you know how to make. Gertrude taught her. others asked her where she learned, but she didn’t tell, afraid that others will start making the same. people came to her house to buy, many came for this new type of food. Next time Jasmine added ufa, but didn’t turn out well, wants Gertrude to teach her again.

Grace’s husband has not come back from Mangochi ever since we interviewed her. Even though lake is closed now - she is afraid he is married there. Asked Gertrude to teach her how to make mandasi [snack] - while during interview Grace had explicitly mentioned she wanted a BS, anything but mandasi... But church meeting coming up, and she decided to sell mandasi there, many people came to buy. Next time she also added ufa - to make more, but people complained.

Last week maize finished at ADMARC, where it had been sold at low prize, as ordered by Bingu at 52 MK kg. Gertrude saw traders come in Mudzi B with 98 baskets (madengu) and later returned with a lot of maize, about 90kg. Exchanged. "Thus not such a shortage as people say it is..." concluded G.
Fatima sent by husband to learn knitting. Jane has already knitted several woolen caps and sold 2 of them for 100 MK each. I saw grandson of GVH (who may be brother of Jane, otherwise cousin) with one of those caps. GVH reprimanded Gertrude for teaching women and girls to knit without charging anything for it, “they will bring their zibwenzi [boyfriends] to steal,” But Gertrude has just continued. Those women / girls also said they will just continue to come.

**WESNADY NOV 5 2008**

The first rain has come! In the night, not hard, but long, with thunder & lighting - but when they woke up, nothing was seen of the rain, soil had completely dried again. So they will wait a bit longer. The chief had told Gertrude earlier that he hasn’t even made ridges on his field yet, will do so when rain starts. May be too late, Gertrude answered. I know what I am doing, he replied.

Went to [nearby] primary school (mission school) to attend day 2 of 3 days seminar on tree planting. Organized by Concern Universal, carried out by government forest extension worker based at [nearest tradingcenter]. Was first, according to extension worker while some participants had told us same seminar was held last year. Teleza explained on way back that last year it was about the whole set up. Committees of 10 people from each village. The committee members could join this year’s seminar so as to be able to teach their fellow villagers about planting trees/forestry. Last year received 2000mk for seminar, say some, while this year nothing. When Gertrude asked grandson of GVH (who came to put plastic + grass on toilet roof) if he has going to attend the workshop - said he stopped because they aren’t paying. All participants did receive a Fanta and bread roll though (yesterday too). Seminar from 8 -12 am. First half about making a tree seedling bed (outside demonstration seemed quite well followed although some women sat down during demo, so were unable to see + some other chatting going on in back, oa chief. Back in class (let’s go back, dzuwa [sun] complained some women) extension worker pasted paper sheets on black board on which he had written about the importance of trees, a table to keep track of your seedling cultivating activities etc). Little less than half the group was dully coping all his writings in the notebooks they had received for this purpose yesterday. I had looked into Pamela’s note book on our way to the seminar. Saw arbitrary lists of words (one including ‘scorpion’ and ‘snake’) without mention what the list was about. When I asked she said they by then hadn’t yet come to understand what is was all about. Gertrude copied in small school notebook extension workers sheet + explanations of demo. She said it will help her improve her vegetable garden, even though it was about trees.

Second half was about HIV and Edzi. Group was divided into 6 groups, and each got 1 question to answer about HIV & Edzi (what is it; how does it spread (incl cultural traditions); how can we know whether a person has HIV; why is testing important for your health; how can we take care of a person suffering from AIDS?). It didn’t take long for the groups to come back with perfectly correct answers, almost literally (“HIV ndi kachirombo kamene kayambitse matenda a Edzi”) from promoting materials. After each group presented their answers they could choose how they would be applauded for, and of the groups came up with original ways: ulule, clap& stamp, wave etc. Childish, but effective to fresh the mind. Gertrude commented to me during the seminar that these were at least better questions than those of the Bride enumerators. But during our group discussion about question what AIDS is some said: Thin person, whether child or old. Anyone can see, even a child can know when somebody has AIDS: thin, coughing (See Gertrude’s yellow exercise book for more details...)
At the end of the seminar the Concern Universal field worker apologized to me that he had been too busy to talk to me earlier. Name is Langmwale, tel: 040976XX. Told me about their upcoming project called REFLECT, aiming to empower women. The women themselves should think of the kind of assistance they want, and then Concern Universal will bring their in contact with potential donors. My thoughts exactly! Curious to find out where this will lead to …. Won’t start for another 4/5 months though [exactly when I plan not to be here]. But Langmwale will bring me some project documents tomorrow. So women were right to believe that the adult school would lead to next steps.

Walking home I asked Jasmine whether she had learned anything new today, which she immediately denied. Started to list: Chiwerewere [adultry], you ‘ll get AIDS. helping someone giving birth in village with wound yourself, you can get AIDS.

When I asked Ada & Pamela yesterday about what has happened in vlg during absence I also asked whether her husband had come back. No she said, and kept quiet. Then Pamela started answering for her, saying that he is married somewhere else, and that his other wife also just gave birth.

During seminar break Pamela told Gertrude that the head master of the [nearby primary] school proposed to marry girls, and if they refuse, transfers then to other schools. Jane had told Gertrude he also proposed to her, now that she wants to go back to school she ‘ll be going to [small crossroads market] ipv [nearby primary school]. may be he won’t allow her back says Gertrude. Dorica also said she will not be going back to [nearby primary school] but [small crossroads market], Gertrude does not know why but may be same reason.

After all the stories about women leaving or sending away their husband after which they survive through ” working hard in their field,” ganyu or start BS --> no independent income that facilitated them divorcing.

THURSDAY NOV 6

Jasmine complained to Gertrude: Is it good that they say they will be teaching us about tree, and then they start talking about HIV/AIDS ? Was ashamed ask this when I was around … Some people (Teleza) yesterday assumed we would be presenting something as well at seminar.

Went for pictures and follow up questions. Talked to Alma, old woman 60 in Mudzi B 11, next to white washed house.(which is from her daughter who married driver in Blantyre) who had 3 failed marriages when she was young : The first husband she chased away after several months because he beat her after he had drunk beer ; Second one (the chief of Mudzi B to whom she came to report about first divorce) had already 2 other wives but he said he would divorce them (she told me, while earlier she had told Gertrude that she had no problem being third wife because he was providing everything equal (eg soap, salt, clothes, ndiwo) and that later the other 2 decided to divorced instead of other way around). This second husband died. Then third one proposed, she accepted and waited 2 months for him to find enough money, meanwhile he did not provide anything. Promising that later they would be working on the field together. She admitted that it can be a bad sign when a man does not provide during courtship, although it can also be his habit tradition / depends on where he comes from. They indeed worked together on the field, but he later left her taking all their cotton
money ... After this many men proposed (incl this last one again) but she refused them all, fearing to find the same behavior, Has been alone for a long time, about 20 yrs, and is doing perfectly fine, has never missed a husband. Lived in the house the second husband had built her until it collapsed, then her son built her current house. She once had an angry woman entering her house, asking who the owner of the bike in her house was. She later heard that the husband of this woman had disappeared and since Alma was single, she suspected he might have gone there. ”Men bring problems, disturb you, ” she says. She works very hard in the field (+ has son who is teacher and helps her and daughter married to driver in Blantyre who probably helps her too when in need.) and says she does better than some married couples who don’t even have salt. When I want to prepare a meal with oil, I buy oil. When I want to drink thobwa [maize drink], I drink thobwa ...

0609 Also talked to Lizzie (19, first marriage) who’s husband went for SA 1 month after they got married. When she married him she knew he would be leaving for SA. It was a plus, actually ;she says; a husband with an income ! Livia has also been proposed by a man who is about to leave for SA (via Elube’s husband, who looked a husband for his grandson - see Gertrude’s notes), but as far as I knows, has not accepted. Why?? Gertrude thinks men want to get married even if they are about to move to SA so as to have place to get back to (and to invest in?). Livia went to hospital in Balaka yesterday to get birth control injection, she told Gertrude - but couldn’t really explain why. Says she does not want to get back with ex-husband, who wants to get back with her, but as second wife, she doesn’t want that. He tried to seduce her when they went to her field together to cut a tree for firewood - she refused, she says. Lizzie said that South African women are after Malawian immigrants because they are hard workers and have money. Livia says that the man who wants to marry her and then go to SA is married to someone else, wants to divorce her, but still ... And that he has only seen a picture of when she was still young and fat, May be he doesn’t even know she has been married and has children (which surely he does ,or at least his grandfather who asked her for him)

0610 Also talked to Mery, who we could not give picture to earlier because she had been in hospital for a long time (delivery baby, received 3 drips of blood, then after birth blood from nose, could not breast feed baby - bewitched, say people). Explained about get-together with husband that during their 9 months of courtship she had demanded he gave her something because she was afraid to get pregnant, as proof to her parents that he would be providing, that it was really his child. He gave her a watch with ganyu money. And married her after 9 months of money collection for kitchen tools etc- as planned. He proposed to her because he was in standard [class/grade] 8 and could not continue education because lack of school fees.

0611 People often mix the two fertilizer varieties here, says Gertrude. While they know that they should apply them at separate stages. Ulesi [laziness]...

0612 About MASAF : indeed, all interviewees said they did not participate, because they were not registered. In fact, said Victoria, no one from Mudzi B 11 was registered. Only GVH's own relatives.

0613 On path from our house to the njiko [pump], just near, in front of houses of Ainessi & Rosemary several condom wraps. Gertrude has seen those there for 3x already. So they are being used ...

0614 At borehole women commented to Gertrude about her small vegetable garden that “here nobody grows
vegetables near their house, didn’t know it was possible, people here are lazy ...

0615  Plant improved *nandolo* [legume] varieties from ICRISAT?? Also as ‘excuse’ for being here? So that people may think that I here for more agriculture-oriented research?

0616  Are the reason of old women for marrying + proposing different from younger women? Check Excell sheet...

0617  Many women’s BSs seem temporary enterprises. By Elube started *zigumu* [snack] few days ago. Grace made *mandasi* several times. Jasmine sometimes makes *zigumu*, recently learnt to make bread from Gertrude, traded potatoes last month.

0618  Jane told grandfather about husband of Ainessi proposing to her while bathing, threatening to beat her later for refusing. Decided to tell grandfather because grandmother (GVH) had only responded by saying: Forgive him. Jane was scared he may one day really beat her. Grandfather said all this behavior (incl being found in bed / at mat with Emra) cannot be accepted, he must be chased from village. So GVH went there with chief Mudzi B + Chief Mudzi A (+ Sunglassed glandson) as witnesses to meet with the man ... [This morning Gertrude went to fetch water and check on what had happened: man is indeed chased from village. But he says he isn’t worried because he knows Emra will follow him when she comes back from Lilongwe where her sister Valentine is now. Thus: to be cont’d again ... It is said that younger sister of Ainessi, Mphatso, also slept with Ainessi’s husband before they moved to Mudzi B. Gertrude says that she thought this man was a good husband, always staying quiet at home ...] To be continued.

0619  When knitting, Modesta was asked about the boy she was seeing. She said she stopped, because her mother is paying her school fees (Form 1) and doesn’t want to cheat her. She wants to continue her studies and become a nurse. others responded. “ We will see you not become a nurse, somebody will cheat you,” (= make to marry him / get pregnant). While knitting (big group today) Ada started singing “ you told everyone at the borehole that you are going to buy fertilizer because your husband sent money from SA.” Chisoni - who had indeed done this, left shortly after this happened. People were complaining “ Does she think we don’t have money for it ?? “ - said Gertrude.

0620  FRIDAY NOV 7

0621  Must really also delve into reasons of men for proposing + leaving *banja* .... !!! interviewing ? Gifts?

0622  Impossible, but would be very informing to understand the exact reasons of Emra to sleep with husband of Ainessi. Desperate for new supporter after own husband left her several days before ? Simply flattered by his attention? Has liked him for quite a while ? Revenge for something ? It is gossiped that they have been in relationship some time already ...

0623  Went to Sofia (granddaughter of GVH staying at Jasmine compound) for interview. Tried voice recorder for first time seemed to go fine (although her baby overcried first part of it..). To question why she grows local maize, Sofia answered: *Zimene amapanga anthu ena, ifenso timapanga zomwezo* [That’s what other people do, so we do it too].

0624  Continued to house of Thandizo to interview her daughter who provides the HH income. But
daughter is off to [nearest trading center] to buy fertilizer. While I expected few people to be going these first days after it has come available because it would be very busy, long long queuing. Must ask her about this tomorrow. Then asked Hilda the question I had not been able to ask before: why she chooses to stay with beer drinking lazy husband. Says she tells him to go, but he refuses.” Where can I go, I stayed with you so many years …” Also about condom wraps we have seen laying around: boys in the village use them. Then the smaller boys use them to make balls.

Walking home passed by chief Mudzi B and sister Kondwani, sitting on mat under big tree with kids. I asked them whether they received coupon (yes) and when they planned to buy fertilizer: Ndalama… [money…]. How do you plan to find money then? We were just discussing the same issue: ganyu. Did you Participate in MASAF ? No, say both, don’t know why this yr only few people could participate. When we walk away Gertrude tells me that chief Mudzi B had told her that she wasn't going to use all her MASAF money for fertilizer and wants Gertrude to knit hat and shoes for her daughter…

GVH went to Balaka today to get groundnut training from ICRISAT! Together with 8 other people from Mudzi A. Mr Chikombo has received the seeds that will later be divided amongst the Clubs. Which people from Mudzi A ? Why these, who selected these? Wish I had known, then I could have joined the training...

Innocent and Lizzie came to knit (Lizzie brought bucket full of water), Rashida and old Chenawe came by. Innocent and Lizzie said that indeed husband of Ainessi has been sent away, back to home village. girls agree with this because he was disrespectful after being caught, saying that he was not afraid of what the chief or GVH could do to him, will do as he pleases.. And Emra will also be sent away once she comes back from Lilongwe, quiet unfair I’d say

Innocent told about Kima selling 4 of the pigs of the pig club to a vendor. Agreed to 14000mk, thinking that would be per piece, but vendor gave it for all … other club members very angry. Girls laughed about story,” and that is supposed to be the treasurer!” Quite a disaster actually, strange that Innocent laughs about. Also her own mother had expected to get 12000mk. club does this every year - to buy fertilizer, and maize. Instead of 12000, they have to share this amount ...

Gertrude tells me story of her book, saying author writes that it is not based on truth, but she thinks it must be, must have happened to someone he knows.

Gertrude says : Can’t happen that husband of Ainessi had come to Emra for first time and at same night have sex. So may be relationship was going on longer. We have also seen husband of Ainessi at Emra’s compound often chatting. Also when we went to interview her.” Ainessi is also not in village, so maybe they left together after all.. Emra is expected back this weekend. husband (crazy when moon) of woman with callosity on head was sweeping her compound. When Gertrude asked what he was doing, he said he is related to her (preparing for her return).

Brief report for DADO & AEDC  
Mudzi B, Nov 7 2008

When I came back to Mudzi B and Mudzi A to continue the study here, my research assistant Gertrude Finyiza informed about Mr Chikombo's request to write a brief update about my work here for
the AEDC and DADO. This is the fifth week that I am staying in Mudzi B, and I adjusted my plans to only stay until March (when the first crops can be harvested) to staying until June. I changed this because through the interviews I conducted I found that cotton selling season is also a relevant period for my study.

As I mentioned to you when I was selecting a research site, my aim is to better understand the causes and consequences of differences in wealth status of women farmers. More particularly, I want to understand why some women manage to be better off while others remain impoverished; and what the impacts are of increased independent income for women on gender relations. I wanted to stay in a village where an agricultural development project is being undertaken so as to include the impact of such a project on differences in wealth status. I selected the Farm Income Diversification Program as this program focuses most specifically on increasing incomes.

Once my research assistant and I settled into our new home in Mudzi B village and we explained the villagers what we came to do (and thanked them for their hospitality), we started visiting each HH of the adjacent village Mudzi A (which is a FIDP target village). In each HH we interviewed one or several women, asking general demographic questions (name, age, marital status, nr of children, educational level etc) and questions related to food security, agriculture and income. This gave me the opportunity to get to know each HH, and gave the village women the opportunity to get to know Gertrude and me.

One of the main problems we encountered was that people had difficulties understanding or believing that this study would not lead to a development project - even though I have tried to make this very clear from the beginning. This belief must have influenced some of the answers that women gave us, as we found several women hided certain information or lied about some issues. The advantage of staying here for an extended period of time is that this gives us the opportunity to not only have one-time interviews, but slowly get to know everybody better, have numerous chats and see for ourselves what goes on. As such we have been able to rectify at least part of the missing/wrong data.

After having interviewed women from each HH in Mudzi A, I got the impression that FIDP did not have the substantial impact on increasing incomes as I had initially hoped. However, several women told me about their small scale businesses (buying and selling tomatoes or masamba; making mandasi, zigumu or zitumbuwa etc), after which I decided to delve more into these businesses (reasons for starting, profits, impacts etc). For this I went to both [small crossroads market] and [nearest tradingcenter] on market days to interview women sellers. I furthermore decided to include also the HHs of Mudzi B village into my study, so as to compare between a FIDP and a non-FIDP community, and simply to expand my number of informants. As our house is in Mudzi B anyway, we are generally more in contact with women from Mudzi B than from Mudzi A.

My plans for the coming months are still vague, as anthropologist I need to “go with the flow.” I intend to be in and around Mudzi B the coming weeks, until the beginning of December. I will return end of January and stay until half of March. Then I return again half April - this time with my supervisor from the university, and stay until end of May or half June.
Reasons for getting into relationship:

1. Mavuto: help/assistance
2. Build house (Belita)
3. Stop gossiping, to be respected (Chikondi, Rosemary)
4. Age to get married, waiting for proposal, just staying, ashamed not to be married
5. Want to live together, be couple, help each other (Rosemary, market woman with 6
6. Pushed/advised by relatives taking care (Rosemary
7. Blood the same/attracted (Valentine
8. Better married than pregnant by unserious lover/than have multiple boyfriends --> (Belita, Thandizo)

Reasons for divorce:

④ He marries other woman, disappears or she doesn’t want to share resources
④ husband not providing, lazy, beer drinking, abusive (Rosemary
④ Went to work somewhere else and never sends anything (Elube

Reasons for staying together while unhappy:

④ Love him (Meriam)
④ He has no one else to go to, chisoni (Madalitso, Elube)
④ Not respected, prostitute, bargirl, gossip (Josephine, Meriam
④ Invested/worked on field, first wait for harvest (Josephine)
④ He contributes, eg building house, new roof (Madalitso)
④ To have example/guider for sons (GVH)
④ Difficult to find new husband who will take care of kids from other man (Josephine)
④ Poverty (speculates Nelia about other women)

Reasons for staying alone:

④ Afraid of same male misbehavior
④ Men only lead to more problems = more mouths to feed (Market woman cassava, chief Mudzi B, Alma)
④ Managing fine without husband, can do as she likes now (Alma, Teleza?)

Nov 8

Thandizo looks scaringly skinny, has the hollow eyes that Brington [our gardener in Lilongwe] also had. Last month when we interviewed her, she also had sores on her face.

Rosemary’s husband has not been around her house for some days now, says Gertrude. S told Gertrude earlier that she thinks he may be having another wife.
Gertrude passed by Mr Chikombo’s house to hand over the report I wrote, asked him about MASAF: first stage “public,” only for limited nr of people, second stage “project “ will follow soon, many can participate. Indeed to help people buy fertilizer. ICRISAT had instructed him to only select 6 people from Mudzi A who’s field is near the road. GVH just joined by herself, now ICRISAT said 2 will have to go.

Rosemary’s brother = chief Mudzi B ex-husband

Lizzie + Jasmine (who’s mother lives near M. village) told Gertrude about Charles Msako’s plans to start bar at M., looking now for girls to work there. Jasmine went to apply for job, but was sent away, they want young girls ...

Jasmine says she was one of the people who stood up against GVH when VDC asked people to report misbehavior of their leaders. She said: “ Is it good when handouts come leaders bring over relatives from other villages to receive? “ Even GVH’s brother stood up, saying he was indeed sometimes brought in from his village to Mudzi B by GVH to benefit from projects / assistance. People clapped when all this was said. GVH herself was not there. Many people are afraid to speak up against her. But all know about her misbehavior, also in the surrounding villages. One person once went to GVH to complain about something he felt was unfair (not receiving coupon or so) but she sent him away, saying he was not originally from this village any way, had no right of speaking. When Jasmine had just moved here she shared her thobwa [maize drink] with the GVH, when she slaughtered a chicken, would bring her half of it. But people soon told her she shouldn’t expect anything back for it because GVH isn’t like that. Doesn’t share. But gets angry when somebody else in village has a nice chitenje, or eats nice food. Want everything for herself.

Jasmine says she doesn’t want to come here too often, because people will say she is begging food from us

When the grandson of GVH passed by one day during the MASAF period he said to the knitting women that his girlfriend started begging him money for kanyenya [snack] now (see Gertrude’s notes) one of the woman then responded by saying “The problem nowadays with you boys is that you want something in exchange for gifts, you want to sleep with girlfriends.”

Jane told Gertrude that Pamela always came here in beautiful clothes when she was married at ZOMBA. Meaning he maintaining her well / provided / was a good husband. Jane told Gertrude the story of Pamela at borehole shortly after Ainessi’s husband had been found sleeping with Emra by her husband. Jane said: This is second time we hear this story in our village. Earlier Pamela was caught redhanded having sex/ sleeping with man working at [nearest trading center] hospital when her husband from Zomba (where she had been sent away because having sex younger brother of husband - says Jane; Pamela says because husband was sleeping with other women in their own house ; may both be true) came and saw them. Then he decided to divorce and take their two children. Later same happened again. Pamela slept with man from M. village when the one from [nearest trading center] also came by ...

Follow up questions to Belita (who’s daughter recently died in Blantyre, bargirl). Belita had told Gertrude during interview that she has no BS. As she is 62, I asked her today whether she never had any BS. Said no. The when I asked why, she started to tell that she brews beer (masese)
for sale, only not now because of traditional instructions related to funeral of her daughter. First waiting for ceremony just like Charity who can’t go to church until ceremony. Says her mother told her to start in dream after she died. After questions I asked her whether she thinks the rains will come today, considering all the clouds. Says she doesn’t know, but hopes because people are getting more and more difficulties, especially finding ndiwo [relish]. When the rains fall, therere (okra) will spontaneously grow everywhere, which can be used for ndiwo

GVH says we can cultivate the small plot between our house and the road. Gertrude wants to plant potatoes, peas, maize. I would like to plant ICRISAT nandolo.

Of whom Gertrude knows that they worked on the recent MASAF project: grandson of GVH, chief Mudzi B, Hilda, GVH + chief Mudzi A did side jobs (bringing water to workers & protecting tools) and received something for this too

Continued from Janneke’s notebook II

Nov 9, 2009

Those few who participated in the MASAF road clearing project (stage 1 - if Mr Chikombo is right) have not received their payment yet. Also Amila joined. She had offered Gertrude earlier to collect firewood for her, but Gertrude said that she can do that herself. Now Gertrude went to ask her husband to help her cut a heavy trunk. Husband not around, but wife will do it. “Then you can help me because I don’t have salt.”

Livia says she took a birth control injection without really knowing what it’s for, just following Fatima, who takes them too and told her about it. Livia thought it was for every woman who had given birth. Only later did Fatima tell her what the purpose is... She [Livia] thought of marrying the man who wants to go to SA, son of Elube, but now doubts because he also has children, will be difficult for her to take care of all those children incl her own. Better first take care of own kids before marrying again.

Amila came to help chop a trunk at Innocent’s field (the field rented by headmaster, young brother of Mr Chikombo - rents field but cannot dispose over trees). While she chopped, Gertrude took her baby called Mavuto (because of the shortage of food, and quarrels with other people at the time of his birth) on her back while the two of us went to fetch smaller branches of firewood. Afterwards made bundles and put on our heads. Gave Amila 100MK + bag of salt + empty bottle (in which Gertrude went to bring her some water to drink) - which made her happy. She complained that she had been doing ganyu for 2 weeks together with husband and received only 1000MK, but we really helped her now. She [Amila] is related to Emra and told Gertrude that the story is indeed true that Ainessi and her husband have moved to other village after he was chased and that all 3 agreed that Emra will join them as second wife when she comes back from Lilongwe, which is supposed to be tomorrow. We will see...

The man who does ganyu on field next to our house (GVHs field, her grandson) was working there again this afternoon, like yesterday afternoon. Thus works on own field in morning, and in late afternoon ganyu, Gertrude concludes.

Walking to one of Livia’s fields (has quite a lot) to get the trunk, Amila said about the field we passed that it belonged to someone who is now away, and now taken by GVH.
For several nights in a row we hear daughter of Rosemary cry in evening around dinner time. Today Gertrude asked her at borehole why: mother gives her too little nsima, or her brother takes too much.

Nov 10, Monday

Yesterday afternoon learned how and where to fetch firewood. Just behind Livia’s field where Amila was chopping the trunk there is a field which belongs to GVH but is not being cultivated. We found quite a lot of firewood there, Gertrude speculated that other people get firewood from trees on their own fields. Bushes that had died through fire we broke of as low as possible and made bundles of these which we left on our path. Walking back we collected these bundles into one big one, laid it over 2 strings (strips of maize/fertilizer bag), did those strings around the bundles and made the wraps tighter by putting a stick and turning it around. Bundle on head and walk home, basi [ready/that’s all].

This morning got up at 4.30AM - already daylight! Made ridges on a small plot between our house and the road. Have 6 blisters now. Realized that even if we’d grow wheat, I would still not be able to make bread of it... Some ridges remain for tomorrow. Afterwards, app 7am many women at njiko [pump], all coming back from their fields.

Small crossroads market) market interviews:

Siye (50 yrs) is from N. [nearby village], behind Mudzi B. She tells us that the cassava BS belongs to her daughter who is now buying cassava at D. village [near river]. They do not grow cassava themselves. This daughter does most of the selling, mother sometimes comes to help. At other times they sell masamba or bananas. Every day sit beside the road at [small crossroads market] (near school, so many school children pass by) - only in rainy season they stop selling to cultivate their fields. Daughter started BS 3 years ago, when she divorced “because there was no one to help them” “tikusowa ku banja” [we lacked things in our family], lack of money. Siye lives with app 12 people in HH: 2 divorced daughter (1 with 4, other with 3 kids) that run the BS + 2 other children of Siye. They don’t always sell enough to take care of this big HH, but her BS is the HH’s only source of income. The only impact of the BS on the family’s life is that now they can at least eat every day. Says “timasiyana!” [we are different!] when I ask about difference between BS and non-BS women. A non-BS woman goes around to find ganyu, while BS women can buy what they want, don’t need to find piece work. Siye’s HH members don’t go for ganyu, only work on their own field. After selling they buy what they want and then all together work hard on their field. Her daughters would like new husbands, because “they are still young”. But the problem is that most boys come, make pregnant and then leave. Have come to realize now that it is better not to marry again, will only disturb them. Her daughters used to be proposed, after allowing they get pregnant and then the husband runs away from his responsibilities. It’s difficult to find a good husband, eg to run BS with. One of her daughters has 2 kids from same father, then divorced, was proposed again while selling cassava. But the man left after impregnating her...

Emiyo (28) is selling tomatoes spread on an empty bag in heaps of 5. She comes from M. village just near [small crossroads market] market. She started this BS in 1995, at 15, because of “umphawi” [poverty]. At other times she also sells rice (when she has enough investment money), therere [okra] and groundnuts. Sells at [small crossroads market] everyday, 7 days a week, from 6 AM to 6 PM. Also farms: from 4-5.30. When her tomatoes finish, she goes to Luwawadzi, dambo near Balaka - about once a week. Then the selling temporarily stops. Profit of tomato BS at [small crossroads market]
varies, most profit is in Nov, Dec, Jan. With her profit she buys soap, salt, paraffin, Vaseline, pays chigayo. Edith married in 1999, first marriage. Her husband is builder. Stays in HH with him and their 2 kids. Went to school up to standard 8, benefits from this education by knowing whether she made profit or not. Own 4 blankets, small radio, 2 bikes, phone and bed. Through BS it is easier for her to get what she wants. Non-BS women have many problems, difficult to get what they want, maybe start stealing or prostitution: “hule” (mention some of the women selling next to her, selling on separate bags (cooked maize, heaps of groundnuts). Behind the line of bags with merchandise are some women with madengu [round flat baskets] with masamba [green leafs] and bananas. Thus, she continues BS even though husband has own income: WHY?

Elina (23) from M. vlg, near Mudzi B (same njiko [pump]). Sits next to Emiyo, selling maize cobs, cooked in their leaves. At other times she also sells tomatoes or masamba [green leaves]. Chose this merchandise because people like to buy these the most (maize has biggest profit). Started 4 years ago to help herself, did ganyu to find money to start with. Sells every day at [small crossroads market]. Goes to Luwawadzi 2-3 times per week to buy new merchandise, whenever it finishes. Usually buys for 400MK (or 500 when made good profit) = half a dengu. Doesn’t know her profit, because after money comes in she buys the things she wants: lotion, salt, chigayo [maize mill]. Married 3 years ago, husband agrees with her sitting here all day. Stays in HH with 5 (1 kid, 2 in-laws), have no other sources of income than her BS. Farms too, and does ganyu every year (husband, sometimes Evelyn too). Left school in St7 because mother died, she stayed with relatives, no money for school. Learned that it is good to learn BS (“geni”), that it is good to be able to buy your own things. She can indeed buy her own soap and salt, “rather than being a prostitute”. BS woman can easily buy what she wants, while non-BS woman not.

Tessi (32) sells masamba [green leafs]. Comes from C. village, under same Traditional Authority as [small crossroads market]. Started her BS 6 yrs ago because of problems at home finding soap, going to chigayo etc. “Ndinasintha merchandise” [my merchandise varies]: sometimes zitumbuwa (mandasi made of ngaiwa [maize husks] & often banana) selling at school. She found the money to start her BS doing ganyu. Buys masamba at Luwawadzi 2x/week, sells on Thursday at [small crossroads market] and on Sundays at Chiyendausiku. The other days zitumbuwa at school. But masamba give bigger profit. [nearest tradingcenter] is too far from her vlg to go. Married in 1999 up till now, first marriage. Stays in HH with husband and 5 kids. Also find money through growing cotton. Cultivate hybrid maize & cotton. Farm together + ganyu workers. Before she started BS they did ganyu, now hire. Went up to St7 in school, now regrets (kudandaula) that she didn’t go further, sees no benefit. With profit buys soap, clothes for kids, ndiwo and pays for ganyu. She decides on the expenditure as she is the one who takes care of the children, she knows best what they need in HH (also before she started BS). Buys masamba at 500MK, sells at 800-1000MK = 300-500MK profit/day. Zitumbuwa profit is about 100MK/day because bananas and oil are expensive these days. Says she has good husband: siitimenya [we do not fight] + help one another (he is the one who goes to buy the masamba on his bike). Says BS did not change the relationship with her husband. “Some women here do stay in difficult relationships, ngakhale [despite] own income. Some husbands tell their wives to start a BS, but when money starts coming in they suspect her of other ways of finding money... Gives problems in the family.”

Loveness (44) from C. vlg today sells masamba [green leafs], but at other times also nyemba [beans], ntotchi [bananas], zitumbuwa [snack] (but these days it’s hard to find bananas). Started her BS in 1981, at 16, because “kusowa” – lacking clothes. Borrowed money to start. Runs this specific BS because she had no money to start another (bigger) one. Started because she wanted to buy goats and pigs. Now has 7 pigs (a lot! Can be sold for 14000-17000MK/piece), but sold all her goats again because they would not come back to khola [fold]. Walks to Luwawadzi once/week to buy masamba at 600MK, sells at [small crossroads market] only on Thursdays, other days at home, making about on
1000MK = 400MK profit/week. The profit she uses to help in the HH: chigayo [maize mill], salt soap. She is the one to decide expenditure. First marriage from 1980-1981, she decided to stop the marriage because he was sleeping elsewhere... Got married again in 1985 until now. Husband is lazy, doesn’t help in HH, she is the only one taking care of the kids, and she made the bricks for her house and the khola [goat fold]. But she pities him because he has no other relatives to go to. Tries to change him but to no avail, besides “he is a man, he knows his own responsibilities” (no need/use telling him what he knows already...). He doesn’t listen, difficult to send him away. Plus, their field belongs to him... Of their 4 acres, she cultivates 1.5-2.5. For the other part she hires people. Kills a pig to pay for ganyu. Sometimes husband also helps on the field. They grow local maize and plan to grow cotton this year. She didn’t go to school, but sees little difference between herself and people that did go to school, those do the same BS as her, don’t have employment either. Says that for non-BS women it is easier to start stealing (eg maize from husband and then sell) or prostitution (uhule).

Konda (54yrs) stays in a small hut on her field, far away. Before used to stay near Balaka at the Liwawadzi dambo, but had to move because water flooded house last year. Until then she used to sell masamba everyday, but now it’s too far. Only sells on Thursday at [small crossroads market]. Her daughter used to grow masamba at her field, mother sold them. Now buys at Liwawadzi. Started her BS when she was still a young girl, after she sold some maize to start of. She sometimes has to do ganyu to keeps the BS running. Started because “kuvutika” [having problems]. On question whether the BS changed her life, she answers: Bola [Ah well/At least/Better], although I was married, I could at least buy my own chitenje. Now that she lives on her field, it is easier for her to farm (before lived far from her field and her knee after hurts...). Grows local maize (can’t afford hybrid), has only 2 bags left now. First married in 1972 at 18, after 1 child he married another, however. In total Konda was married 6 times and had 6 children, all from different husbands. Some left by themselves, others she sent away, the one she married in 1985 came back to ask her for marriage again, but she refuses because he never bought her anything when they were together, not even cloths. She married again and again even though she has own income because “was very young, wanted to be married. Each time hoped this one would be different especially farming together. Saw other families helping each other, by buying clothes for their wives, exchanging gifts, she hoped for this too…. Usually buys for 250mk and sells for 550mk. Today she bought for 700mk, to try - profit from last week, also from selling tomatoes at home. With profit she buys soap, chigayo [maize mill], matemba [dried fish] - but it’s not enough. Went up to std5 in school. In HH now 5, herself with 4 kids, the other 2 got married. None of her children works, her BS is the only source of income. One finished secondary school (school fees paid with BS, daughter herself cultivated the masamba), but difficult to find a job. Does do ganyu together with her kids. Benefit of BS: can get what she wants, although it’s not enough. It’s just good to do only one thing, but farming - can eat but not get soap etc need money too, but BS.

Jimesi (46yrs) lives at [small crossroads market] (goes home to eat lunch every day, others who live far buy bananas etc). Currently sells tomatoes (before usipa & masamba but too expensive these days, too little profit). Started 3yrs ago because of “mavuto” [problems] like hospital costs, soap, njala. Before used to do ganyu to find money, sold maize after harvest to start her BS, goes to Liwawadzi ¾ x per month depending on sales. Gets a full small dengu [round flat basket] at 700mk, selling at about 1200mk = 500mk profit per month. Difficult to keep tomatoes for so long time, break easily. With profit buys soap, salt, food. Has to take care of 7 school going kids (and 2 orphaned grandchildren) who need pens, soap etc. She is the one who decides on expenditure because her husband wouldn’t know about the needs of their children. Sells every day at [small crossroads market] (unless she is ill or when attending a funeral). Farms before going to [small crossroads market].

First marriage in 1975 at 13, had 1 child after which her husband went to visit his parents in Dedza and
wrote her a letter that she could find another man… Second marriage in 1976 until now. Stays in HH with husband and 7 kids (of whom 2 are orphaned grandchildren). Income sources are BS (alone no help) + ganyu (she + kids, husband is too old now, he only farms a bit on their own field + orphan care money for 1 child. Left school in std 2 because the teacher beatend her. Now wants to go back to learn how to write and read the bible. Also for BS to have a bigger one needs to be to write inorder to calculate whether you make profit or not. Now her BS is still small enough for her to manage calculating. Says that the BS did not change her life: money still goes to soap etc, nothing else, nothing she can show (off with). “Did not change relationship with husband, also before BS, she decided on expenditure. Why continue? When stopping and just staying, won’t even be able to buy soap. Would have to beg, now at least not begging. “Don’t forget us and our problems when you go back to your country”

Patricia (36yrs) from [nearest tradingcenter] came around noon on 2 bikes with husband. Together they hang zitenje over a structure made of sticks. She says BS is her own, but the next day we saw the same BS at [nearest tradingcenter] but only her husband selling. In 1996 started selling mandasi and zitumbuwa, selling at various market days. Heard from friends about the profit of chitenje BS and used her mandasi/zitumbuwa profit to buy 20 zitenje in 2004. Buys at Limbe and Lilongwe about 2x per month. In Lilongwe better quality, from Tanzania (shop owner goes to Tanzania himself), buys about 40/50 zitenje depending on the money she brought. Spending app 14000 -10000 incl transport. In Limbe usually spends about 10.000mk. Buys at 750 for a pair, sells for 900. Sells at [small crossroads market], [nearest tradingcenter], Kachenga and Chilipa (takes 4 hrs of travel by bike, sometimes hire a car). Sells 8-10/day [zitenje], cotton season 15-18. Got last marriage in 1997 until now, husband found her selling mandasi, she is second wife - didn’t know he was already married. They farm maize together, but cash crops + BS she does herself, doesn’t want to share.

With her profit she bought goats, pays for ganyu, and school fees, buys food. She decides on expenditure because she knows best what is needed. Farms cotton + mtedza [groundnuts] for sale, and chimanga [maize] for food. Has 1 acre and rent 2 or 3 (for many yrs already, 7 or 10) [thus already wealthy before zitenje BS]. In past it was difficult to find what she needs, now she can buy everything she needs. Why does she choose to stay with [polygamous] husband? Married woman are more respected, without husband people may think she does prostitution to help her BS, now they can think it is husband who helps start/run BS. Wears small silver waist match.

Only went up to std3, because lacking money. Patricia asks us whether we are from an organization that gives out loans? No, would she want a loan? Ah she knows where to get a loan, went to FINCA, Concern Universal, MADEF to inquire about loan. But one has to pay back each week and she isn’t sure whether she could manage, then they may take away her whole BS. Why did she manage to grow while others don’t? Doesn’t know why others don’t, but for herself, she is good in calculating, whether she makes profit or not, how much to reinvest and how much she can use for other purposes. [it’s clear that she finds vegetable sellers lowest in BS hierarchy, the least developed.]

At [small crossroads market] 10:30am: Women selling bananas, mtedza [groundnuts], cooked chimanga [maize], tomato, masamba[ green leafs], cassava, zitumbuwa [snack]. Girl selling thobwa [maize drink] for grandmother or aunt. Several men selling second hand clothes, and another new clothes. Before noon woman arrived running restaurant (grass walls), buying her ingredients at market. One man on bike buys a big, enlarged dengu full of masamba, may be to sell elsewhere. Women keep watering their merchandise to keep it from drying, and have an empty bag or banana leaves to cover. Most people are said to come in the afternoon. And it’s busier at [small crossroads market] in cotton selling season, May, June, July. Then people sell and buy cotton here.
November 10

2 x 85 MK = 1kg flour
2 x 10 MK = yeast
2 x 20 MK = sugar
200 MK = salt

95 breads at 10mk = 250mk profit.

--> Ingredients for Jasmine’s bread. Husband went to Balaka and bought. She already agreed with 3 grocery shops in surrounding villages of related owners that she can sell bread to them. Wants to learn now, and them buy a big bag of flour and make many.

Jasmine told me (while Gertrude was teaching how to make bread dough - Jasmine happy that through my coming here she had now learned to make something that others can’t make, everybody is making zitumbuwa [snack], but don’t know how to make bread!). that people went to [small crossroads market] today to receive money from orphan care.

Innocent and Sofia, all dressed up with shoes and head scarf, left early this morning to go to hospital with sick children.


Traditional medicine: Jasmine was cutting slices of a wooden stick into a big cooking pot - making a traditional cure for a woman who had been taking pills from the hospital (birth control pills) and now was pregnant but continued bleeding monthly. Jasmine learned about traditional curing when she herself was ill and didn’t get better. A traditional doctor from other vg helped her, cured her, and then taught her about traditional medicine.

While Gertrude and I were knitting outside a bike taxi passed by with on she back Emra, with a bandage on her head. I didn’t notice, but Gertrude saw, and Emra waved to her.

At around 4pm the grandson of GVH who has been making ridges on her field besides our house, started working again. “pfff, dzuwa!” [sun!] Innocent commented, that someone would work in this heat.

Gertrude remembered, seeing Emra pass by, that she heard at borehole that Emra’s ex-husband already found a new wife in his home vg. Which made Gertrude conclude that he must already have been dating there longer, but I wonder if that is necessarily true.

Gertrude was tricked into babysitting somebody’s children (single woman working at MEJN) sometimes for days & night, even month in a row) in exchange for bed and food. Woman had promised to take care of her, let her go to get educated and pay for it. Until after 2,5yrs friend of this woman told Gertrude that the woman had said that she wanted to keep Gertrude like this until kids finished secondary school. Many yrs …. Gertrude told her she wanted to go and do her own BS, woman said “I remember what I promised you, don’t worry”. Tried a bit longer but eventually left to rent a telephone bureau. By now this woman is very sick. Gertrude had seen many different cars coming in and out when staying at this woman’s house.
Nov 11 Tuesday

Again up early to make ridges on our small plot (Gertrude plainly told the GVH that we have nothing
to pay for it). Moon is almost full (Gertrude says people believe the weather will change when there is
no moon, then the rains will start) - gives a lot of light. When I asked Gertrude if people sometimes
work on their fields at night when there is much moonlight and coolness, she answered that people say
that the one who works in moonlight is a witch, or at least related to witchcraft. Like the boy who was
recently abducted by an old woman to work her field in the night. But maybe she speculates, if one
had started doing it long time ago, people would be doing it now, since so many people just copy what
others do (= an answer many people give to question like why they grow local maize, or why they
participate in the tree project. And she said the same when I asked her why she ate nsima with her
right hand (just do as others do- then realized she uses the other for washing these parts, pointing at
arm pits).

Gertrude finished knitting a jersey yesterday which Jane has already paid for by buying 3 new balls of
wool at 100 MK. Sells jersey thus for 300mk uses 2 balls of wool = 100mk profit. Others have
helped knitting parts of the jersey, to practice.

On our way to grocery to interviews BS women there, passed by Eveles, who was happy to see us.
Said she had dreamt of me, so knew I would be returning soon. Asked after Feye [my husband], why
he left, should have come live with her to chat and work if he was so bored in Lilongwe. Oldest
daughter of the son she lives with had come back from working at a shop in [small crossroads market]
to be living with parents again. From now on, will be working for cotton company, buying & selling -
not married. I asked Eveles why in her opinion some women start a BS while others just stay. Some
are simply born lazy, she answered. Is it not in your country like that too? Some go to school while
others don’t. Although this also depends on whether parents advise their children to go to school or
not. Daughter in-law added that some women lack investment money to start BS. Gave us some
mango’s, and Eveles accompanied us for abit, telling us she had received a condom. After a while, we
understood she mean coupon. Had believed she was going to receive fertilizer when she went to [small
crossroads market], but no, just a coupon, money will be difficult to find, doesn’t know where to get it.
Under Bakili at least they all receive fertilizer…… Also [Eveles] told us, while showing her field full
of ridges she made herself (the part where soil is too hard, will wait for rain. When rains start will first
plant on part with ridges and then make ridges at other part meanwhile planting), that her second
husband was always chatting too much while working on the field, telling her many stories, so he
didn’t do more than 10 ridges per day. Then she would go to work on another field to make him stop
delaying his work. And eventually sent him away completely. Last yr rain from 17 - 25 Oct and then
stopped in Nov 7, said Eveles’s daughter in- law.

Then continued to the trading centre at [tiny crossroads market]: 3 grocery shops, a tailor, bike repair
shop and a few women under a tree. At a small distance, an iron sheeted house where one can charge
television. Gave Gertrude’s phone to be charged, and interviewed her and the women under the tree.
Tomorrow back to make pictures (forgot camera), pick up phone and interview the woman in one of
the grocery shops.

Esther (29) lives at [tiny crossroads market], just near the grocery stores and runs BS of charging
telephones. Is a bit fat and wears earrings. Iron sheet roof, charge phone batries through a car batriy
and invertor. Bought the battery for a television, but did not give enough power, then together thought
to use this battery to charge peoples phones. husband is away from home most days (is a builder, only
in evenings and at Sundays at home) so she runs the BS (and kids help out when she is out,
sometimes). Started this BS last year, charges the battery at [nearest tradingcenter] where either she
or her husband go by bike for 60mk can charge
about 15 phones with this at 30mk = 360mk profit per week. With the profit she buys ndiwo, soap, salt, pays the chigayo [maize mill]. She decides on expenditure because she is the one that is at home while husband is often away. Before they sometimes didn’t eat during day because she had no money to buy ndiwo. Husband’s salary is erratic, whenever they reach a certain level of the house, by foundation, window level etc. But when there is no cement e.g., takes a long time before some money comes in. Now, disadvantage of this BS is that some phones don’t charge well, and then people think they broke their phone. Has led them to consider stopping their BS, but people get used to charge their phones at her’s therefore continuing.

Married at 17 in 1996 till now = first marriage. Went to same school, he proposed chibwenzi in 1996. He was in std6, she in std4. At first she refused because she wanted to continue school. Only in 1996 did she allow, because she faced many problems, especially lacking soap. Didn’t start a BS at that time because difficult to find money to start. Has a good husband: not abusive (nkhanza), not moving around with other women.

Who charges the generator?: husband when he is around, otherwise she goes.

Besides his building job and her telephone charging BS they also cultivate peppers and cotton for sale. This year harvested 4 x 50kg of peppers and 11 bales of cotton. With money bought kitchen tools, and chairs maintained the TV etc. She + kids + ganyu workers do the farming.

The BS certainly changed her life: Akabwera anthu timatenga ndalama yomweyo ndikugulira ndiwo. [If people come, we have money with which I can go to buy relish]. Pakanapanda [if it was not - ChiLomwe] zimenezo tikanatetema [we would stay – ChiLomwe] ndi njala [with hunger].

husband does bring in money, but not continuously as said…

Different between BS and non-BS women is that “Iwowo amasowa kopezera ndalama” - last ones lack ways to find money, while she: “Ndimateza zinthu zomwe ndikusowa”. [I find/can get the things that I am lacking]

Doesn’t know any organizations that give out loans/microcredits. Doesn’t remember/know/want to tell how much the battery had cost them, so husband is called in. He says they bought it on 11 October 2007 for 10.500mk at Zomba. They stay in (nice iron sheeted) house with their 5 children. Inside they have huge fluffy furniture taking up almost all the space. In a small room behind the living room they keep the battery and inverter, with a number of phones being charged.

Zilongo (18) from J. village sells mandasi only, started in January. Her father decided that she should be doing a BS because it was difficult to find what they needed in the house: soap, salt, chigayo. She then choose to make and sell mandasi, (just like a friend who taught her to make) because it needs less investment capital than other BSs. Her father borrowed money for her to start. Elsewise isn’t helped by anyone to run BS. Goes to J. village about 2 x per week to buy ingredients. Sells 3 days per week here at [tiny crossroads market]. Her friend sells here the other 3 days. The rest of the week she works on the field. Buys ingredients at 300mk, selling for 400/500mk in those 3 days = 100/200mk profit per week. Uses profit for chigayo, ndiwo, soap. Sometimes gives to her parents, sometimes buys these herself. Also uses for lotion or clothes sometimes.

Is not married, (lives with parents and 5 younger brothers and sisters. Is second born, 1st lives in Mangochi. Father works at [large commercial estate], they furthermore cultivate sorghum for sale (eat too), and when in problems, sometimes sell maize too. [BS woman at Grocery] Left school in std8, but would like to continue (to help people like me = have job like Gertrude). Wants to get married in future, but not now, not thinking about it yet. Men do propose but she answers that it is not her age yet, better wait till 30, haha. BS changed her life in sense of that now it is easier for her to get lotion or money
for the maize mill. Advantages of making mandasi: easy to make. Disadvantage: get bad after a few days. BS women have less problems in their HH… Knows FINCA as org. that gives out loans, but never thought about getting loan herself because her father never told her to go and borrow.

Paula (23) from C. village, only sells tomatoes, as decided by her husband last June. “Ndalama zinkavuta ndiye atayipeza anaganiza kuti ndizipanga gain”). - “money used to be a problem so when he found some he thought I should make a BS”. He found the investment money through ganyu, but elsewise no one helps her running the BS. Buys at Balaka 2 x per week at 1000mk and sells only here at [tiny crossroads market] 400/600mk profit 3 days per week, the other days she just stays because it is too far to walk more often to Balaka. There is currently no other place to get tomatoes, in Balaka they come from Ntcheu. At Liwawazi all finished now. Of her profit buys ndiwo, soap, salt, paraffin. Bought a dengu [round flat basket], plates, mphasa [mat]. She decides on expenditure as she is the one who stays at home, knows best what is needed - “Ndinaganiza ndi ineyo, kusowekera kwa ziwiy anso” husband also stays at home usually has a leg problem, walking is difficult. When he feels better, he builds houses. Other income sources: cotton + groundnuts. This year harvested little maize (5 bags), 3 and half bales of cotton (used money to buy 6 bags of maize, cloths, windows for house, a pig and kept to hire ganyu) and ½ bag of mtedza (part for selling, part for eating, part kept for replanting). She owns 1,5 acre, husband none, rent 4 acres. Both of them work on field + ganyu.

[BS woman at Grocery, husband gathered money and told her to start tomato BS] Married in 2001, “first marriage:” Ine ndimachokera kwa C. [village], iwowo kwa C. [same village] komweko. Mumadziwa kuyendayenda kwa atsikana, ndiye tinakumana pa msewu. Atandifunsira, ndinakana, ndiwauzu kuti apite kwa makolo anga. Ndiye anapita kukawauza makolo anga, sipanathe 2 weeks,. Kenako anabweranso ndi akawo. Kenako, basi kulowa. Allowed because: “Ineyo ndinakula movutika, amayi anga amadwaladwala, ndiye sukulu ndinasiya pa njira. Ndinaona kuti ndidzingokhala mapeto ake ndikanatengera khalidwe loyendayenda, kuposa mwamuna kubwera pakhomo. Ndinavomera kuti basi, ndikhale pansi. [We are from the same village. You know how girls wander around, and so I met him in the street. He proposed to me, I refused, told him to go to my parents. Within 2 weeks he went to my parents. After that he kept coming. After that, well, we married. I accepted because I grew up with problems, my mother was often/very ill, I left school early. I realised that if I would just stay, I would have the behaviour of wandering around, but instead I was lucky that someone came to propose to me].

Paula agreed to this specific husband because "ndinaona kuti ndi mhatso ya Mulungu." [saw it as a gift from God]. Was also proposed a year earlier but then wasn’t thinking about marriage yet, refused. He is a good husband. “Ndimawakhulupirira, osayendayenda, sindimamva munthu kuti anali pena pake. Titakhala pansi tinapatana maganizo onena kuti: momwe kulili kunjaku penapake pamafunikana kukhululupirirana. Chifukwa dzikoli silili bwino, ndiye tinamvetsetsana ndi kuunikirana moti panopa tikuwala bwinobwino.” [I trust in him, he is not moving around. I don’t hear people saying he was at other places. After we sat down, we shared thoughts saying according to how it is here (in the world) it is important/gewenst to be faithful to each other, because the world is not good nowadays (often meaning “matenda”, says Gertrude). So we understand each other and show directions so that now we are staying very well.]

Says BS made it easier for her to get the things she needed (kitchen tools, mat, ndiwo, soap) “Ndiwo ndimapeza mosavutikika.” [It is not difficult to find relish]. Others who just stay lack money, but I don’t have problems, take the money and buy what I want - munthu oti akungokhala amasowa ndalama, koma ineyo sindikuvutika. Ndimachotsa ndalamayo kugula zomwe ndikufuna. Why not all women run a BS? Don’t have money to start, or just don’t think of it. Advantages of selling tomato: can use own tomato for ndiwo, doesn’t loose money on buying. Disadvantage: on way back from
Balaka some break, then make no profit. Knows one org. that gives out loans, CUM, but hasn’t considered it herself because doesn’t know advantages + disadvantages.

Lucia (20) from J. village, sells mandasi since last year March. From April to June this year changed to fish but stopped due to lack of money (transport costs + high investment needed). Decided: Ineyo ndi amayi anga, chifukwa cha mavuto. Abambo athu anakwatira mkazi wina ku Lilongwe.” [My mother and I decided that I would so BS, because of problems. My father married another woman in Lilongwe]. He left in 2001, since then managed through ganyu, was taught how to make mandasi by cousin, got money for ingredients from mother. Choose mandasi because don’t need much investment money. While mother takes care of the other kids, she makes and sells alone. Buys ingredients at [nearest tradingcenter] , ½ x per week (sometimes all money is used at home, then do ganyu to find new money). Buys for about 500mk (1kg flour = 100mk, mafuta 400mk, yeast, sugar) and sells for about 800mk = 300mk profit per 2/3 days of selling. Doesn’t sell much but lacks investment money for more profitable BS like matemba or tomatoes (bought a lot these days). BS doesn’t have a big impact because profits not big. But at least can buy soap now to wash body and clothes, lotion. Advantages of mandasi: she helps people who pass by to get food, while at the same time it helps her family to get food. Disadvantages: If not well made, many people sick. Non BS women “cannot get the things I am getting, for them it is difficult to find soap etc.” At first she need maize from own nhokwe to add to flour, but maize is finished now, this even less profit. Often thinks about getting a loan to increase BS, but registration fee…

Is not married, stays with mother and 6 younger brothers and sisters. She does BS because eldest. Decides together with mother on expenditure, because they are the eldest. Also income through ganyu, nandolo, mtedza (cannot manage cotton, too much work for only mother and + daughters). Use money to buy clothes, food, soap, lotion, chigayo. Gives mandasi money to mother. Stopped school at std7 because of problems, lacking clothes. Also to help her mother, as eldest child.

Alisa (28) from C. village sells tomato and matemba. husband decides, works at [large commercial estate] which brings in money once a month, leading wife to make debts during month. When receiving his salary, they had to pay off money debts and were left with little money for the new month. Asked her what BS she wanted, choose tomatoes + matemba because they had money for such an investment. Started in Feb, 2007 with husband’s salary. Buys 2 x per week at Liwonde (walks via [nearest tradingcenter] to tarmac, there in shared taxi). Buys 3 or 4 cartons of matemba at 600/700mk + transport 200mk. Sells here every day. Makes about 150mk profit per carton. Tomatoes, she buys at Balaka these days, finished at Liwawadzi, at 1500mk sells at 1800mk. With profit buys clothes for kids or food (but no ndiwo, because has her own). husband decides how to use the [BS] money- she gives her profit to him: kuwapatsa ulemu chifukwa ndi wamkulu m’nyumba [to pay respect to him because he is the elder] (28 vs 32), married in 1999- now first marriage. Are from same village, used to play together as kids. “Ndinali wamasiye ndiye ata bwera kundifunsira, “ unali mwayi kuti ndapeza mwamuna andisungu.” (was an orphan and when he came to propose to me & told myself “ you are lucky, that you have found a man to keep me/provide for me.” plus for younger sister who stayed with her. Could share the soap husband would give her with this sister. Was proposed before, but them her heart wasn’t ready. -

Left school at std5, because couldn’t pay the school fees, chased away. He is good husband - “ timamvetsetsana, kulima limodzi, mwana akadwala timapita limodzi ku chipatala, chakudyanso abale anga akakhala kuti alibe amawapatsa.” [we are dressed, working together in the field, if a child is ill we go to the hospital together, gives food to my relatives if they don’t have]. Stays with husband and 3 kids (2000, 2002,2007) injections for birth control at hospital, because both she and husband don’t have parents who could help them take care of kids. Other income sources: for
husband works at [large commercial estate] + cotton (+sometimes sell maize if they have surplus. One acre for maize, 1 ¾ acre cotton - hers, from parents. husband has 1, 5 acre at his village. Do farming together with ganyu workers. Running this BS has changed a lot. “Zisintha kwambiri, sitikumavutika, ndisanayambe gain, ndimapempha mchere, chifukwa cha kuti ndinalibe ndalama. Sopo sakusowa. Akalandira ndalama timakhala tilibe ngongol” [It changed a lot, we do not have problems anymore. If I had not started doing BS, I would be begging salt. Soap would be lacking. We do not have delts].

Type of woman who start BS: kumakhala kuganiza kuti ndikamapanga izi zindithandiza [those who think: if I do this it will help me]. They have problems, some lack money to start. Advantages: have enough ndiwo for own use. Disadvantage: tomatoes easily destroyed. Easy to consume too much matemba themselves. Never thought about taking a loan, husband gave her his salary to start. Doesn’t know any org. that gives loan, therefore took more to increase BS.

In order to be able to continue BS, one seems to need financial back up like salary.

Nov 12 Wednesday

A funeral is being prepared: leaves have been put on the road near the graveyard, men are digging a grave, women are preparing a meal under the tree in front of the graveyards entrance. Woman from M. village died while staying with her husband in Blantyre. As her daughter is at this graveyard too they will put her here. The body has already arrived at M. village (after Mudzi A) and will later today be brought to the graveyard here. Two chickens have already been brought from M. village to be cooked by the women, for the men who dig the grave and themselves. The women are from Mudzi B and Mudzi A. (one from the Musitafa family, Nola) and some unfamiliar faces, probably from M. village. The men who dig are selected, each time the same men, says Gertrude. In order to join the women’s cooking, one has to pay something, said Livia. - Ask one of the women who cook later! --> Pay 50mk once to participate + 100mk annually. After harvest all villagers contribute something. Some maize or money. [Later:] more and more women gather under the tree. Daughter-in-law of Eveles and Rashida pass by to chat on their way to tree too. Explain about the bungwe [organization]: contribute 20mk each time + 100mk annually. Is used for helping the bereaved family in case they cannot afford to buy chitenje to wrap the body in e.g.. Also annually each HH contributes some maize or nandolo to the treasure of the bungwe, who is chosen to store the food for funeral occasions. The women cook indeed for the grave diggers plus themselves. This org. exists for long time already, but in past fewer people participated. Now, however death is everywhere, omnipresent, everybody has to deal with it, to much greater extent than in past. Therefore much more people now join in. So that when they themselves are faced with a death in their family, people will come to help. Daughter-in-law of Eveles tells of somebody who never helped to cook at funerals and had to do all the work of fetching water etc alone, when she had a death in family. The bereaved family cannot manage to also cook for the grave diggers, and dig the grave etc, therefore helping each other.

Yesterday late afternoon Jane was knitting with Gertrude and said she was going to get blood test today, at the hospital on the way to Balaka. Why? Just decided to. I told her I’d like to go with her, but as I already expected she didn’t come to pick us up. This morning women were also talking about testing their blood. - Is there a temporary VCT nearby, or did the clinic start offering tests for the first time? One woman told the others she had gone yesterday (Blessings), but didn’t tell about results. Hilda said her husband refuses to go, others then told her to go to the clinic herself, get condoms and put them in the house. If he asks what those are, you can tell him to go to the clinic and find out himself. The women complained that men from this village cannot allow to go there (will not go there). Ada said “I cannot go there” without further explaining. Venesi told the others to go to the clinic and get condoms, she can’t herself because she doesn’t have a husband.

Amila had gone to her relative Fissa to borrow a scissors, but Fissa had refused to give her “because
there is AIDS nowadays,” Amila complained to Gertrude and Livia.

Teleza said during interview that she doesn’t own a cell phone, but this morning she came to ask me to knit/crochet her a black little bag for her cell phone (simple Nokia) Says she doesn’t have time to come and learn knitting herself. Gertrude charges her 30mk for it “because in Lilongwe asks 50mk for it”. Gertrude was also requested to crochet a holder for a ½ litre water bottle - should be completely closed (no holes) so that people can’t see what is in it, just water or may be a soft drink. For grandson of Jasmine, living with her. Charging 40mk, went to bring yesterday morning after finishing making it, but he didn’t have the money ready so she took it home again, as planned because otherwise people may start thinking she gave it for free, have to ask after money, forget “mawa” [tomorrow] etc.

Livia is preparing to have bricks burnt for a new house, to be build next year, but burning now before rains start. Now staying in big house with Phingi (her mother). Gertrude saw Tinenenji and Molly go to [tiny crossroads market] to sell groundnuts and tomatoes respectively. Both didn’t mention this as source of income during interview.

Mr Ntawanga ordered a chipewa, hat, simple muslim head cover. Black with white lines. At 60mk, while he is doing ganyu to find money for food…. Among others building house for daughter of Rashida.

At borehole young women (not from this village), one was explaining to others that she divorced her husband because he wanted to sleep with her sometimes up to 5x per day, and then also in the night. Also when she was menstruating. Compared his behaviour to the MASAF project, (?).

Emra still here. Amila complained at borehole that she will stop taking care of her - being her relative with head wound, hence difficult to fetch water- because Emra continues the same behaviour of sleeping with Ainessi’s husband. Amila does not agree/approve of this behaviour, therefore thinks of stopping helping her, Ainessi’s husband is said to have come the evening of the day Emra come back from Lilongwe to sleep with her.

How to continue the data collection? Still have few follow up questions for some people, but then what? More detailed, case studies? Interview/talk with development org’s in Balaka? Venesi.g Mr Langmwale from Concern Universal, who I met at the tree planting workshop? (and who promised me to bring some project documents the next day, but didn’t). Ask about project, implementation, his specific role, participation, impact (evaluation) etc.

Line of people (men first) pass by singing, carrying with cloth over it, all enter graveyard, most of the cooking club join them, some stay under the tree - the moslims, maybe. Some more singing and praying at the graveyard, then, maybe 10 minutes later, all go back home again. Some even laughing, most talking normally.

Asked Elube why + how she started a zigumu [snack] BS recently: her HB decided because “kusowa” [lacking]. Her mother then taught her how to make zigumu [why chose zigumu?] and she borrowed 500mk {from who? Relative or money-lender?}. Sells at [tiny crossroads market] and at ‘grocery’, but few people buy, isn’t making much profit, that’s why they are eating mango’s. - pointing at daughter eating a mango. But mango’s are good! I say. Ah, but for breakfast for lunch…… Now waits for the rain so she can do ganyu to pay back the debt. Goes to sell herself?

After funeral Victoria and Alinafe came by to chat. So hot, so hot - everybody agreed several times during conversation. They thought the rain will come soon, because of the terrible heat, the hard winds, the clouds. There was even some thunder at a distance (but all cleared within an hour or so…)
Said that as soon as the rains start people will start planting. If it starts in the morning, people will plant that very same afternoon. Both received coupon (for 2 bags of fertilizer sharing) and already bought their fertilizer (800MK). Some people mix the 2 types to make work easier, to not having to apply twice [rather, to have enough for whole field - 101008]. But one can see a difference between fields where both types were applied at the same time and fields where they were applied separately at the right stages (one at planting, second when maize is about 10cm high). Said that during the recent concern universal tree seminar it was announced that from 9 Nov on, people could get their blood tested at [nearest trading center] and some other place, but they don’t know till when. From that side of Mudzi A nobody has gone, “mantha”, are afraid. Victoria had attended the 3 day seminar and says they were informed on the first day that on the second, someone might come to teach them about HIV/AIDS. Many people don’t know much about it, she said, so she thought it was good, but all groups gave exactly the right answers, I said. Because in each group there was someone who know, if everybody would have been asked individually it would have been different, she says. The problem, they continue, is particularly with those who go to the lake to buy fish for their trade. There it is easy to sleep with other men/women.

Victoria’s new house is not yet finished, windows are still missing etc. Thinks she can move in by December, her mother will stay in her own house. So that when Victoria would die, her children at least have their own house. {why is Victoria doing so well???

ICRISAT project, only one from their side (Mudzi A II) is participating, Josephine, because she happened to be present at the tree planting day, when Mr Chikombo came to register people. Say that ICRISAT wants all 6 people to be making 13 ridges - will be problematic to find such an exact field, they think. At the concern universal seminar people complained that the GVH took all items like watering canes etc, which according to concern should be kept by a treasure and used for the project. If this is not the case they will come to take the items away.

Gertrude talked with Livia about blood testing. She said she had gotten a test at [nearest trading center] when she was pregnant. For now doesn’t have a husband, so no need to go, but will go again when she has a new husband.

GVH had told Gertrude she was happy, because her husband went to one of his other wives, so she didn’t have to take of him anymore. However, he get so ill that she went to the other wife too to take care of him together, stayed there for 1 night. After this wife he also went to his third wife and now is back with GVH again.

At Rashida’s a new house is being built with unburnt bricks made by Rashida, building done as ganyu by Mr Ntawanga. House is for daughter who recently got baby.

Some nights back Jane had been chatting at Jasmine’s with that one’s grandsons. When walking to her own house they continued their conversation, screaming very loud. He said he wouldn’t sleep with her. She said: you have girlfriend + I boyfriend, won’t be sleeping with you. He: even if that wasn’t the case I wouldn’t sleep with you! Stop coming here. She: I’ll be back tomorrow. All joking, laughing, pretending to be mad. Very loud, very late. GVH reprimanded her later for behaving “as if she had no parents”.

Nov 13 Thursday (full moon)

Gertrude overheard grandson of GVH + Sofia shout at Jane for having come home very late yesterday, at 10:30pm. Leaving at 6 in the morning saying she is going to visit friends, and then not
coming back until very late. She said she had gone for blood testing. Doesn’t take that long! You have been with a boy and your friend was also with a boy, don’t you know that you can get pregnant? And then next year you won’t be able to go back to school. Grandson said he will ask her friend what she really did, and that he will keep a big stick to hit her with whenever she decided to come back late again. From now on she will not be allowed to leave the fenced compound of GVH. Sofia added: First you are screaming very loud, waking up everybody and cheating us saying that is wasn't you, now this. If she continues this behaviour she will be send to live with her mother at J. village (when asked earlier why she didn’t live with mother she said she was used to living with grandmother. She says she has a boyfriend who is in form 3, but also had talked about boyfriend who had gone to S.A. Jane told grandson + Sofia that she was sorry and wouldn’t do it again, would be back around 7pm from now on, not 10pm. But grandson still thought that is too late, 5pm. Grandson is about same age as Jane.

AT 8:30am Jane passes by house, is on her way to [small crossroads market] to receive money from the MASAF project for GVH.

Esnart passed by on her way to the borehole, came to look at the jersey Gertrude is knitting for her. Says she already went for blood testing twice [has 2 kids….?] and can’t go again, will see what to do when something happens, will face the problem when they come.

Grandsons of Jasmine passed by with 1 bag of fertilizer + 1 packet of maize seeds. She sold goat for over 4000mk, and received money for the pigs (even though much less than their real value). That she has money can also be seen from fact that she taken up her BSs again, making bread and zitumbuwa - says Gertrude. Later grandson passes by with chicken and eggs to bring to someone who is buying them.

Florence, only wearing a chitenje on her way to borehole (which is quite far for her, by the way!), talking about the rain, the heat - as everyone these days. The heat is so intense that the rains must really be coming very soon. Received 1 coupon to share with her grandmother. Grandmother went yesterday to buy, she today. Names are kept track of. Found money through husbands recently started “fresh” BS = fresh fish. Goes to the lake at 2 in the morning on bike, or leaves at 4 in the afternoon and comes back early next day. Says that depending on whether one gets the fertilizer in time, people apply either separately or mixed (whether ADMARC is stocked in time, coupons distributed in time, and one does have to weed first to find money). Now it makes sense to me... Find it hard to believe that people will mix out of laziness while the difference is clear and the work is not THAT much...

Also met Hamra on the road with a hoe. Gertrude asked whether she went to her field; no, finding traditional medicine. For what, I asked. For different kinds of things, eg when a child is born dead. Gets 200 up to 1000mk for this. Learned from grandmother.

Interviews market women [small crossroads market].

Bulenda (23) from M. village, about 10 minutes walk from [small crossroads market]. Sells dried fish since her husband left her 2 years ago: kuti ndizipeza chithandizo cha ana anga - to find myself help/support for my kids. Started with selling zitumbuwa and zigumu because just after harvest kids find left over maize cobs in the fields and have money. Sold near school. Her twin brother sells chicken food in Blantyre, she asked him for money to start BS with. When maize and oil became expensive she changed to fish this year. After harvest she’ll go back to zigumu and zitumbuwa again, and then later back to fish.

Buys her fish at Mangochi turn-off in Liwonde, 2 or 3 times per week. Buys for 1000mk (+ 200mk transport costs), making at about 900mk profit [don’t know whether that includes or excludes transport
costs. On market days sells at [small crossroads market], sometimes at Kampendensisi market
(everyday market) and other days walks around through villages, passing by the houses to sell. Uses
profit for soap, clothes…..

0780 Had been married from 2000 - 2006; anapanga chiwerewere mwana ali wang’ono - he was unfaithful
while child was still young. Gave birth in 2002 and 2003 (and when husband couldn’t sleep with her
just after birth, slept with other women). He decided to end the marriage, she then moved back from
his village to her own, working on her field instead of his. Stays alone with her 2 kids. Wants to
marry one day (because “it’s nature” chilengedwe, but will see later [ndidzakwatira koma
ndiwenetsetse kaye]. Good marriage = Tidzidzagwirizana zochita - discuss together and act as agreed.
Advantages of being pa banja; Adzidzasamalira nyumba yanga, kaya ndikufunu imangiwenso.
Adzidzatha kukwera pa denga [he will maintain my house or even build a new one, will climb on the
roof (make new roof)]. But she would still continue her BS because he may not want or not be able to
give what she wants at the moment she wants it, buy food, chitenje. Grows maize, nandolo and
khobwe on her 1 acre. Went up to form3 because she was strong at that time. Brother paid for it, but
started to drink a lot of beer and money vanished. Impact of BS on her life: zimene ndimavutika
monga sopo ndimaginula, ndalama ya chigayo, kaya zovala ndimaginula. Now can buy the things that
gave her problems, like soap, money for maize mill, clothes.

0781 Type of women who do BS: amakhalidwe abwino, osakwiya, adzisangalala ndi ma customer. -Behave
well, don’t fight but are happy with customers, chatting with all of them to attract them. Situation of
“mavuto” is what makes women to start a BS. [easy victim for seducing men?] Disadvantages of
running a BS is that some customers take merchandise saying they will pay later but don’t. Solution:
don’t give on credit. Disadvantage of fish BS: fluctuating whole sale prices at Liwonde.

0782 Mentions FINCA as org. giving out loans, came to her village to ask for people who wanted to take a
loan, but she didn’t take: they put people in groups and when, after 1 month, some women are not able
to pay back, the whole group will be punished.

0783 Tahera (20) from K. village, within same Traditional Authority as [small crossroads market]: 70mk for
bike taxi from village to [small crossroads market] market (app same as from [small crossroads market]
to [tiny crossroads market] grocery, thinks Gertrude) Started in January this year to sell tomatoes, in
march switched to dried fish. Bought tomatoes at 800mk, selling at 1000mk - little profit because some
broke on way back, and they don’t stay good for a long time, go bad quickly. While dried fish doesn’t
go bad. Started her BS with money her husband had given after their divorce and added to this
through ganyu. To change to the more expensive BS of fish used her tomato profit and asked friends
to bring her a carton of dried fish so she didn’t have to pay for the transport. After selling that one
carton she had enough profit to now go herself to Liwonde (Mangochi turn-off) to buy. Usually buys
5 cartons of dried fish at Liwonde turn-off, but now only bought 2 because her house collapsed so she
is building new one, spent money on that. Only goes once a week on Wednesdays due to lack of
money, buys at 2000mk + 200 transport, sells at 3000mk = 800mk profit. Sometimes sells all fish in
three days, sometimes it takes the whole week. On Thursdays sells at [small crossroads market], other
days at home. With profit buys soap, food, school fees (kids go to a paid school).

0784 Got married at 13 in 2001. Father died, mother can’t walk, so was difficult at home, therefore got
married quickly. He was a BS man and told her they should sacrifice one of their children in order to
become rich. Then he decided to divorce, because these kids were the ones to take care of her later.
He doesn’t support his children now, even worse: took everything from her house and destroyed the
house itself when they divorced… She now stays alone with her 2 kids. After divorce in 2006 manage
through ganyu + support from her mother (who makes rosaries for sell) Sometimes sold
her nandolo when problems pakhomo [at home]. Furthermore cultivates maize (doesn’t sell) on 1.5 acre, left school in std7, because of same problems that pushed her into early marriage. There wasn’t even money to buy a pen for her.

0785 The BS changed her life: panopa ndikumagula sopo, sindikupempha amayi, panopa apuma (Now I buy soap, I am not begging my mother for it, she can rest now). Vuto lalikulu ndi kudya, panopa chimanga ndikutha kugula [The biggest problem is food, now I can buy maize]. Type of women starting BS: Akusowa chithandizo, ena atha kukhala kuti ali pabanja koma chithandizo chimasowa, (they lack support, some can be married but support is lacking). Disadvantages: many… nsanje (jealousy), ziwembutrobery). Once all her money was stolen after selling 1 carton, she to borrow money to continue the BS. Will marry again in future, but not now. Receives many proposals, but she is still remembering the behaviour of first husband, afraid to encounter similar man. Will marry when: mavuto azachuma atapitilira, (when financial problems persist). A marriage is good when the two are able to understand each other. Disadvantage: “monga ngati ine ndabwera kuno bwenzi maganizo ali kunyumbako kuleka kumagula gaini kuno. Ndikakafika ndikamutelekere madzi kuti akasambwe, ndikumphikire from Jchakudya kuti adya. Panopa maganizo amenewo palibe. Panopa ndikuganiza kuti Pamela adya bwanji, asamba bwanji. [If I had a husband at home I would have to stop doing this BS, would have to give him water so he can go and wash, would have to cook him food. Now I don’t have that thought, now only thinking about how my kids will eat and wash]. When she is away from home to buy and sell fish (Wednesday + Thursday), her mother takes care of children.

0786 Mentions MADEF when asked whether she knows org’s that give out loans, they came to her village to find people who wanted a loan. - chifukwa chakuti anabwera m’mudzi mwathu, ndi kumauza anhu ofuna kutenga koma ineyo sinditha kutenga chifukwa magain ake ndi momwe akuyendera kundipanga force ndigwiritese ndalama zochezipa ikwono akufuna ndalama tomweyo. -She didn’t take loan because in their BS they force one to pay back, even if you sold for little money, they take that money. Witness (45) from J. village, which belongs to group Mudzi B. Sells only masamba, since last October. Was married from 1977-2004, when husband died. Decided herself to start a BS, choose masamba because it is nearby to get, one if her children did ganyu to find money to start, 500mk. When she makes some more money she will change to selling fish, to find more profit. Started ‘kuti ndidzipeza chithandizo’ [so that I find support].

0787 Buys at Liwawadzi, 3 x per week, at 400mk, making at about 200/300mk profit after selling in 2 days. Usually walks around through villages to sell, this is her third time to sell at [small crossroads market]. In past she has been brewing beer, but renting all the materials was expensive, difficult to pay. Uses her profit to buy maize.

0789 Since her husband died no one has proposed to her, but she would agree so that he can help her: building a house, a nkhokwe, farming together. Plus the secret thing….. (chinsinsi). Stays on her house with 2 children and 1 granddaughter. Other children are married, they only find money through her BS now, but will do ganyu when people start planting. Grows herself maize, g/nuts and nandolo on 2 acres, farms with her children. Couldn’t finish interview because man of shop nearby the women selling vegetables under the tree came to see that there is no one else selling for her, so she needs to get back to her BS…

0791 We went late this time, arriving at about 3:30pm. Still not many people. Some selling fish on simple structures, hiding from sun under it, mostly men, 2 women. Under the tree quite a number of women selling tomatoes, nandolo, masamba, onions, maize cobs, thobwa, bananas. Not all them could sit in tree’s shade, so some in full sun. The later and cooler it got, more people came. Besides food, 2 Old
men selling tobacco, various heeps of second hand clothes, some structures exposing new clothes, old
clothes, zitenje.

Met Emiyo, whom we interviewed last time, when she was selling tomatoes. Today she wasn’t
selling, because there were already too many women selling tomatoes. Even 3 women from very far
had come to sell. She had gone to visit her sister in the hospital and now just came to check how BS
was going and chat with her friends. Her house just nearby, went there to ask some more questions
and take picture. Continues her BS even though husband has income as builder to help each other. He
may not always have money, then she can help + other way round. Have even a khola with pigs, are
doing well. House with windows of glass and glass roof. The type of women who can run a BS: those
with a wish (khumbo) to run a BS, others just don’t think about it. Kuthetsa umphawi = to end
poverty. Forgot name of an org. that gives loans. Doesn’t want one anyway, because one can get a
loan of 5000MK and have to pay back 750 after 2 weeks. Is impossible, some days don’t sell any
tomato, few people passing by... Patricia, the one we interviewed earlier about her zitenje BS - wasn’t
there at [small crossroads market].

Nov 14 Friday

I saw husband of Amila work on roof of Emra, so she plans to stay here. Esnart came by to give
Gertrude 200mk for the jersey that she is about to finish for Esnart’s daughter. Don’t have the other
100 yet. Gertrude told her she will keep the jersey till she has it. Esnart told us her husband had sent
money from S.A, but part of it was stolen, therefore she couldn’t buy fertilizer yet. But does spend on
a jersey...

Met Rosemary’s husband on the road from Mudzi A to Mudzi B yesterday. Drunk and with a bundle
of grass, but Gertrude hasn’t seen him at Rosemary’s house since.

While knitting outside Jane passed by singing aloud (already earlier Gertrude had heard her say to
friend at borehole that she wasn’t going to stay within the fence of her house, the friend was also
saying that her mother had shouted at her for coming home late. They laughed: both shouted at…).
Joined us on the mat, chatted with Gertrude while lying down. Told that the owner of the house we
staying phoned GVH saying that he wants to come back Feb/March and wants to gather all the 12
children that he has with a (large) number of women from surrounding villages, and that he wants
them all to stay with him at the GVH’s house while we still stay in his. Jane said that this man also
slept with Livia and had given her money, same with Livia’s elder sister. Furthermore [Jane] said that
she didn’t gone for blood testing after all, and that the testing will continue till Sunday only. That
tomorrow she [Jane] will be going to Balaka with a friend, just to walk around, hadn’t been there for
quite a while. Wants to get her hair braided, buy new trousers. With what money?, Gertrude asked.
Brother and grandmother had both borrowed 250mk from her and will be paying back. Laughed when
Gertrude asked again how she got that money in the first place, not answering, had made only 300
doing ganyu, she explicitly confirmed again, which she used to pay for the jersey that Gertrude made.
When Doris passed by with a bucket and greeted only me and Gertrude, Gertrude asked Jane whether
they are not on talking terms (so that’s the way to show one is not happy with another, literally not
greeting when passing by, and that’s why it’s important to greet or at least say ‘ndadu tsa’ [I am
passing by!] when passing otherwise it can by interpreted as an animosity). Indeed have not been on
speaking terms, had fight over fact that Doris’s grandmother Hamra advised Doris after evenly letter
issue to go to TA. [small crossroads market] because GVH wasn’t big enough to handle these
questions, and even to kill GVH or bewitch her.
Went to Mudzi B 2 (mr Ntawanga transporting bricks from there by bike) to follow up interviews with Christina and Mwayi. No surprising answers. Mwayi says she has no reason to get married again (30 widow). She is growing different crops and after selling there is no one who tells her that to do with the money, can do as she like herself. The only disadvantage of being alone is that it will be difficult to build a new house, may she want one (but house looks fine, even bed outside, grass but windows). Mwayi agreed to marry her second husband because “kusowa kwa nyumba” she says (was staying with mother), and third husband because her mother died and was told that it would help in her grieve over being an orphan, to have someone to chat with, she took an advance at the place where she is currently doing ganyu in order to buy fertilizer. Clears and makes ridges on plot smaller than 1 acre for 1000mk.

Coming back home Naima (daughter of Balakasi) was waiting for us, complaining that we are always “kuyendayenda” [walking around] made an order for socks and hat for baby girl, because will be visiting her mother-in-law in Lilongwe (she laughed when she told me, about fact that Naima desperately wants her baby to look good for this). Took long time before she made a decision about the colour that she must be using. Finally decided on hard green with white. Was supposed to go tomorrow, but as she said she will be finished tomorrow, Naima postponed her travel to Sunday. Paid the costs, 100mk at forward now. Fatima also stopped while on her way to the borehole. I asked her why she and husband are not staying in her village. Will move there as soon as they harvest their maize, she said, first had to build a house there. Received coupon, but has not bought fertilizer yet, lacking money. Not received from brother-in-law in S.A? No, only mother-in-law = Elube. I asked whether that money is not taken by her husband to play cards, no. she said when Fatima left: now we finally know the real answer, couldn’t believe that someone in this period could borrow out 500mk - Elube said she borrow this amount to start zigumu BS, but not selling much, will have to do ganyu in order to pay back.

Later I say to her; long trip, all the way to Lilongwe. Expensive answers she, indeed it is! Ok 200mk on bike from here to Balaka, from here to Balaka, from B to LL 1000mk, then in LL another 50-100mk. Plus going back. “At this time….” Add her surprised.

Since the tree seminar Pamela has not been seen at all by her. Naima and Julia (chatting at our mat) said rains are late this year. In evening had a small shower various showers in night.

Market woman, Witness at [small crossroads market] wants to get married again (but no one proposes ... ) because building house + nkohwe for her, farm together + “secret thing” so sex is an issue! Others have also sometimes gargled shamefully when I asked about advantages of being marked/why they want to get married.

Nov 15 Saturday (heard hyena in night)

Various times showers in the night, but no real, hard rain, so still no planting today.

Left after breakfast (mango and potato, neighboring girl came to ask for some tree burning charcoal) to VCT at C. village, at the mother-and-child-health-clinic, past [small crossroads market]. Met Nelia beside road at water tap, her husband went to Kasungu and told her to move to his parents, said she will come to Mudzi B today to order hat and shoes for her child.

No-one at clinic, health man under tree in front of clinic. Started testing on 10th of Nov, equipments
and training from NAC via District Assembly. Five week training, man was already employed at this clinic (lives with wife and 2 kids on other side of road, nice government house, name is James, asked when I would come again to chat). Disseminated message that people can get tested through a publicity vehicle and a meeting with local leaders. Say they will only be testing for this week to stimulate people to come, but will stay. Tested people in past week (= first days after opening)

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<td>Monday</td>
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Today one woman had come before us, after the questions, and after testing me and Gertrude, 7 people (men 4, old 2, and young 5) were waiting to be tested. They were called in as a group. When I was in, older woman was saying that most people in that village are afraid to get tested, but at least this year more were going for testing than last year.

All persons who tested positive were referred to the ART clinic in Balaka. I want people wanted to receive condoms, each received 20 condoms and were demonstrated how to use it. Other places to get tested are at [large commercial estate], [nearest tradingcenter], Chiyendausiku, Kapandansinsi (temporary because close to Chiyendausuku) and of course Balaka. He reports to the District HIV Coordinator in Balaka.

When I requested to be tested myself, James wrote me a small note with date of today, nr 163 (hence, nr app is nr of people having come for testing since opening this VCT service), asked date.

3 months from now to come again for testing. Then asked me if I knew what HIV and AIDS stands for, how one gets it, how to avoid. Why I am worried and come for testing. Whether I am married and want to receive condoms. (No, husband is not here anyway - But don’t you have a boyfriend here? No, why? Don’t you want?). When Gertrude answered that she was not married she was not offered condoms! Asked again whether I felt ready to be tested. Showed me the posters on the wall with pictures of the 3 types of testing materials. All just with one drop of blood, waiting either 10 or 15 minutes for results. One stripe means test was effective and one is HIV negative. Two stripes means HIV positive. Then a second test is done, a different type, same idea. If the two tests show different results than a more thorough and expensive test is done. In room some simple chairs and a table with big recordbook, and in corner a sink with boxes with needles, alcohol, tests and cotton swabs.
Chatted some more while waiting (what my religion was, whether I am a volunteer, whether I will help them advertise, stimulate people from village that it is important to get tested). Then asked whether I was ready for result: negative. When I came out of this room, She decided to go to. James told me that here in Malawi “people tend to think that if they are tested positive, they will die the very next day”.

Walking back passed by [small crossroads market], bought masamba and nandolo, and interviewed 2 more selling women;

Brenda (46yrs), staying at C. village - not far from [small crossroads market]. Today sells tomatoes, other times mandasi, bananas, masamba when one BS sizikuyenda [is not going well], changes to other “chifukwa ndi kumudzi” [because it is in village]. Have to find small money for salt, just trying whatever goes well at each time. Her husband decided that it would be good for her to start a BS, (now 4th year) instead of just staying, in order to find salt for at home. He himself “samakonda kuyendayenda kumagulitsa” [does not walk around to sell]. He make mats and handles of hoes. “Anati ndalama ndi yanga, ndizionera za ku kitchen, iwonso ndi yawo) ---- he said the money was hers, she has to look over the kitchen, he has his own money. Didn’t take out loan to start, found money through selling cotton. Married in 1980 till now, secret of the long marriage is that God gave them the gift of love…… He is a good husband: farming together, growing cotton together and after selling discussing together how to use the money, buy own cloths, each choosing their own. Only had 1 child, who gave birth to 4. One of the granddaughter stays with Brenda & husband, she has no other children, and daughter has enough, otherwise Brenda would be alone. This granddaughter is sometimes send to sell, especially in weekends, because on week days goes to school, in std4, but today granddaughter was sent somewhere by mother.

VCT CLIENTS FORM

DATE……………15/11/08…………………………………….

SITE CODE………………02…………………………………….

CLIENT CODE………………163…………………………………

CO. CODE……………………………………

NEXT VISIT …………………15/02/09…………………………

Buys at Balaka, Ntcheu or Liwawadzi. Tomatoes she is currently selling she bought yesterday in Balaka. Went on bike taxi = 300mk - when she has no money, she walks. When she has a lot of money she goes to Ntcheu to buy, but that costs 300/400mk transport one way, plus tomatoes on way back, plus paying for someone to help her carry. But then she can sell for 1 to 3 weeks. At Balaka usually buys 3 x 5Ltr at 500mk, 5Ltr takes about 2 days to sell, says she makes about 100mk profit per 5Ltr - which does not conclude with that transport would last her 600mk. She speculates that she may not calculate all the money she spends when it gets into her hands when selling tomatoes, maybe only the money that is still in let pocket when reaching home. Sells at [small crossroads market], Chiyendausiku, Chikombolo, Mlangali, all markets but also passing by houses. Gertrude: mumayendayenda! [you move around a lot!] Brenda laughs hard, confirming. With profit she buys chimanga [maize], chakudya [food], salt, ndiwo [relish], soap. Sometimes gives her husband,
sometimes keeps herself.

HH finds money through her BS, HbS selling of mats + hoe handles and selling cotton, and growing tomatoes at dambo (husband- sometimes gives her to sell, sometimes sells himself). Also do ganyu: kupalira - “njala imakhala itawirikiza, mpamba wadula..” when hunger is everywhere, profit/investment money finishes (partly yao). At that time it is difficult to do BS, to find money, people don’t buy much, they themselves use their profit/investment money to buy food too, so can’t continue BS. Need ganyu.

Whether BS changed life: Ndikumapeza chakudya monga ku mudzi kuno, ndikupezanso mchere, koma kusintha kwenikweni palibe. Ndalamabe ikuvuta. I am now buying food, also finding salt, but there isn’t any real change. Money is still a problem.

No impact on her relationship with husband, to have independent incomes, doesn’t know any org’s that give out loans. In her village an org. that gives goats, to make manure because their village is big. Of every 10 people only received a fertilizer coupon - not her.

Mitandire doesn’t know her age (60?), lives at C. village (where we went to get tested today). Sells veggies now, at other times bananas (but too hot now, can’t find bananas, while these days many people working at dambo, growing tomatoes etc. Buys whatever she can find. Now, sells 3days per week, farms the other days. Now at [small crossroads market], but also passes by houses. In banana season, buys here and goes to sell at Balaka.

Started long time ago. husband was just staying, only farming, she decided to start: Ndinaganiza ndine mkazi chifuwaka cha ana ndizithandiza. Ndikabwera kumsika ndimatenga zofunika. Ndiwo timagula pochoka kumsika, mafuta anyale (parafin) timagula pochoka kumsika. Mavuto amachepa. [I thought: I am a woman and I must help my children. If I come to the market I get what I need. We buy relish, parafin. The problems are few now]. Is still with her first husband, married long time ago, he is good husband: “khalidwe, akanakhala woipa ndikanawathamangitsa, [this behaviour, if he would have been bad, I would have chased him away]. Kusamala ana, akamadya osawapangira nkhanza (she: some men eat a lot, leaving little for their children, nkhanza, abuse], chimene utapeze amatenga mwamuna kupatsa ana [shares what he finds with children]. Chifuwaka akukhala nawa ana bwinobwino, (because he lives well with the children). He does have other wives, but she is his first. I: why do you allow that? “Sangatheke amuna samalola. Bola akukusamala....” (impossible to disagree, he wouldn’t allow, doesn’t allow. Atleast, he is taking care of me). Although he apparently takes care of her she does continue her BS, because he may not always at any time be able to provide her with what she needs, then she uses her own money.

Stays in house with husband, but 5 children (other 7 died) and 1 granddaughter. Find money through her BSs + growing cotton, chimanga, nandolo + doing ganyu on the days that she doesn’t sell. Type of women who start BS: “kuvutika”- kuhala olemera, gain siungapange! – Those who suffer/have problems. If you are rich, you can’t do BS. (Laughing...). Disadvantage is that people know you sometimes carry a lot of money and through chitaka (taking money without physically present, through witchcraft medicine) may take it from you. Arriving home, finding that money has disappeared and that she needs to do ganyu or borrow money to start up BS again. Has received a fertilizer coupon, but doesn’t have enough money yet. husband is now with his other wife, she will see whether he helps her get the money when he comes back. NB relieved when the interviews has over, had feared difficult questions she couldn’t answer, but it wasn’t
that hard at all!

Granddaughter of Jasmine passes by with fresh ‘scones’ - breads to sell to me, bought 5 at 10mk. Livia, Lizzie (with huge tin bucket full of water for us). Pamela (saying she had been busy fetching firewood in the last days to prepare for the rainy season and therefore hadn’t shown up lately here). Esnart came to knit or closh. Balakasi came to check on head and shoes that her daughter Naima ordered, with baby hat too small. Was very friendly with Esnart, asking about each other’s families etc. Later Naima herself came again with baby, to pick the knit work. Mother-in-law does not live in Lilongwe but elsewhere, more nearby (may be Ulongwe?), will travel tomorrow and be back on Monday. Has something to discuss with her. Women discussed that brother of Elube, son of old woman in Mudzi B taking care of brother who had TB; at time of interview, came back from South Africa today. Is married elsewhere but first wanted to pass by his relatives. Brought 2 bikes, 2 bales of clothes, (looked like this at least) and 2 bags.

At one point Mphatso, daughter of Rosemary, was spotted in fields towards [tiny crossroads market], with a boy. Women were commenting that there may be a new relationship, since they were not just walking, but stopping to look at each other, the problem with men here, commented Pamela, is that, the first days they were very serious at loving you, but soon they will just leave you at home wondering where to find food.

Some of the husbands in S.A will soon be returning husband of Lizzie in Dec, husband of Esnart any time now, (why?), maybe for Christmas holiday, guessed Gertrude, and make their wife pregnant, who will then give you lot of BS, Gertrude, as they all want heads and socks etc for their baby’s, said Balakasi.

If rains don’t start soon, people will start eating the seeds they kept for planting, the women discussed to. Gertrude refused to give Esnart the jersey she made for Esnart’s child because she is 100mk short of paying the total 300mk.

Pamela has not yet moved into her new own house (being built by son of sister Venesi with whom she currently stays). Will in Dec, bought fertilizer at 500mk + 150 for bike transport. Livia complained that the father of her last born brings too little, just 1 bar of soap, little money. Gertrude guess he comes about once every 2 weeks. Is helping her get firewood to burn the bricks with which he earlier wanted to build a house for her.

Esnart will move to her village when husband comes from S.A, because he will be going back and here people are stealing money from her because she is not from here. Gertrude thinks that Nelia was transferred to have at her mother-in-law’s while her husband is in Kasungu so that one can keep an eye on her, afraid that she will be moving around with other men. As soon as the rains start people will plant their maize, then make ridges and plant cotton - will be very busy.

Two boys passed by, one said that he went for blood testing today and saw me go there too, so why can’t you go there too?

**Sunday Nov 16**

Finally had rains in the night, the morning is clouded, the soil dark - but Innocent says people still find it too little to start planting. At around 11 pm, 3 men at our door, asking if they can sleep here.
Gertrude told them to go to the chief. (ask forgiveness via grandson of GVH, came from very far and thought wife of owner of house was still staying here.)

Yesterday afternoon other women were ridiculing that Naima's husband sometimes goes to fetch water on his bike. "My husband would never do that, wouldn't allow, afraid that his friends will laugh at him." Others however said it is good that he is helping his wife. Naima herself said that the water is for washing HIS body and HIS clothes.

While Fatima was knitting here after breakfast, [I can’t walk because of nasty blister from walking to clinic yesterday -- knitting at home all day, joined by women.], another woman came who just arrived from Mangochi to receive whatever her husband sent for her with the brother of Elube (left again on Nov 19 with a blanket). More katundu [luggage/stuff] arrived yesterday via the road passing Mudzi B 2, including 5 bikes to give to others, from their relatives in SA.

Jasmine indeed already bought fertilizers said Innocent. Both share 1 coupon. Innocent hasn’t bought yet. Also told Gertrude that Jasmine wants to start selling fish again and Innocent wants to get a loan at [tiny crossroads market] (concern universal?), to start a BS, may be go with her mother to buy fish, or make zigumu and sell everyday at [small crossroads market].

Daughter of Mery came to order a hat and shoes (on behalf of Mery), for mother’s new born baby. Brought four small balls of different colour thread to make it with. Some women have torn a part old jersey’s to use the thread.

Levison and brother of Pamela & Venesi (who is building Pamela’s new house, hence in not Venesi’s son who does that, as I thought) came by one bike (one of these bikes came yesterday with man from SA). Stopped shortly to chat at veranda. On their way to find money. [?How?] Levison said he wants a blue hat and bargained the price down from 60 to 50mk.

Tinenenji, sister Dorica and unknown face (also young woman) came to knit in afternoon. When Filimona passed by, they were saying that besides the 2 children she has now, 2 more have died. In total given birth to 4 children, of another man than her current husband. Leading the girls to comment that apparently there are few girls to marry these days, considering that this husband had to pick one of that has already given birth 4 times.

Dorica had met the ex-husband of Emra in his home village, where he told her that he is now with the one he wanted to get married to before marrying Emra. Tinenenji commented that: that girlfriend has another boyfriend who wants to get married to her too, so when the two men will meet, there will be a big fight, since ex-husband of Emra is disturbing the other man’s plans. He also said that he hadn’t meant to slash her head, but wanted to destroy her ear, but she ran away.

Tinenenji got up to talk to the husband of Fatima who passed by on a bike, when she came back the unknown face reprimanded her for talking just the two of them apart, should have called him to come to the
group, or pass by his house if she wanted to talk to him, not like this, separate herself from group to talk to him privately. He is married, you should respect your friend (Fatima).

Another man passed by, who apparently proposed to Dorica yesterday. The other two advised her to take his offer, saying ‘chikondi’ at several points, meaning that he loves her, “he can buy soap and salt and clothes for you and your mother and relatives!” Dorica answered that: he already have wife, only that she mistreats him, making him sleep outside the house while she sleeps inside. The others said she could just sleep with him at Lucius Banda’s place in Balaka, (because he has a wife at home). “You can choose there what you want to drink and eat nice”. He loves you, is serious, forget about his wife. Pamela came by shortly, on way to borehole, had kept some nandolo, that she now wanted to prepare, therefore didn’t stay too long.

Monday Nov 17

Jasmine passed by on way to pump (following granddaughter who went with big tin) and chatted shortly with chief Mudzi B in front of our house. She was saying that: her grandson wants to go back to his mother in Zomba, because there is not enough food here, while there they just harvested maize from dimba, and vegetables too. She will go there to receive some maize & veggies from her daughter.

Article in Vice Versa on AIDS pandemic, referring to Epstein’s recent book (the invisible cure) on why initially Uganda was able to drastically reduce the number of new infections - through promoting ‘Zero-grazing campaign. Developed by local leaders who understood that concurrent sexual relationship were main issue to be addressed, later condom promotion (UN) and abstinence promotion (US) had much less impact - less suitable, less in concurrence with local culture.

On our way to Chenawe passed by Chikondi’s house, who was sitting at her veranda, chatted very comfortably with her for a while, hasn’t bought fertilizer yet, needs to find money first. Is doing ganyu now at M. village, will get money for that, then buy, has finished making ridges on her own field, except on the part where she plans to grow cotton, will not make ridges there, just plant when the rains have started. Last year had finished with her own field earlier, but now because she is (very) pregnant, takes longer, but at least she did work hard - meaning the child will be a boy again. When it’s a girl, one is more tired and lazy. [Chikondi] was looking through the remainings of a primary school book in English, from when she went to school in Blantyre. When she has nothing to do, she looks through that (even though I am pretty sure that she doesn’t understand much of what is written there, about Nyasaland and English protectorate etc) I told she should come to us when she has nothing to do, then at least she can learn how to knit, then she talked with Gertrude for a while about prices of thread. Gertrude also said that there are threads and needles at our home, she can just come to practice. Chikondi said that she doesn’t want people to say that she knows already that her baby will live, therefore doesn’t want to knit something for it yet, nor wants Gertrude to knit something for it yet. Maybe the baby
First said that: this pregnancy was an accident, when I asked why she had not need any birth control method, she said she had been taking pills from the hospital for a while, but her body didn’t respond well to it, was menstruating the whole month. If her body had responded well to it, she could have been taking then, because husband wouldn’t know. He said however that he didn’t want to be feeding only children of another man, wanted his own child too. So she couldn’t avoid pregnancy in the traditional way, by putting a string around the waist, the number of knots with which you tie it respond to the number of years that you will not get pregnant, but when you work hard on the field the string may come off, then you may get pregnant, because can’t put it on again or has to take new one. One can also drink a traditional medicine once, after which you will never get pregnant again. Her mother, Mrs Ntawanga, took this after her last child because she was embarrassed to be pregnant at the same time as daughter Chikondi. Chikondi gave birth on Feb 17, her mother in Feb, also Elube took this medicine, and both have not become pregnant since. Chikondi says she tried injections too, but was menstruating whole month, most people, she says, don’t like using condoms because they know traditional medicines that they prefer to use. Chikondi had also asked in the hospital to be operated so she couldn’t have more children, but says they refused, a woman should a least have given birth to 4 children, so at least be left with the few kids if some die. Chikondi also said that: it may be problematic, because may be one finds a new husband who wants children. Men these days are problems, they say they love you in the first days, say they will take care of you, will stay with you till you die, and that they want to have a child, then you become pregnant, and they leave you. Next one comes, same story.

I: Is there any way you can raise your own sons to behave differently, when they are older? Children just copy the behaviour of their parents. The parents of her last husband (who has not come back anymore) must have behaved the same as he, that must be where he saw such behaviour. Her sons will them also copy the behaviour of their father. A mother can advise her son not to propose girls, but then he will say he will marry you, the mother, because you don’t allow him to propose other women, and still, they can just sneak out at night and secretly propose.

Her child will be born in January, will go to hospital for it because there people know a lot. It’s better to get pregnant in a different period, now it has kept her from working on the field as hard as usual, will try to do ganyu in coming months, but will be difficult. Large staple of nkhuni [firewood] next to kitchen, to prepare for rainy season.

We passed Elube on road with bag of nandolo on her head, app 100mk. Probably bought from Holy, who has been smart, will be making a lot of money, said Gertrude. By now people’s own nandolo harvests have finished, will be buying.

Chikondi has a small round veggie garden where she planted pumpkin. Surrounded with bricks (2 layers)
and topped with thorny branches to keep goats and chicken away.

Continued to Chenawe but found her ill, stomach aches. Indeed looked very ill, tired, lifeless, listless, problems swallowing as if she felt nauseous, has been to hospital in [nearest trading center] last week, but they told her she is just growing old, there is little they can do to help. Did give medication though, but hasn’t helped so far. Daughter Julia was with her, together they complained that the government hospital in [nearest trading center] only really helps the people who are related to them, only staff at giving them sufficient numbers of the good medication. We said we will come back another time and had one of the grandchildren come along to take at least some strong pain killers.

Phingi passed by again on way back from borehole (are burning Livia’s bricks today, need water to make mud to plaster the staple of bricks), saying to another woman that when the father of Livia’s last child will show up again (which he hasn’t since he came to help Livia fetch firewood for burning the bricks and wanted to sleep with her at the field and she refused), she will chase him because he promised to pay for ganyu, but up till now he hasn’t, and he promised to burn bricks for her but now her father is doing this. The other woman (the one in very small house who gave Gertrude knitted decorations as example) asked Phingi whether Livia was working on her own field. Yes, said Phingi, so that next yr she can take care of her children herself, live in her own house.

Before all this we first passed by Mr Ntawanga’s house for some agricultural questions. The structure that they are building in front of their house will be a goat khola, like in Mudzi A 2. FIDP visitors already passed by twice to check the progress, also some visitors from “forestry” have come to see the tree nursery that is also next to their house. While his wife is finishing the last ridges on their own field, he does ganyu on somebody else field in the morning and after that builds the house for Rashida’s daughter. Each village was ascribed a number of fertilizer coupons (only 30 something in Mudzi A). Not everybody in Mudzi A received, those who did not receive: Wisikesi (husband of Chenawe), Saibi, Suset, Patty, Makali (son of Hamra), Holy (but received), Rashida (did her husband receives, I asked? Has no husband, answered Mr Ntawanga - during interview she said she had! Maybe divorced?), Eliya, Mrs Ntawanga (but Mr Ntawanga received), Viola (but husband received). These were selected to not receive because they do not actively participate in any project activities, only show up when there is something to receive, so as to stimulate them, encourage participation in future. Mr Ntawanga says that this selection was made by all villages together.

He doesn’t know why this year only so few people could participate in the MASAF project. Only 3 including the chief. Chief Mudzi A was the one who selected them: Mr Mvula (very old husband of Chenawe) and Mr Tulipesi (HB of Viola).

Says it is normal that the rains have start end of Nov or beginning of Dec. only because last year they started earlier (Oct 18) do people now think that the rains are late.

At the Ntawanga’s the radio is on. Agness order a chipewa for her child and says she will come to pay for her husbands chipewa also, that she didn’t know he had ordered one. I told Gertrude, J will pay for Mr Ntawanga’s chipewa as thanks for all his assistance to my research.
For ICRISAT, he and Mr Chikombo selected a number of people with fields near the road, as they were told: himself, Mr Tulipesi, chief Mudzi B (because she also has a field, near the road), Levison: husband of Thokozani), Serena, they have now selected a field, where each of the participants has 4 ridges.

Went to Amila to give picture, (she asked about the one that Gertrude took of the 2 of us, said one day that others didn’t believe the 2 of us were on a picture together), found her sitting under tree with many other women from that side, some cutting masamba into a small pieces. Gertrude pointed out to me which girl is girlfriend of Jasmine’s grandson, who was screaming and shouting so loud that one evening with Jane. Boy passed by earlier too, very young still!

Then went to Molly’s house to check if there were some tomatoes to be bought but grandmother (Nola said she had taken them all to the market (grocery/[tiny crossroads market]). Jasmine and Evelin were sitting with Nola on her veranda (the husband at some distance under a tree). Sofia was selecting brown nandolo seeds from a bowl with mixed coloured seeds - explaining that these germinate best/give highest yield (kubereka bwino). Jasmine was buying about over half a 50 kg bag (30kg, thinks Gertrude) of maize seed from Nola for 900mk, for the other hundred (giving 2 notes of 500mk), she wanted nandolo - said she has harvested 2 bags this year but finished it all. Nothing left for planting, in her own maize seeds there were weav, hadn’t had money at that time to buy chemicals. The bag with seeds will be enough for 2.5 acres, showed us her field walking back from Nola to our houses. In front of our house and Elube’s house, she used to have her house there, and her mother too, and other close relatives, but moved because of “madzi”, heavy water streams. And has another field at some distance, where she already planted yesterday (hybrid seeds which she bought with fertilizer coupon probably for 50mk 5kg) which made the others laugh at her, herself included.

Saw, with his bike in hand at house of chief Mudzi B, the ex-husband of Emra, who greeted us enthusiastically. At borehole Gertrude overheard Emra complain to others that: this ex-husband took the coupon that was distributed on her name, which he refuses to give to her now. She says she will go to police because this is theft.

When we are eating and people pass by, Gertrude says “karibu” also when we pass people who are cooking or eating, but is always declined, saying “ndakhuta” I am full, or just no.

Chikondi also said today, about not having bought fertilizer yet, that people with wage jobs also have to wait till end of month before they can buy their fertilizer.

Nelia’s husband went to Kasungu when a car came here to find people to work there on tobacco fields. He recently called her to say he sent money for fertilizer to somebody living in Liwonde. Nelia went there to pick up the money and will buy fertilizer tomorrow, started staying at husbands village because his grandmother is just alone there.

Fatima came to knit again,(said her MIL Elube received blanket from son in SA via brother). Naima (daughter of Balakasi), came back with hat and shoes that Gertrude made for her daughter because
they were too small. Stayed to chat, complained that: because of the late rains many people go to bed without having eaten ndiwo (but do have nsima). And [Naima] complained about prospect of us going back to Lilongwe while they have gotten used to come chat at our house.

Esnart passed by with tin of water on head and pail of water on daughter’s head, saying that she now had the missing 100mk to pay for the jersey (300mk total). Her husband had given money to brother of Elube who arrived from SA few days ago.

Jens Anderson: what kind of jobs do these men in SA? Do they live very cheaply (zuining) to channel as much money and items as possible back to Malawi? Do they have sexual relations there? How do they manage to bring so many items back with them to Malawi? Gertrude thinks all from Mudzi B in same house.

Received text from Marjolein, Hazel is in big brother finale! I s thought to stand a chance, because although generally considered boring, is seen as the only one with morals, oh wow, that would be so great for her! And for Malawi, can be very proud…. Must tell Feye to gather a big Dutch voting force!

Ellesi, only child of Jeneti (we thought before that her name was Modesta, but Modesta is daughter of Auleria, who lives with mother Thandizo), came by in afternoon on brand new mountain bike (on which somebody had written “Jackson”). Her uncle, brother of Elube and probably also Jeneti, bought it for her from SA. But if she not finishes her secondary education, she has to give it back.

Almost each day (if not each indeed) a group of singing kids comes back to village in late afternoon, having played netball somewhere. Jasmine reprimanded her granddaughter after coming back that she does do good at netball, but didn’t pass school. At kids have holiday now, up till beginning of January.

In afternoon, sitting on mat in front of house to be out of the smoke of Livia’s burning fire, Gertrude overheard the husband of Nyamwale talking with a friend under a tree nearby. The husband, Jeremiah, was complaining about his son who was suddenly found to have impregnated a girl who now came to live with him (sent by her mother) and with whom he has decided to marry and thus stop school. The friend said he didn’t understand why the boy hasn’t denied the child is his. Neither did Jeremiah, he should have, school fees were ready for him! Tomorrow the ankhoswe will come for the ceremony but Jeremiah will not be present as a witness to show his protest/disagreement. Ceremony will still take place though, also if father is present.

The GVH has about 4 sons in SA, said Fatima. SO must surely have received something through brother of Elube too. Indeed she walked by, coming from Jasmine’s compound, with a mat (g thinks Jasmine’s husband make mats), some soap and a bottle of lotion passing by to greet us with her hands fall.
In evening, dark, moon behind thick layer of clouds, the husband of Amila shows up at our veranda, saying that he needs a smoke (fodya). Asks whether we can bring us firewood from his field for 50mk. We agree, better to have as much firewood as possible before wet season starts. Then pleads if we can give him 5 or 10 MK advance, because he really needs his smoke tonight, otherwise can’t sleep.

A cigarette, probably buying at Jasmine’s husband, costs 5mk, at least he is not lying about it, says Gertrude by saying that they have no food.

Gertrude closed another carrier for water bottle, this one for the grandson of GVH. In evening someone passed by and shouted to Gertrude that everybody at the football field (he or she was coming back from watching match) how wants one. Innocent and Lizzie have already been learning how to make them.

Tuesday Nov 18

Many people working fields this morning (may be because people have been receiving money from SA and can hire ganyu now?): Kondwani and kids behind us, GVH + husband+ Salika (mainly resting at veranda of little house next to ours though…) on field between our house and Rosemary’s, at a distance other people, young men. Some rain in morning, prompting Alma to start planting too. But she stopped when rains stopped quickly. Clouds remained though so still now (10am), we so Amila with kids working on her field, which is quite big and a bit low, so very black instead of sandy brown, with banana trees. Seems very fertile field, but may be problem of flooding. Also at borehole few people, leading Gertrude to conclude that many are taking advantage of the clouds and working on the fields.

When we passed by Julia’s house few days ago, saw big stack of small cut firewood sticks, we asked they answered that husband sells.

Went to [tiny crossroads market] (grocery) for pictures and follow up questions of BS women we interviewed earlier, but found only Lucia, not selling mandasi today because she had been working at field. Asked her whether she not want to get married. Not yet, she said, needs to help mother taking care of all younger siblings. Men have proposed, but she declines, not, first wait for younger siblings to be bit older. Mother is also taking care, but sometimes goes away. Sibling born after Lucia still at school, 18yrs.

Saw a paper on tree with printed on it “vacancy” G4S is urgently recruiting guards. Need people with JCE certificate at least, and a letter from village headman. Women are especially encouraged to apply. In English! Asked some people about it, whether many had already been applying. Not yet, recruitment is on 20th but many want to go. You too? I asked Zione (mandasi), ah no, said the men
around her: one needs at least JCE certificate (plus at least 2yrs)

0909

0910 On way back from grocery (where a little shop is selling the same thread that Gertrude has been buying from Balaka via Livia, Jane and Jasmine’s grandson for 85mk, while Jane and Jasmine’s grandson had said they paid 100mk per ball. Gertrude told boy at shop (pouring cooking oil in small plastic bags, size of finger) that she wants blue, black and white, he said they will have it on Saturday), passed by Lizzie who just came back from borehole with relative, says there was no particular reason for allowing her husband when he proposed, just decided to agree. Has never asked his age, he [husband Lizzie] found the money to travel to S through his clothes selling BS in Lilongwe. She gave us more mango’s straight from tree, said that people can at least be eating mango’s with the current lack to ndiwo.

0911 Continued to Lizzie’s grandmother (Alma) to buy groundnuts. When Alma heard I had been working on the field, she said I shouldn’t be doing that, leave those problems to them. I should at least wait till rains have made soil a bit s. told her I want to understand those problems, by doing as they are doing. Says many people are buying g/nuts of her these days, to plant. [Alma] Said that these g/nuts are her husband, help find the things she needs.

0912 In morning, at borehole, Amila apologized to Gertrude for her husband coming begging at our porch yesterday. No problem, said Gertrude, as I told you, said Amila, he always starts to behave strange when moon is on this side. (now declining in size).

0913 Alma, when I asked whether she as long time single woman had encountered problems with suspicion of other married women, said that putting on nice clothes does evoke suspicion in people about you sleeping around.

0914 When she does not have enough fertilizer put manure on top of her ridges before the rains start. Received a coupon, sold maize and g/nuts to find money, but daughter borrowed it, but will pay back and then she will buy fertilizer.

0915 Rashida says she did receive a coupon, a whole one even, for 2 bags. Borrowed money to buy now, because the ADMARC at [nearest tradingcenter] will soon stop selling fertilizer to start selling maize, so people can eat. Those who still want to buy fertilizer need to go to Balaka to get it then. Transport costs much higher: 200mk, or even 300mk in rainy season, while from [nearest tradingcenter] 100mk. At ADMARC have to pay 50mk for lifting the bag from store room to bike. This is first year that fertilizer is being sold at [nearest tradingcenter], before everybody had to go to Balaka.

0916 Lizzie went on Sunday to buy fertilizer, and yesterday again to get her hair braided at 50mk. Couldn’t do that on Sunday because many people were waiting to buy fertilizer, no time left to get hair done. Gertrude told her she expects many customers and will send some through to her, but Lizzie thinks they will not allow, as she is still learning.
This morning a woman passed by which we may have interviewed at [small crossroads market], had familiar face. Sold "Chinese" green leaves, at 2 for 5mk! It’s getting more and more expensive.

Are people allowed to sell maize this year, (no, yet still do, says Gertrude) or only through ADMARC? At 52mk/kg, (higher than Lozi Nola’s price), if I remember well. (yes, says Gertrude).

Jasmine’s HH having ceremony to remember death of Innocent’s older sister. Innocent came to invite Gertrude, as they are cooking for many people there now, Gertrude declined, saying her church does not allow participation in such ceremonies. Ok, no problem, said Innocent and left again, in the rain with umbrella, it seems to have started now!

Balakasi’s daughter Naima, yesterday said that people speculated that the rains were being kept from starting by the muslims who are building a mosque half way from here to [small crossroads market], so they have time to put a roof on, bad people. In evening killed big scorpion with brick in front of khonde [veranda].

Nov 19 Wednesday   PLANTED!

We have planted maize and beans together: 3 local maize seeds + 2 beans per phando. About 1 yard (1 step) apart, + 75-90cm? On one ridge planted potatoes in small cirhels: only one ridge because Gertrude doesn’t know whether they will do well in the hot Balaka, are mainly grown in cool, Dedza. On the other side of the house, in front of the toilet and bafa, we have enlarged our vegetable bed where Gertrude had already planted pumpkin (and watered twice a day), for it’s leaves. Now also planted spinach and tomatoes, (a lot of goats dung on these places) and in between more beans. When Rashida passed by, I asked whether she had also planted, but has no seeds yet, she answered. Her fertilizer she bought with borrowed money, which she will pay back after they receive money from orphan care.

Then we went to have a look at field on other side of road, where Jasmine, husband and Innocent and Jasmine’s granddaughter were planting local maize, 3 seeds per phando, about 50cm apart, will also plant mseula in between the maize phando’s, but only here and there, because it grows very big.

Gave us a handful of mseula seeds too. Later, when maize is some high centimetres high, she will plant g/nuts in between all maize miphando. On that field, about 2 acres, she grew cotton last year, but this yr will grow more maize than cotton. Because cotton does bring in a lot of money, but only once. Got into trouble this yr because they didn’t have enough maize. Planted her hybrid seeds first, (5kg, which comes together with the subsidized fertilizer for 800mk, because it is early maturing. Didn’t plant more hybrid maize because of “chuma” costs about 1000mk per 10 kg.

Naima passed by, will get visitors today, therefore on her way to buy a chicken.
Many if not most women’s BSs seem of temporary nature, merchandise changes.

Fatima and husband have not planted today, first have to finish making ridges, will plant tomorrow. At 10 she comes to knit though but it’s not hot (clouds and showers), may be husband is working on the field.

Two young girls passing by, about 10yrs, with water on head, discuss which is better when your mother asks you to choose make ridges or plant, one says ridges, other says planting, which she can do as quick as a car.

Young daughter of Molly came to tell us that her mother had been to Balaka and has nice tomatoes for sale. Three small tomatoes for 20mk! That means people will not be buying tomatoes, said Gertrude, too expensive. Molly has thus become a real BS woman now, I said, yes, may be her husband gave her a lot of money, was Gertrude’s first reaction.

Learned to cook nsima today, (as I have blisters on my feet and most people are busy planting on their fields anyway, so little to do). Bring water to boil, add few hands of ufa while stirring, then leave for 10-15 minutes on hot fire. Add some more hands of ufa while stirring hard, then another few minutes on fire and ready, when using mgaiwa need to add more flour for some density (but when grinding etc use less maize to make mgaiwa than gramill or woyera, between gramill and ufa woyera no price difference, but mgaiwa is cheaper. Buy 20kg gramill we paid 2770mk in shoprite, same amount of mgaiwa would then have costed about 2000mk, while woyera 3000mk. Mgaiwa is cheaper because it is only grinded, paying only once at chigayo (Gertrude paid 50mk to grind 1 bucket of maize). For gramill and ufa woyera one also needs to pay the same amount for the other machine, to make ufa. For gramill this is done at same time, while for ufa woyera the mgaiwa is kept for a few days before making it into ufa, then it becomes very soft ufa.

Read the whole LOVA - publication that I had brought from the Netherlands from A to Z. Put my current struggles in larger academic perspective, should not be afraid of theory, is helpful and enjoyable!

Plan: collect as many interviews with women who have an (independent) income, either through BS or paid job like working in a small grocery store. In NL select some of these women for further in-depth interviews for life history + reasons for choices made. Hopefully that will also shed some more light on questions about how disempowered women are here. Must not forget that Dutch government aim of my study is to advise them on how HIV can be improved.

Rosemary reprimanded one of her younger daughters for trying to throw/beat mango’s out of one of the mango trees at some distance of their house. You act as if you didn’t eat nsima, come back home now!

Gertrude says that as muslims wedding ceremonies the wife is advised to always allow her husband when he wants to have sex, and also in general just always do what he wants, ask about wedding ceremony to some of
Few people in village in afternoon. Innocent said most planted on that nearby fields (in village) in morning and now in afternoon are planting on their fields that are some more distance. In afternoon Sofia passed in front of house to plant too, crying child following her because she didn’t want to take it, not much later she came back with baby wrapped on back and another child on her shoulder. Innocent walking behind her carrying 2 kids in the same way, shouting to us that the children were given them too much trouble to be planting, they better sell them. Ja, shouted Gertrude back, to make ndiwo out of them! They did well coming back because little later heavy rain.

Nov 20

GVH’s husband planting a bag full of red painted maize seeds on field behind our bafa.

The grandson of GVH who does ganyu on field north of our house is still making ridges in morning, but said to husband of GVH that he will not continue today because wants to plant on own field.

Chisoni is also planting, Gertrude saw. Rosemary not at home, so maybe planting too. Thokozani + husband first have to finish their ridges, cannot plant yet because husband says police took his coupon after they imprisoned him for 1 night after fighting in line for fertilizer. He and Thokozani and sister Ainessi sat at their small khonde when we came. Thokozani got up to get an empty bag for us to sit on, while husband got up and took his bike from inside (or did Thokozani get it for him?), said he was going to [nearest tradingcenter] to see friends. Thokozani and Ainessi (just visiting) clearly think husband is cheating Thokozani. He had said one day that he had received money building in Balaka and would be buying the fertilizer after work that same day. Didn’t come home, called late in the evening with somebody else phone saying that he was kept at the police station for that fighting in fertilizer line. Next day he came home, saying that the police had taken his coupon, he keeps saying he will go tomorrow, she plans to follow him, see what is true of the story, or otherwise will go to his builders colleagues and ask what really happened.

Sister Ainessi comments that if he would really have been arrested, they would have charged him 300/400mk, story can’t be true. Friends say, they add, that he has been kumowa, buying beer after selling their coupon. Thokozani said they will then have to grow cotton only, because the soil here is not fertile enough to grow maize without fertilizer, will not grow higher than 50cm. husband agreed to this plan, she interprets as proof of his cheating her, because why agree if it is true what he says that he will get the coupon at the police station and buy? They are sharing their coupon with the grandson of GVH who works on field north of our house. That one came to ask for it, wanting to buy his fertilizer. Levison answered that he will get it later, that the coupon is currently too far, cannot got it right now.

Sister Ainessi hasn’t planted yet either, still busy making ridges at the field where she is staying now. GVH passed by, with half the bag with red seeds still full, hoe and bowl on head. Ainessi asked her to
give her some seeds. GVH told her to go and ask her friend (Emra) for seeds, since they share husband now. Gertrude expected Ainessi to get up set about this comment, but just laughed, saying that: Emra doesn’t have either, they are both looking at the same husband to support them.

When registering for coupons, people were already told that there were not enough for everyone, that each had to choose someone to register together with, to be sharing with.

Thokozani eat yesterday: mangos in morning, lunch nsima + matemba, dinner nsima + cassava leaves.

At Emra the radio was on loud, a lecture/add about HIV/AIDS, urging girls not to be attracted to those men with vehicles, just to get money. I heard “chiwerere ayi”. The last part Gertrude couldn’t understand because in chiyao, radio I slam. Emra seemed fine, nsima was on fire, with leaves to be prepared for ndiwo. Indeed a wound on head, there were others have no hair but thick skin from carrying water. She is planting local maize now with nandolo, both kept, has no fertilizer: ex-husband took their coupon, says he will come to discuss about it, but hasn’t still, so now he just started to plant. Doesn’t know how to solve if fertilizer doesn’t come through. Can’t you go and collect all the goat dropping everywhere? (or even send children to go and collect everywhere), ah, wouldn’t be enough, she said fatalistically. Will still plant cotton and g/nuts (will buy g/nuts seeds). Yesterday ate nothing in morning, nsima & masamba, she collected in the bush for lunch and dinner. The maize for this nsima, she has bought with money “that somebody has given her”, maybe Ainessi’s husband?

Fissa (woman who had husband from Zambia) has started planting, but not finished yet. Local maize (4 seeds per phando) together with 2 pumpkin seeds, in between these phando, a phando with 2 nandolo seeds. Later will also plant g/nuts, 1 seed per phando. Received these seeds from her mother, bought fertilizer already, after selling a goat, will apply after 1 month, will mix both types because they are mixed in a bag (shares with daughter-in-law Chisoni). Says she has never tried applying separately, everybody mixes. Yesterday eat mango in the morning, for lunch and dinner nsima with leaves, she collected in bush because “ndiwo zikusowa”. Has nice house, I noticed again, and quite a professional livestock khola behind house, of bricks with small door. Daughter-in-law Chisoni was planting on her own field, in own village where she will move to later (K. village, if I remember well), went together with Fissa to buy fertilizer (probably with money sent by husband from SA) and they eat together, so ate same as Fissa yesterday.

Tumanene (hair half un braided, cutting downsides of mangos), in house I saw a chair and a small table with a crocheted tablecloth. Started planting, not finished yet: local maize (3/4 seeds) together with pumpkin (2/3 seeds per phando), on same field nandolo (3 seeds) kept maize seeds for planting. In other field will plant cotton and g/nuts (will buy seeds in village). hasn’t bought fertilizer yet, “there is still time”. Has coupon and money which was sent by husband from SA. Yesterday ate phala in morning, nsima with matemba for lunch and nsima with piln (masamba) for dinner plus mangos all day through. Has not bought maize yet, still eating from what she harvested. In 3 months will plant sweet potatoes.
Ayama (old woman) started planting today, not finished yet: local maize (3 seeds, kept but will also buy more) with 2 pumpkin seeds (kept), in same phando, in between these phando, nandolo (3 seeds, bought at grocery /[tiny crossroads market] village). After this will plant mtedza and khobwe together in same field, seeds bought in Balaka where she went herself and also bought extra pumpkin seeds because found that these were finished in [nearest tradingcenter], will also plant cotton, will receive both the seeds + chemicals at [small crossroads market], pay back when selling harvest. Bought 1 bag of fertilizer (sharing coupon with Blessings), did ganyu to find money, ate nothing yesterday morning; nsima with cassava leaves for lunch and mango in evening because ndiwo was lacking. When we almost finished the interview a new male face came angry, saying we were keeping her from her responsibilities, she better put some water for him to wash. Gertrude stayed very calm, saying we were almost finished. Ellesi joined us while talking to grandmother Ayami. [NB man who recently came from SA is her son! Probably found many through him. Find that quite a number of women were still at their fields although we intentionally started late, at 10am.

Chief Mudzi B had started planting today, not finished yet: local maize (3/4) (bought in village because had finished own), together with 3 nandolo and 2/3 pumpkin seeds. Will later plant hybrid maize (received when buying fertilizer) and cotton (will get these later). Bought fertilizer with ganyu money, yesterday ate only phala (breakfast and lunch) and mangos for dinner, lacking ndiwo.

Thandizo (sitting at khonde with granddaughters, 1 knitting!) said she hadn’t planted yet, because she is not getting better (when we left I said “muchire msanga” [get better soon]. Ah! She answered, if you give me the medicine, has been to hospital, was given medication, she says). Daughter did plant on own field, will plant maize, nandolo, sorghum, pumpkin - all seeds kept. Bought fertilizer already (we saw when we came to interview her daughter), sold “something” in order to find money. Gertrude said we couldn’t probe because she had deliberately been vague. Yesterday ate mango in morning, and nsima with nandolo in afternoon and evening. In afternoon also more mango, nsima made of bought maize.

Nola seems to be doing very fine. All people eating matemba yesterday had bought these from her, she herself ate pig meat yesterday, and a newly bought goat was tied to tree to keep it from running back to where it came from. Husband sat at khonde while we sat on sand under tree. They have started planting local maize (3, because some may contain weevils) together with 1 pumpkin seed & 2/3 nandolo seeds, also planted rice, saying soil is ok for that, can harvest about 4 bags, will still plant hybrid maize (1 per phando), g/nuts and cotton, except for cotton kept all seeds for planting. Somebody is collecting her cotton seeds today at [small crossroads market]; bought fertilizer with money from selling the pigs of pig club, will apply in December, after weeding. The two types mixed at once because they have a big field, would not be enough if she applied separately twice. Yesterday had phala for breakfast, nsima with pig meat for lunch and dinner. Nsima still from own harvest, differences between past and now: In past people stayed in their marriage for a long time, while nowadays girls just get married whenever a man proposes, without even informing their parents. Leading to problems in the family, divorces and then remarry again with another… In the past girls were advised by their parents and grandparents, and they listened to what they were told. Nowadays girls say there is “freedom” ufulu = freedom, liberty, right), and that they can behave as they like don’t listen. Doesn’t know herself why this has changed, doesn’t understand. Granddaughter Grace supposedly staying with uncle in Mzuzu but Nola hasn’t heard from her for long time. Aunt is now visiting relatives in [tiny crossroads market],
so Nola will go there to ask about Grace.

Venesi Tunga (together with sister Pamela tearing of the wings of some type of insects, looks like wasp, yellow lower part of body, rest black. Don’t sting. At least people are already finding some ndiwo now through rains, commented Gertrude later). Has started planting, not finished yet, put 3 local maize seeds (bought), 2/3 nandolo (kept), 2/3 khobwe (bought) and 2 pumpkin seeds (kept), in 1 phando, will also plant hybrid maize and cotton. No g/nuts, because she has no seeds, she adds. Bought fertilizer [Venesi] with MASAF money, will apply both types separately, one just after germination, because one is for better germination, other for high yields. Says that most other people either don’t know that the 2 types have different purposes or they are lazy. Shared her coupon with Pamela, yesterday had mango for breakfast, nsima with matemba for lunch and dinner. Bought the matemba from Nola.

Pamela planted 3 maize (bought in village) + 2 pumpkin + 3 nandolo and 3 mseula seeds, all mixed. Also planted cassava, begged some of the seeds from friends, will also plant cotton, mtedza and nzama, but last 2 only if she can find money to buy seeds. Bought fertilizer with money that her brother sent from SA, (laughs somewhat besmuikt). Yesterday ate phala and mango in morning, and nsima with matemba for lunch and dinner. Today they will eat the zirombo that they are clearing from their wings (most still alive, although they don’t fly away, because of heat, says Gertrude), will just fry then without oil and add some salt.

Dora (mother of Dorica, in pink dress with hole where 1 breast hangs from) cleaning plates to be eating nsima with the same insects as the Tunga sisters. Started planting, hasn’t finished yet: ¾ maize seeds (kept) with 3 pumpkin seeds (bought in village). later will plant nandolo at the end of all ridges, as a fence around field, will buy her fertilizer on Monday, shares coupon with Hilda. Found money through her son who did ganyu in [small crossroads market], will mix the 2 types, if she had the whole coupon to herself, it would be possible to apply the types separately, everywhere twice. But now has to mix them to have enough for the whole field. In morning ate phala, for lunch nsima with nandolo plus mango and for dinner nsima with nandolo, actually mango all through out the day. Has now started buying maize for food, kept last bit of her own harvest for planting.

Hilda had just come from the field, when we passed by earlier found only her husband, telling wife was at field. Planted (not finished yet) 3 maize seeds (some kept, some bought with 3 pumpkin seeds (kept). At end of each ridge (kept) nandolo seeds, and mseula separately, 2 seeds per phando. Will also plant hybrid maize (2/phando) because field is not big enough. Last yr people also received 5kg of hybrid maize seed, which would normally cost 400mk, shares coupon with Dora, found money through MASAF, will mix because otherwise not enough. Yesterday ate mango in morning, nsima with matemba for lunch and dinner, and at 4pm mango. Today will find some leaves from bush for ndiwo.

Evelin Tunga is also taking wings from the same zirombo. Has started planting, but not finished: 3 maize + 2 nandolo + 2 pumpkin seeds (all kept + received from friends) in 1 phando. Bought
fertilizer, sharing with someone from her church. Found money through ganyu. Will apply the types together, doesn’t know why, sees everybody around her do like that, will not be enough otherwise she then says. Ate yesterday mango in morning, nsima + nandolo for lunch but no dinner by lack of ndiwo. Today will eat the zirimbo as ndiwo. Says she has not been proposed since husband divorced in 2006 (sanabwere). Wouldn’t want get married either, still remembering the bad behaviour of his relatives who came to take all their properties after he died. The advantage of being alone is that: no one is commanding her; “palibe wina amanidizwa kuti chitani izi”. Disadvantage is that: she has to do ganyu alone, and if she would do a BS no husband to help her. Have you finished asking questions now, she asks me, or will you keep coming back? Ah! I will be coming and coming! Told her already before that she should feel free to come and ask me everything she wants to know too, which Livia did, but she hasn’t. Then she asked Gertrude price of knitted shoes, Gertrude said she can also come to us and make them herself, instead of just staying (home). Giggles a lot, nice girl, beautiful young woman, strange if it is true that she has not been proposed, light shinned. Gertrude says people don’t like light skin, very dark neither, in between.

0960 Molly finished planting today, together with husband: 3 (kept) chimanga seeds + ½ nandolo + (kept) pumpkin + khobwe (bought at [nearest tradingcenter] ) all mixed, will now start making ridges for cotton and hybrid maize. [Molly] Bought fertilizer with money from her new tomato BS. Will apply the 2 types of fertilizer mixed, for it to be enough for whole field. Ate yesterday mango in morning, for lunch and dinner nsima with masamba.

0961 Molly Started her tomato BS in October last month. She decided, husband gave money and goes weekly to Ntcheu on bike to buy 1500mk of tomatoes, sells in about a week, 300mk profit. Wanted to start because sometimes people pass by selling things but she can’t be moving up and down to husband at grocery to ask some money, up until now only used profit to buy fertilizer. husband’s income they keep, sells at grocery and other days at home (nice small coffee table at veranda with piles of tomatoes). Sells much more at grocery but today went to chigayo, then worked on the field and is now too tired to go to grocery.

0962 Mother of chief Mudzi B planted at lunch hour. After lunch, quarter to 4, husband of GVH also planting again.

0963 Jeneti we found coming back from field with firewood at 4pm, started planting but hasn’t finished; 4 maize seeds, in mapando also maungu, and planted also khobwe, all kept seeds. Will later plant nandolo, and elsewhere cotton + mseula together because the cotton chemicals also help against mseula diseases. Jeneti Bought 1 bag of fertilizer, sharing with Tumanene, with money she found through selling maize. Tumanene has the 2kg (TWO) of hybrid maize that came with the fertilizer, will give Anne later, if the fertilizer is wochepa, apply mix, applying when maize is knee high. Ate yesterday mango in morning, for lunch and dinner nsima with khobwe and masamba. Nsima still from own harvest, masamba bought at Balaka where she went to hospital.

0964 Auleria (daughter of Thandizo) started planting today; 3 maize seeds + 3 pumpkin seeds in 1 phando. Nandolo (3/phando) at end of ridges (because big roots can destroy maize). Bought all these seeds in past, since then has kept then each yr, will later also plant tomato (kept seeds). [Auleria] Bought fertilizer, like mother [Thandizo] she mysteriously says she sold ‘something’ in order to find money. When I ask specifically whether she found it through her zigumu/zitumbuwa BS, she said
no, will apply the fertilizer mixed (to make it enough for 1 acre) when they are knee high (touching knees). Yesterday only ate mango in morning and masana, nothing in evening because ndiwo is lacking. When I said that other people go into bush to find masamba or zirombo, she laughs, says she doesn’t eat zirombo, one yr many people got sores in their stomch because of them, but today at least she ate nsima with pumpkin leaves. Some relatives, boys, had been doing ganyu and brought this back.

Esnart planted 3 local maize seeds (bought) + 3 pumpkin (kept) + 2 mphonda (kept, type of pumpkin) together in 1 phando, and 3 nandolo/phando separately (bought). Will later plant g/nuts + nzama if she finds money to buy seeds. [Esnart] Bought fertilizer with money that her husband sent, shared coupon with Mphatso, daughter of Rosemary, who hasn’t bought her fertilizer yet, so they haven’t received the 2kg maize seeds. Will share the fertilizer when maize is knee high. Applies separately the 2 types of fertilizer; 1 at knee level, other when higher. She has a small field, half a bag of each variety will be enough for whole field. Yesterday ate mango in morning, and nsima with nandolo for lunch and dinner. Nsim s maize bought.

Hb [of Esnart] left to SA in 2004, came back in Oct 2006 till Jan 2007, and says he will be coming back again soon, temporarily, but hasn’t told her for how long. Says now she is born in another village in Balaka not Mudzi B as said during interviews (which corresponds better to her saying that people steal from her here because she is not from here). Gertrude apologized for all our questions, Esnart said: Ah no, it is your job.

Elube was sitting under tree infront of her house with Lovely, some children and bachelor man in chair. Another young man was in the bafa, telling me I was very welcome in English, everybody laughed. Lovely was playing bawo. They felt free to talk to me. Bachelor asked where I was from + what research was about, disappointed that I was especially interested in women, he would have liked to tell me about the problems of his bicycle.

Elube started planting (saw her in her field at 1pm, took picture): hybrid maize (2 per phando), and g/nuts (1/ph). Local maize (3) + nandolo (3) + pumpkin (2) all together in 1 phando. Not finished yet, will later also plant cotton at her field at Misowali and mseula. All seeds she just bought at Balaka, ate them because ndiwo was lacking. [Elube] Went for ganyu to find the money. Bought 1 bag of fertilizer, sharing with daughter-in-law Fatima. Borrowed money from Lovely, will pay back after doing ganyu, says she received nothing from her brother coming back from SA, not 1 tambala, nor from her son, are they fighting? No. Not even soap, she kept repeating, “olo sopo”. Yesterday ate only mango, today too, does look skinny and underfed, but Fatima claims that magret received money and at least a blanket from SA, strange.

Lovely then said we could interview her too while there, has planted local maize (kept, ¾) + 2/3 pumpkin seeds (kept) in 1 phando. Nandolo (3, kept) at end of ridges. Mtedza wofira = (67, bought at Balaka, are early maturing + high yielding, 1/phando. But also will plant chalimbana, just following what parents are doing, + cotton, mseula, hybrid maize and sweet potato. [Lovely] Sold maize to buy fertilizer, sharing coupon with sister Blessings. Will also buy another bag of fertilizer and apply the types separately because the soil is not fertile here, and will have enough for whole field. People including her, first plant local maize before hybrid, because hybrid is early maturing, while local needs more rain. Yesterday ate mango in morning, nsima with masamba from tchire (bush) for lunch.
and phala for dinner because lacking ndiwo. [Lovely] Did not receive anything from husband via magrets’s brother because he left without saying goodbye to husband, but will receive in December, when Esnart’s husband comes.

Innocent sat in front of Jasmine's house with youngest child and Dorica who was knitting. Planted maize, pumpkin, nandolo mseula, mawere and mtedza at mother’s field. At her field not planted yet, not today because Jasmine went to [small crossroads market] to sell zigumu & bread. Waiting for mother to do work quick together, will maize, nandolo, cotton, tomatoes and chitowe (to put in ndiwo like g/nuts). No pumpkins because thieves tend to steal from her field. Still has to buy maize and nandolo seeds. Will borrow money from father because has to plant soon. Will buy at Magda, has not bought fertilizer yet, sharing coupon with mother. Has no money, zili kutali. Will borrow money to buy fertilizer. Plans to apply the fertilizer separately, the first one half way, to make it grow quickly, second one to get big cobs. Yesterday ate nothing in morning, mango at noon, nsima with pumpkin leaves in evening, together with parents. Mother bought the leaves from someone passing by.

Gertrude went around to ask if we can borrow bicycles to go to [nearest tradingcenter], because of my blisters. Bike of Innocent’s father is being used by son for BS, will be back on Saturday. GVH said bike is not her’s and will some payment for it. Dorica also said it is difficult to borrow a bike without paying something for it, told about someone in village who has bike for BS, rents out for 70mk going, 70mk returning. Will ask and come to tell us later. Gertrude told GVH we are just asking people what they are planting, afraid that she would get angry again.

Thandizo has 2 granddaughters, spending their holiday from secondary school with her. One stays with relatives in Blantyre, other in K. village, going to school at [large commercial estate]. Strange to come to place where food is lacking, would they have brought anything to reduce pressure on grandmother’s HH at least, two full grown extra eaters?

Tinenenji was also knitting when we came to interview Auleria. When asked whether she has planted already, said she also has no field. They will just do BS and buy their food, yeah right. Probably just didn’t feel like answering my questions.

Not getting into the friend relationships that I had in guatemala, not at all, mainly because of language, all chatting goes to Gertrude. And maybe people feel that I’d rather not be here.

When asking people what they ate yesterday, they all first have to laugh. Then say “nsima” or “nothing” (and chief Mudzi B said phala). Have to ask specifically what they ate in morning, masana and madzulo, and what kind of ndiwo they ate with their nsima. Lack of ndiwo is much bigger problem than lack of maize, it seems. Only few said they didn’t ate nsima: chief Mudzi B ate phala because lacking ndiwo, Elube says she only ate mangos, but I have difficulty believing her; her own brother just came from SA, where her son also works and she claims she did not receive anything while DIL Fatima told Gertrude that Elube received a blanket, and me that only Elube received money, and not themselves (while Innocent had said to Gertrude that Fatima told her she was happy because she received some money from SA), Auleria said she only ate mangos yesterday, while the mother with whom she lives said she ate nsima with nandolo twice yesterday. But Aurelia did say that at least
today she ate nsima because related boys brought pumpkin leaves after doing ganyu. I must ask “why” next time someone tells me she doesn’t eat nsima, may be Aurelia was selling her zigumu somewhere but although she said in interview she had stopped now to be working on her land.

Gertrude asked grandson GVH to build a small fence around veggie garden, which he will do in exchange for bottle bag she crocheted for him. I asked her whether we cannot do it ourselves; we could try if we had tree, she answered. She has seen her mother make a new fence every year, even though it is obviously a man’s job. Indeed, she would work on the fence mainly at dawn, to avoid the many comments from men passing by, asking her whether she wanted to deprive them of their tasks/jobs/responsibilities, complaining. She would reply that she has no husband, and no money to pay for one to do it for her, so they shouldn’t be complaining. Gertrude had boiled mangos for breakfast, and said verheugd that they were very good, just like pumpkin, will fill stomach just like pumpkin.

Nov 21 Friday.

Grandson of GVH came in dark to say that he won’t be needing his bike so we can borrow without problem. Don’t even have to pay, it’s his, so he can decide. If GVH asks, we should just tell her that; that is between us and him, very kind. Dorica came to say that husband of Tinenenji is indeed willing to take one of us there for 70mk, so we left after breakfast, at about 7am. On bike to [nearest tradingcenter] is not too far at all. Passed by Eveles’s husband to ask if he still have that bike he made himself from all different parts. Unfortunately sold already in Balaka. I liked that one, but he is making a new one now, says it will be ready by Sunday (saw him go to [nearest tradingcenter] on our way back. Costs 2500mk, but get discount! He answered when we were about to leave, said it was beautiful to see me on bike. On way back also Fatima shouted surprised that she didn’t know I could cycle. Then for coming 2 months Gertrude has a bike, can do some more interviews, and I can order other bike to be ready in Feb, unless we don’t stay here. Well, should at least partly stay here, to follow up on all lives here. Where can we bike to? [nearest tradingcenter], maybe Balaka, Liwawadzi, lake. Yes, definitely, I will increase our radius substantially, for only 40 Euro per bike!, and it would help Eveles’s HH a lot, I am sure.

Instead of more rain, it is getting hot again, worrisome. Last rains in afternoon of 19th, and no sign of any coming now.

On way to [nearest tradingcenter] saw Thokozani + husband planting! On field near Eveles.

In [nearest tradingcenter] first went to hospital, spoke to very young officer in charge. Wanted to see identification, was satisfied when showed him my business card. Introduced me to Mr Mavuto, the HIV/AIDS counsellor who took us to his office. Had a soft carton paper binder keeping his records together. VCT is available since 2007 at [nearest tradingcenter] hospital. Staff is trained by Goal Malawi, saw tables carried name of this org. testing kits come from the ministry of health. In the past quarter year, July +/- Sept 2008 657 people have been tested here: 72 men, 120 non-pregnant women 465 pregnant women. He said that all pregnant women get tested and are willing to hear their results immediately.
Of the 72 men, 17 were found positive (+_ 25%!), of the 120 non-pregnant women, 26 were positive (+_ 20%) and of the 465 pregnant women 53 were positive (+_ 12%). For receiving ARV’s people have to go to Balaka, other nearby VCT centres are at XXX, [large commercial estate] and XXX. To those interested both male and female, condoms are distributed. Men always choose male condoms and only some women choose female condoms. Keeps record of the date, sex, age, village of those who take condoms, and how many they request (5/10/20/40), but has not aggregated these data. I saw that some days none, other days a few people take them, both men and women. A nurse Ms Joshua joined us and told us that the birth control options offered are injections (every 3 months), pills (give for 3 months) and condoms (each month 20). Something else will start, a nurse is now being trained for it, but doesn’t remember the name, gestures an injection in elbow. Says yes when I ask whether it is an implant, but doesn’t sound sure. Injections are preferred by most client, either because they are afraid to be forgetting a pill, other say that their husbands don’t allow and like this he can’t find out. All these are free of charge. Says that most babies are born in Aug - Oct and Dec - March, meaning most baby’s are made Nov - Jan and March - June, indeed what I expected! In hunger season + cotton selling season. Will need real numbers though people can come to [nearest tradingcenter] hospital with all their complaints, whatever cannot be solved here, is send to Balaka.

Waiting rooms are just outside spaces with cement benches and roof, very publicly visible. Here at least this hospital had it’s own compound, but the clinic at C. village was just beside road, at some small distance, but still, could have made open wall to waiting room on one of the three other sides not facing the road.

Bike had no lock, just placed somewhere against wall, all bikes look alike, none locked. While interviewing BS women/women with own income, we take the bike all the time, putting it at a place where we can keep an eye on it. In the market, quite a hassle. If indeed I want to have own bike, then at least with a lock so we can just leave it somewhere. Bike taxi much cheaper of course though, paid 70mk going (down hill), go coming back for 1600mk one can make many bike taxi trips.

Asked nurse Ms Joshua whether we could interview her one day, being a woman with own income. She gave us her telephone 094820XX.

First market women to be interviewed was sitting down beside road with hips of tomatoes, unions and pumpkin seeds. Saw some gray hairs under her head cover, but still looked good, fat. Agreed to be interviewed, people gather around us while talking, we sat next to her on the ground. Bcoz of loud noise from shop behind us, did not use voice recorder.

Chabwinja (47) from [nearest tradingcenter], selling tomatoes, onions and pumpkin seeds. At other times also sells beans and cabbage. This is 5th year of doing BS, her husband had told her to start because of “mavutu”, they worked on the field but without much benefit. Found starting capital when they sold maize after bumper harvest. [BS woman [nearest tradingcenter] ] Sometimes takes loans from concern universal to continue her BS, has been selling the same merchandise from beginning: tomato, nyemba, cabbage, because they bring in enough profit (kupindula). Husband buys once a week at Ntcheu, by car, and then she sell everyday at [nearest tradingcenter]. Buying for 8000mk, making 1500mk-2000mk profit (most women say first their highest profit, then lowest, this 2000-1500mk). Discuss with husband what to use profit for; food for the children, school fees. Can’t remember when she married, but is first have 8 children, together cultivate local + hybrid maize and cotton. Sometimes sell some of their maize, sometimes do anyyu,
and hire when they have enough money. Husband just stays, but helps in BS, usually he is the one who goes to buy in Ntcheu district. Say with 12 people in HH: husband + 8 kids + 2 grandchildren. She has not been to school, because parents were poor, couldn’t afford school fees. IMPACTS OF BS on life: before she didn’t have livestock, now has 2 goats, now are able to eat what they want, now have enough ziwiya, sees no disadvantages to running a BS. Says that only those who have problems start BS. Others may have the same problems but think they are not able to start a BS, cannot manage.
Then we went into market: small streets of counter shops, and women sitting on porches selling cakes, breads, mandasi, chigumu. Approached women selling mandasi; Akolija (31) from [nearest tradingcenter], only sells mandasi, started last September, she decided because ‘ndiwo, basi’, just because ndiwo was lacking at home, because she had only little money to start with (“kuchepa kwa mpamba”). She chose mandasi, since that needs little investment money. She just took the money that her husband had given her to buy ndiwo and instead bought ingredients for mandasi. Makes fresh mandasi 2 x per day, because she doesn’t have enough money to make many at once. Buys ingredients for 450mk, making 100 MK profit, thus 200mk per day, which she uses to buy ndiwo, keeping and spending the money herself. Who ever comes early can choose where to sit, sits at different spot each day. Married in 1995, now first marriage, gave birth to 5 kids between 1997 - 2006, all alive. Stays in HH with 7 (husband+5kids). Found also income through husband’s salary as a teacher. Farm only for food, no cash crops, don’t do, but hire ganyu. Left school in form 2 because of school fees. Impact on life: “ndalama sizikusowa za ndiwo” [money is not lacking for relish]. Disadvantage is that, sometimes people don’t buy much, then she can just buy some ndiwo but no new ingredients. Then she borrows at shop tp start again, buy ingredients for new mandasi. The type of women that start BSs have “mavuto pakhomo” [problems at home]. Women wish to buy something think of starting a BS to be able to buy that. Knows FINCA, concern universal, Rural finance as org’s that give out loans. Took a loan from FINCA once for a tomato BS, but doesn’t want what anymore, means you can’t eat, you are just paying back the loan. What other type of BS done before?

Continued bit deeper into market, where in between the brick & cement grocery shops stand wooden structures where men and women sell masamba, eggplant, thelere, dried fish, tomato, beans, g/nuts etc. I wanted to interview a woman working in one of the shops, but could first only find Maria, daughter of Alinafe, who indeed confirmed that in most other shops boys were working. Eventually did find 1 woman, in a very small, scarcely stocked shop with goose wife separating her from customers. In goose wire a hole at head light + head size. Iron sheet stocked with soap, Vaseline, batteries, sewing threads, women underwear, some dresses for baby girls, razor, tea, washing powder in small quantities, blades, painkillers, salt and plastic bags.

Alexa was operating the shop, which is hers; since last year. 35 yrs old, from D. village. husband decided she should be running a shop here at [nearest tradingcenter]. They had sold cotton and used money to start, because of “umphawi”. Hasn’t run any other BS before, this is first. husband chose her BS should be a shop because it would give more profit than other types of BSs last year the shop was well stocked, but this year things have become expensive, and they are not able to stock it as well as before. husband goes to Balaka once a month to buy new merchandise, after asking her what is needed at the shop. She goes to the shop everyday of the week, opening at 8am because of distance, until 5pm. Doesn’t know profit, but makes about 100mk, per day, sometimes 200mk. Then buys ndiwo (answers very much time bound!) and goes home.
Married in 1989, now first marriage, but was pregnant once before marrying this man, at school (1986), but the boy denied the child was his. It died just after birth (1988). Just stayed with parents in Blantyre. Current husband was also there, staying with his sister, but from Utale. He proposed marriage to her, she doubted for 2 months, remembering the behaviour of her boyfriend cheating her, saying their baby was not his, but was lacking soap, so decided eventually to agree, to get the things she needed. They are staying well together, have no problems, live in HH with 9: husband+Wife+7 kids. Did tell proposer about the first pregnancy, this yr they have rented a field to grow cotton, to continue BS here. She doesn’t do ganyu, because always working at shop. husband currently works as a guard at a home in [large commercial estate]. He sells in the shop when she is ill, sometimes works on their field.

Impact on life: is now able to buy ndiwo and food. Last yr made a lot of money, this yr BS not going so well. Bought maize, clothes with money of BS last yr, have radio and iron sheets, sleep on mat, sees no disadvantages to running a BS, is now able to buy what she wants, although it is not enough. Mentions Concern, and Rural Finance as org’s that give out loans, but has never taken a loan because she is not making enough profit to be paying back. In D. village their neighbour already has such a shop, therefore couldn’t build one there. Is doing a bit better than her but in village few people buy things, go to [nearest tradingcenter] for that.

Giradi (31) from C. village looks poor (no fat, skin condition, hair, clothes)and sells masamba, just like 3 other women in the shades near her. Started last yr, always masamba but different kinds. Today she sells 3 leaves for 5mk, started because of “kuvutika”, failing to take care of her children. She decided but discussed with her husband. First started with mandasi, but when she felt they didn’t bring her enough profit, she switched to masamba because more people buy these, buys at Luwawadzi, goes there every morning except Sunday (then goes to church). Wakes up at 4am, arriving at [nearest tradingcenter] between 8 and 9, depending on the number of people buying at Luwawadzi. Spends 300 or 400mk buying, selling for over 600mk. These days uses her profit to buy food, and keeps for buying again the next day. Always sells at [nearest tradingcenter], married in 1988 until now is first marriage. Has 6 kids, from 1990-2006, stays in HH with 6; husband+W+4 kids. Other income sources are cotton and husband runs a bike taxi BS. Don’t do or hire ganyu, left school in std 6 because lack of school fees. Impact on life is that before they had to do ganyu, but not anymore, and now are at least able to eat everyday. Before she just stayed at home, doing ganyu, cooking, sometimes doesn’t make profit, then her husband helps with bike taxi money. Some people “amasowa chithandizo pakhomo, but have a husband who doesn’t bring enough money, yet don’t think of starting a BS, don’t know the benefits of BS, while when doing a BS one can find what you want, says you can see from the appearance of a woman whether she runs a BS or not: her body and clothes are well washed with soap, put on lotion. Mentions CIUMU and concern as org’s giving out loans, but is afraid of herself to take a loan (“mantha” [fear]), she just answered to “why?”). afraid that she won’t be making enough profit, and then they will even come at home and take all the profit she has.

Gertrude would like to buy mawere to make thobwa, and we ask the selling woman whether we can interview her. But will I really come back to give her picture? She asks, hesitating, until young man selling dried fish next to her, who Gertrude identifies as the father of Livia’s last born, confirms that I really always come back with the pictures. Alimani (34) from A. village is doing well, has many lits of a dengu (woven grass) in front of her, with mtedza, nyemba, nandolo, khobwe, mawere, colorant, pumpkin seeds, also hips of tomato, potato and onions. At other times also sells thelere (okra), mseula
and nzama. Started in 1997 after her husband died. Did ganyu to find money to start BS with, started with masamba first, because “ndalama zinali zochepa” [too little money]. Later changed to cabbage which she bought at Ntcheu after which she started to make more profit which led to her changing to all these legumes. This season especially people buy a lot of these for planting, but she sells then all year through. For her masamba BS she had to walk to buy then, but now makes enough money to take transport to Ntcheu. Goes once a week, buying for app 10.000mk + 1200mk transport costs. Sells everyday at [nearest tradingcenter], making about 2000mk profit per week, which she uses to buy ndiwo, sugar, clothes for kids.

First marriage from 1988-1996, husband died, married again in 2000-now, because of “mavutu”. Although she was doing BS, she didn’t make enough money to sufficiently feed her children. She didn’t know whether this man would be satisfactorily providing, but maybe, he helps indeed, but gives her money when there is nothing at home. Sometimes he goes to Ntcheu to buy merchandise for her, sometimes gives her money if she lacks to continue her BS. Stays with 8 in HH: husband + W + 5 kids + in-law. husband also earns money, as a teacher, also do ganyu. Stopped school in std 5, when parents died. Impact of BS on life is that: now they are able to eat and buy clothes. Disadvantage is that there is no one at home to take care of the house, has never taken a loan and doesn’t know how to describe the type of women that start BS.

Livia and Chisoni, came to knit, Chisoni said that she hadn’t come for a while because people [Ada] had been teasing her, talking + singing about her here and at borehole. At borehole they had discouraged her saying she can manage to knit, but now she decided to not just stay at home, wants to learn to make some decorations for in the house, so that when her husband comes back (saying “mwamuna wanga”, not his name) from SA, he will see some changes in the house. And the people who teased her have stopped coming, are now just staying at home. Livia told that she also was teased for coming here, at the borehole. Gossips about that she is in chibwenzi with a policeman, who may come to destroy our house while she is nicely chatting with Gertrude. Said she just let them be, and continued coming here, now the talking has stopped. She encouraged Chisoni to do the same, otherwise later she would have to come to Livia if she wants something knitted, and Livia will charge a lot for it! Livia asked Chisoni why she wasn’t pregnant yet. Chisoni answered that she is afraid to be pregnant alone, so waits until he is here for sometime. Livia also asked how they paid for his passport, C answered that his elder brother sent money for it. Chisoni was wearing nice shiny blue slippers with decortions, bought them at 650mk in Balaka when her husband sent money from SA.

When we went out of the market, saw a woman enter “sizowona restaurant”, next to a man with a scale and maize. Followed the woman into the restaurant and found there another woman cutting leaves, the owner.

Anglesi (34) from [nearest tradingcenter]. She started this tearoom and restaurant last June, a decision from husband who left to SA last year, because he may not always be able to send money sufficient for her to take care of her HH of 8 (6 children + her mother). He also choose the type of BS she should run and sent her the money to start with. Two of her children help her in the restaurant, which is open everyday from 6am to 7pm. Said about reason for starting: “ndimavutika kwambiri chifukwa amuna angawo ali kutali” “ali kuti? “kunja” - over there, outside = South Africa. “Iwowo anagani za kumene liko Poona (seeing) kuti zina zisamawavutitse (not to be concerned with) chifukwa pena (sometimes) samatumiza ndalama mwamsanga, chifukwa chake anaganiza kuti ndipange gainiyi kuti ndizipeza pang’ono
I was having a lot of problems because my husband is far away [South Africa]. He thought of this plan, because he cannot always send money, therefore he thought that I should be doing this business, so that I find money bit by bit. Rent of the restaurant (half the space is his), costs 750mk/month. “ndimawina 500/600mk” = profit selling just tea and nsima (although the menu also said “pisi ya buledi” = piece of bread, she sent one male customer away to find himself whatever he wanted to eat with his tea while she would be preparing his tea). A painted menu on the wall saying: tea wamkaka 50mk, tea wopanda mkaka 15mk, extra mkaka 40mk, pisi ya buledi 20mk, nsima ya nyama ya nkhu, mpunga wa nyama ya nkhu, extra ndiwo (last ones without prices). In cotton season she made up to 1000mk profit. With profit she buys food, clothes for the children, ndiwo, paraffin, hire ganyu. Married when she was 17, because pregnant for same reason left school in std 6, saying: “basi, ndinangochimwitsidwa”. I sinned (which was enough for Gertrude to understand that she was pregnant, others sometimes say: :ndinachimwitsidwa”. I was made to sin). Only income sources are her BS + the money that husband sends, kids sometimes do ganyu, especially around Christmas time they like to show off in new clothes, walking through the street, eating biscuits, drinking juice.

Impact on life is that; before she was having problems because husband was not always sending money! Gain yasintha bwanji moyo wanu? -Basi ndimaona kuti ndimavutika. Mumavutika? Eeya, kumadikirira kuti akati atumize amuna kunja, ndiye nthawi yapakatiyi umavutika kusowa sopo, kunchini, chakudya kaya ndiwo, kumazunikirira. Eeyetu, ndiye ndimangoona kuti, ayi bola, ndi bwino kumapanga chiyani gaini, kuti zina ndi zina ndisamavutikire etu. Kuti ndidzingodalira kunjira (waiting for husband outside/over there to say he would send, so in the meantime you have problems, lacking soap, to the maize mill, food or else ndiwo, having problems (kuzunzikira in dictionary; to be painstaking/to be persecuted for). Indeed, so I just saw that, no enough/at least/better, it’s good to be doing what, business. So that some of the things I should not be having problems (getting them), rather than just waiting by the road/where husband is.

Sees no disadvantages to running a BS, says about the type of women that start BS; “azimayi kukhala ovutika, ndiye amati akamaona mavuto amene akuwaona nyumbamo, ndiye amati akapeza ka ndalama, bola, ndingopanga chiyani gain kuti ndipeze chithandizo” so some women are living with problems, when they see their problems in the house, they say when they find a little money, better, I just start what, a BS, so that I find help/resources.

Mentions FINCA, concern and Rural finance as org’s giving out loans, hasn’t gone to get a loan because her husband sends her the money to continue her BS.

From the tearoom see group of mainly young women selling thobwa under a tree. Chiwende (23) from A. village is one of them. Makes thobwa, once a week, sells in about 2 days. Other days she sells maize from home. Is knitting while sitting on very small wooden bench behind her a washtub with half 1ltr bottle field with thobwa, standing in water to keep them (kind of cool). Before she sold zitumbuwa, started in 2001 because “ndimavutika” [I was having problems], decided :ndekha” [she by herself/alone]. Ndipo mpamba unali wosakwanira: and the money she had to invest was not enough/then sold some maize to start. Changed to thobwa last month because the fire and hot oil started to irritate her eyes. The maize they sell is bought just after harvest, with the money her husband earned by working for the HH census (may-June).

She buys some of this maize from her husband + other ingredients for 600mk, selling for 800/900mk. With her profit she buys ndiwo, soap, decides herself. Stopped school in form1 because she got pregnant in 2006, married the father, but the child died. Is still together with this man, got another child in 2008,
who is with agogo while she sells. Stays in HH with 4: husband + W + child + her younger sister. Selling maize and thobwa is currently their only sources of income. When they harvest enough g/nuts, sell those. Do no ganyu, hire neither, says that BS hasn’t changed her life, sikusintha. Advantages are that it is easy to find soap and ndiwo. Can’t think of disadvantages. About the type of women that start BS: ena akupanga kuvutika monga chakudya, ena pakhomo [some face problems like food]. Decided not to take loans, because cannot manage to follow their rules, may be her BS is not going well, then they may come and take the only plates you have in the house. Liked this girl, looked at me while answering, may have helped that she sat on the little bench (may be 15cm high) and I on ground.

Crossing the street found a woman frying potato chips, which I see mostly done by men. However, BS is her husband’s. next to her, under a red CELTEL umbrella and behind a red plastic table with celtel phone that looked like a landline but is actually a cellular phone, sat Mtendere (20) who rents a house in [nearest tradingcenter], where she goes to a private secondary school, but now during school break does BS for her parents who stay in their village. starts this telephone bureau last Friday, so only 1 week now. It’s just a try-out, if profits are satisfactory she will continue, otherwise just stop. Parents decided, are farmers who sell maize, masamba, onions. “azipeza chithandizo pakhomo” they have to find support for at home. Before Mtendere sold tomatoes and masamba for her parents, so far the profit from the telephone BS seems much less than selling veggie. There are 5 people doing the same BS in this street. Sits behind her telephone 6 days a week, on saturday goes to church. After a month she will give all her profit to her parents who will then give half of it back to her, with which she can buy materials for school. She isn’t married, but has a boyfriend who is also in form3, like her, but at a different school. He promised her they will marry later. Other sources of income for parents: mother’s sister sends money from Lilongwe, and Mtendere’s elder brother is a driver in Lilongwe, sometimes helps too. Says that those who have to buy their merchandise have problems selling, because those who grow their merchandise themselves can offer them cheaper, about the type of women that start BSs she says: some are intelligent and choose to start BS, ipv moving around with men to find money without being afraid of diseases. These women just think differently. One thinks: I washed my body, put on nice clothes, cannot sit by the side of the road [doing BS], getting dust on me each time a car passes, better move with men and find me one.

Mentions FINCA as org that gives loans, but her or parents have never taken, because it is difficult to pay back, when you fail they may come at home to take your child or property.

Saw Teleza, Emra and Rashida with daughter and granddaughter. Last one’s had been to hospital with baby. Saw Tumanene Usi on way to [nearest tradingcenter] in morning.

Earlier Ada told Gertrude that her mother Hilda had gone to [nearest tradingcenter] to buy fertilizer and also bought a knitted hat for Ada’s child for 80mk, while Ada had been learning to make exactly those hats herself! Mother could better have bought thread for same price, of which 2 hats could be made.

Check MDICP whether there are questions on women having independent income. What I am doing now a better be done large scale, in a survey, there is little qualitative about it.
Nov 22 Saturday

Thokozani passed by in morning with hoe, baby on back and plastic bag with small mangos. Planted half her field now, will do the other half when the rains start again, since we planted on Wednesday no rains anymore on Thursday and Friday, and today clear blue sky again. [Thokozani] Said her husband just shouted to her when she started about the coupon again; “am I not a grown up person? I know what I am doing, don’t ask me that!” Doesn’t know where he went today.

GVH working on land between our and Thokozani’s house with several young men. Making ridges and planting at the same time. At some distance her husband was clearing land. She [GVH] had given Thokozani a very small piece of her land there. Thokozani had complained, to give her at least all the ridges up to the small path to the borehole (which is still not very big at all), so she could at least be planting some maize. When GVH saw the few pumpkin plants that are growing on the bed that Gertrude made weeks ago, and has been watering twice a day ever since, she said she wanted some of them, probably used to be treated as e.g. Jasmine did when she just came to Mudzi B; sharing thobwa if she had made, giving GVH half the chicken if she slaughtered one). But Gertrude said she wanted to prepare them herself today, which is only the second time we are eating them since I came back from NL. Later Gertrude was taking the ‘veins’ of the plants, GVH passed by saying to me she was on her way to find vegetables. Gertrude did not respond.

Several people asked us, yesterday and this morning, whether we had been to town/hospital yesterday. Gertrude laughed about them using the word “town” for [nearest trading center], confirmed but gave no more details even that was obviously what they were after. Also when going somewhere, she usually answers vaguely when someone asks us where we are going “over there”, waving her hand in the direction that we are going. Not really fair, I am asking all sorts of questions to everybody, and she stays vague about our own abouts.

How do I get more insight in relationships with men of rural women who have own income? Should I ask other questions during interviews? Most enlightening cases: women with own income who stay with ‘bad’ husband, BS women who divorced ‘bad’ husband, women with income and children from several men/several husband, since starting BS/job, single mothers be able to decide herself how to spend the money she finds through selling crops.

Young daughter of Elube passes each morning after breakfast to the borehole with a basin full of dirty plates to be washed! Again showing that her claim that she is literally only eating mangos cannot be true. Elube herself passing around noon, selling chigumuzi. Daughter of son of Eveles comes early in morning to ask if we still want bike, price is 7700mk.

In NL: find literature on research question, how increased independent income for women impacts on their sexual behaviour rural Africa”, and write synopsis. Hopefully will give some inspiration for research methods, qualitative! And theoretical frameworks, and gaps/niches. So, first write 19th month paper about first findings, then literature review and master classes whenever. Maybe talk to some key persons’ on topic and way forward. Biggest problem is, however, that I don’t want to spend much
time here, while I know I should, how else can one do anthropological research. And if I would have been given this assignment 3 yrs ago, I would have been exhilarated, fits so well in all my interests. But that’s 3 yrs ago, before a long time full frustrations far away from ‘my world’ with my people - family friends. I can’t bring it up anymore.

Eh, that was fun, bola, thank you life, I indeed needed some uplifting. Passed by Hamra who was making rope from khonje. Had already roped the big leaf into long, thin lines and now tore them past a hoe, while pushing them against the hoe, with some cloth tied around her hand to protect the skin so that only the fibres remained, without drying these fibres can now be knitted (used word kuluka) into a string. She will do that tomorrow when coming back from the field. I want to do that too! Have been trying myself in Guatemala, for fun, now the real thing! She wants the rope so she can tie her goats to the tree when the maize germinates, afraid that people will point at her when goats start to eat their maize. Hopefully tomorrow will also be a good opportunity to ask her why she chooses to stay with her husband even though she complained so much about him.

Went to Eveles, always fun (said she is worried because I just walk and cycle around at midst of the day without protecting my skin, and that my stomach looks as if I don’t eat anything, therefore she keeps sending so much mangos. Joked that her grandchildren should just stop school because of them they are not eating now. Yesterday only mangos, today phala - to safe ufa for the days that the mangos will be finished. Eveles remembered that in 1949-48 people were eating the roots of banana trees, but not her, she was still young then, had worked hard on her field. Gertrude says that also in 1999-2000 people around her ate the roots of banana trees, making it into ufa, but gave people stomach aches). We agreed with her son that he will make 2 bikes for us, first a small one for Gertrude, and then end Jan, a big one for me. If we give some advance he can have the first one finished by Friday. Will make it blue, Gertrude was happy. And I guess they are happy too - ate the phala today also because they had found 10mk to buy
sugar - maybe hoping that I would indeed buy the bike and borrowing some oid. Anyway, it is very clear that they can use the money very well. Have fertilizer coupons, but not yet found money to buy - problem is / expenditure is on kids in school. But are at holiday now, will probably do ganyu in Dec, I guess? Assume, hope.

Then passed by Ntawanga’s to ask the mandatory questions. Chikondi (pregnant) was there too, and (Aisha, and Mrs Ntawanga’s brother who is married elsewhere. After asking my questions: Chikondi said she had wanted to come to our house to ask exactly the same questions: have you planted, what, do you have fertilizer, how will you find? So I answered, that we would probably going to Balaka to buy some fertilizer, a small packet. Chikondi said we should buy some from her, ok I said - not knowing whether she joked or not, pretended it to be, but might very well be true. Difficult, it will help her now, but not on longer term. And don’t you want to know what I ate yesterday? Yes, haha, what did you eat yesterday. In morning g/nuts, for lunch nsima and masamba, dinner only mango. You slept with only mango? I hope she believes it, should have explained that Gertrude does eat nsima in evening, but I am not used to eat something as heavy as nsima twice a day. Anyway, had a conversation in Chichewa, had real one-to-one contact!

Chikondi, daughter of Mrs Ntawanga, has not planted yet because she has no seeds, will beg from others. Didn’t harvest enough to keep because she didn’t have fertilizer last year. Now she did buy, borrowed money from her mother. Will apply the varieties mixed because 2 half bags are not enough for the whole field. Ate mango in morning yesterday, nsima with (home grown) nkhwani (pumpkin leaves) for lunch and in evening nsima with matemba, bought at [small crossroads market]. Nsima from bought maize. I didn’t want to ask [Chikondi] where she found the money, because an unfamiliar man was sitting with her on her veranda, may have embraced her, maybe he gave it.

Hamra already finished planting for now: maize (3) + 1/2 khobwe + 1/2 pumpkin seeds in 1 phando, all kept from last harvest. Will continue planting when the rains start again, ndandolo - but first has to buy seeds. Planted last yr but harvested very little. Hasn’t bought fertilizer, because GVH took her coupon as punishment for Hamra behaving rude, don’t come to settle the issue with Doris. Hamra did so because her older brother advised her not to go alone, wait for him to be on her side. Doesn’t know whether GVH is keeping the coupon or used it already. Now Hamra sold one of her goats and will buy here and there. Rashida and Mrs Musitafa have already agreed to sell her some plates full of fertilizer, for 600mk. Yesterday ate “nothing” in morning, just mango, for lunch nsima with nkhwani which she [Hamra] bought at 20mk from somebody passing by, and nothing in evening to save ufa for the days without mangos, will finish in December (how cru, many just rotting away now, cannot be kept). Although, I don’t know how many are indeed rotting away, maybe people really eat a lot. [Hamra] Asks whether I will be helping people to get fertilizer, says people have been saying this. Gertrude doesn’t even translates, just anwers that we are really just here for research.

Filimona, with nice golden ear hangers, sitting at Hamra’s veranda. Started but not finished planting maize (bought in village, because “njala - ate all”), ndandolo (kept), khobwe (bought, etc) and maungu (kept). Will still plant cotton and tomatoes. Bought fertilizer, sharing her coupon with chief Mudzi A. Says she [Filimona] did ganyu to find money for the fertilizer, but tries to keep her face from smiling shy while looking away. When I ask how she will apply the fertilizer, she answers: “we have only 1 bag [variety]”, doesn’t know whether she and chief will exchange their types or just apply 1 variety.
[Filimona] Yesterday ate mango in morning, nsima with matemba for lunch and dinner, matemba bought at grocery with ganyu money, and maize bought 8th of October at people in village with ganyu money.

1021 Alida (sleeping on mat behind home [+ 2pm]), started but not finished yet: maize, nandolo, pumpkin. Bought all of them because didn’t harvest much last season because she was ill. So she is worried now about the rains not having fallen for some days. Sold a goat at 3700mk to buy seeds, fertilizer and maize to eat now. Sharing coupon with granddaughter Florence, will mix the types, because doesn’t see the different at harvest whether applied separately or mixed. Will still plant her hybrid maize seeds. In morning [Alida] didn’t eat, because went to [nearest tradingcenter], for lunch eat nsima with nkhwani (bought in [nearest tradingcenter]), for dinner same. Maize bought last Friday at [nearest tradingcenter] (had sold goat), 900mk for about a ¼ 50kg bag, paid 30mk at chigayo to make it all into mgaiwa.

1022 Mrs Agnessi Musitafa (husband working behind shoe sewing machine, she sleeping on khonde at other side of home) started planting maize (kept), maungu (kept), mseula (bought), nandolo (bought) and g/nuts (kept), she says wofira, but the one she shows look more like chalimbana). Also has another g/nut variety, received from FIDP, which she will plant later, smaller but with the same flat top as chalimbana, more brownish in colour. Will also still plant cotton and hybrid maize. Bought fertilizer, didn’t share her coupon with anybody, so bought 2 bags. Found the money to buy through the shoe BS of husband. Yesterday ate (uncooked) mangos in morning, and at 3pm nsima with one of her chickens. Maize for the nsima her husband bought [shoe repair BS] this month; 15kg at 900mk from vendors passing through village. (100kg 1 person 1 yr).

1023 Saibi planted maize, maungu, mphonda, mseula, seeds she borrowed, will later pay back by weeding the field at Magda. Hasn’t finished planting yet, also wants to plant nandolo, but has no seeds yet. Wasn’t registered to receive a coupon, because there were not enough (but own mother is not sharing!). Will just work on the field without it, nothing to be done about it. [Saibi] Yesterday morning ate mango, for lunch nsima with ndiwo za mtchire (leaves from bush, wild) and nothing evening, because ufa was finished. [Saibi] Went to buy maize today, with the money from her BS, but stopped the BS now because she spent all her money. Will continue again after doing ganyu in December. Wasn’t making much profit lately anyway because the veggie were being sold at high prices.

1024 Melina (daughter-in-law of Eveles) started planting, but hasn’t finished: puts 3 maize seeds with 1 pumpkin seed per phando. Hasn’t planted all of them yet, waiting for the rains to come again. Kept the pumpkin seeds, begged the maize seeds from friends. Will plant more maize, g/nuts, mawere, mapira, cotton, mseula, khobwe and nandolo. Kept mawere seeds, all others received from friends. Received a coupon (not sharing) but haven’t found money yet. Will mix the 2 types because otherwise not enough for whole field. Yesterday ate mangos only, but today at least phala in the afternoon. Ufa still kept from before, but didn’t eat yesterday because had no sugar, while today found 10mk for sugar.

1025 Eveles planted on the 20th and 21st, hasn’t finished yet, now waiting for the rains to continue. Put 3 maize seeds, with nandolo, maungu, and khobwe seeds in 1 phando. In between planted mawere and g/nuts. She only kept mawere seeds, all the others received from “mbale”, a relative. Hadn’t kept any maize because her grandchildren at school came to take (couldn’t let grandchildren go hungry). Will still
plant g/nuts, mawere and rice at her dambo field at some distance. But some of her field near her house still needs to be ploughed to ridges, soil may too hard before rains started. Has a fertilizer coupon, sharing it with her oldest grandchild, but no money found to buy yet, I should phone my husband and tell him to buy it for her! Palibe chithandizo [there is no support]. She is helping to take care of 6 grandchildren, all in school, some secondary school, can’t manage to keep money for fertilizer. Jokes that those children (some of them sitting with us) should stop school. Also she only ate mangos yesterday, gave us mangos again. Hopes her son will buy rice for her to plant.

I asked Eveles and Melina what people eat here when the mangos finished. Melina answered that people will start buying cassava from D. village, where a lot of if is grown. They themselves will be harvesting their cassava beginning of January, planted last Jan. I asked why not more people here grow cassava themselves, she answered because of goats and thieves. Does D. village not face the same problems? No, because everybody grows cassava, no body stealing. Gertrude SAYS IN Lilongwe main problem is theft of maize, around time that first green maize can be harvested, car go around announcing that nobody should be selling and buying green maize, to reduce theft. Say people don’t eat zikhawo [boomwortel?], Melina didn’t even know what it is, but Gertrude did.

Agreed with son of Eveles that he will make us bicycles at 7700mk each. Look forward to them, assembled from old bike parts.

After finishing the interviews for today, Gertrude and I sat outside eating fresh mangos straight from the tree that Eveles gave us. Tinenenji and Fatima came knitting, but didn’t want - had enough of that variety. Pamela came shortly, on her way to a tree with another variety to eat these mangos, declined the variety we had to offer. Fatima was hungry, she said at one point, hadn’t eaten nsima because young daughter Faith, had thrown away the fist Fatima led already prepared. Left to eat that variety of mango from a tree on her field, but Gertrude thinks they all declined because ashamed to be eating here, people may talk. Gertrude indeed asked them, when they refused, whether mangos are like nsima, to be ashamed about when eating it elsewhere.

Leaving Eveles’s compound, Gertrude speculates that they may be opening their little grocery shop again in cotton selling season, when they and customers have money.

Florence had been eating when we first passed by. Has planted maize, ntedza, nandolo and maungu, all bought at [small crossroads market] for 1500mk. Didn’t harvest even enough for food, therefore not kept. Bought fertilizer, sharing coupon with grandmother Alida. Found money through her husbands BS in “fresh” = fresh fish. Will mix the types of fertilizer, because otherwise not enough. [Florence] Yesterday ate phala in morning, for lunch and dinner nsima and masamba. Bought the masamba at [small crossroads market], are eating their last harvested now, will last until 2 or 3 December, she knew precisely. Then will go for ganyu, will not be hard to find now that the rains have started. Didn’t seemed too worried or concerned at all about the lack of rainfall in the last days, was like this last yr too, she said, so people are used to it. Last year some had to replant 4 x! [Florence] borrowed seeds in exchange for ganyu later.

Tinenenji and Fatima talked about a hyena that often attacks, seems to stay at [large commercial estate], where
there are some bushes. People tried to kill it in various ways, but without success (e.g. poison in cow corps). Tinenenji said that maybe it is a woman, who changes into a hyena at night. They also discussed that Magda and husband they raised price of small plate of nandolo from 20 to 30 mk now.

Mrs Ntawanga, chatting with daughter Chikondi, Aisha and brother from elsewhere, bawo holes in earth in front of khonde. Have only planted cotton now, because were still looking for hybrid maize seeds. Found them finished in [nearest trading center], so will have to go to Balaka. Will not be planting local maize at all. Will plant nandolo, maungu, mtedza, mawere, khobwe, kept all seeds. Will start planting when rains come again. Bought fertilizer, shared coupon, will mix for it to be enough. [Ntawanga's] Yesterday ate mango for breakfast and lunch, nsima with fish for dinner. Fish from [nearest trading center] market, bought with ganyu money of husband, maize bought yesterday at Alma, 50kg at 3000 mk.

Nov 22 2008

Women are together with men for money/support/chitandizo/resources (see also birth statistics in combination with reasons that many women mentioned for accepting relationship proposals) – but ALSO for other reasons: to be normal/social respect; build a house; “secret thing” (sex). Also when they their own income, many (though not all) women want to get married, or stay with a man who had multiple wives. And also women without income sometimes divorce their husband! A husband taking more wives or girlfriends is a reason for divorce particularly because support then diminishes. HIV risk maybe especially among adolescent girls, those who say there is “ufulu” now, who ‘misbehave’ like Jane, dating numerous boys. After their money, according to elderly women. Not taking marriage serious anymore, get pregnant at young age, before being properly married. This is indeed the age group with highest infection incidence. At market I see such young women/girls selling too, maybe pay more attention to them in study. Girl with phone boot at [nearest trading center] said: “Some girls think ‘I have washed myself, pot in nice clothes, I cannot sit besides road now [to sell something], get dusty every time a car passes. Better move around, find myself a man…”

Nov 23 Sunday

At borehole people pointed at Ainesi’s husband coming out of Emra’s house. one woman said she saw him come out of the house very early every morning. Another woman said she sees him go in every evening. Ainesi is pregnant, but according to Gertrude he could still have sex with her [thus not necessarily reason to look for sex elsewhere]. Just because this one is a new one, Gertrude thinks. They were furthermore complaining about the rains that haven’t fallen since Wednesday afternoon. Most have stopped planting again [Nov 23].
Dorica, Tinenenji and one of their holidaying cousins passed by at 9:30 with hoes in their hands. So at least the cousin works on the field during her break here.

Rashida has been left by husband, he had gone to work on [large commercial estate], has finished there, and is now just staying, she said. Daughter interrupted: what are you ashamed for, just tell them that your marriage has ended. He decided, didn’t say why. She has maize seeds on a mphasa in the sun, had kept them in water overnight to speed up germination, but now that rains still haven’t come, decided to make ufa from them, still has other seeds too for planting. Already planted local maize (3) with 1/2 pumpkin and 2 nandolo seeds in a phando, and mseula (3) in a separate phando. For cotton, mawere, and hybrid maize she is now waiting for the rains. Got the seeds from Magda & husband, will weed in their field in exchange. Already bought 1 bag of fertilizer, but has the other part of the coupon with the required money, in the breast pocket of her blouse, showing it proudly, then carefully closed the button again. Says the other part is actually for Nelia, who has gone to her husbands village without coupon, one pays about 5000mk per bag of fertilizer. Found the money to buy through people who paid back money they had borrowed from her before. Say that nowadays coupons are expensive to buy, 3000mk. Will apply the types of fertilizer separately. Yesterday in morning ate cooked mango, for lunch and dinner nsima with masamba. Bought masamba at a vendor passing by, and maize for the nsima last Tuesday at [nearest trading center]: 320mk/5kg. Doris was cleaning masamba at khonde when we arrived, Rashida came back from the field. [A bit unclear, first said she bought 2 bags already, sharing with Nelia and will buy another. When I asked now she got this coupons, her story changed.]

Julia planted 3 maize + 3 nandolo + 2 pumpkin seeds per phando, and mseula (3) separately. Will still plant cotton, hybrid maize (1) (near house) and tomatoes. And khobwe she may still buy. All other seeds she kept from harvest, bought fertilizer, sharing her coupon with her mother Chenawe, will mix the types (kusakaniza). Borrowed money from her father/Chenawe’s husband to buy the fertilizer in exchange will do ganyu on their field (when we later asked Chenawe whether she bought fertilizer already, she said “we are just old people, where will we find money?” At least husband did MASAF, maybe Julia borrowed that money?) [Julia] Yesterday ate nothing in morning (no mango trees around her, sometimes finds mangos when she goes to the Njiko [pump] in Mudzi B. Gertrude says about 2-3 days per week the water tap at that side (in front of Magda’s house) is not working, then they all go to the borehole in Mudzi B), for lunch and dinner ate nsima with one of her own chickens. Bought the maize last week at vendors in [nearest trading center] at 500mk/kg. ADMARC is not selling yet, but in Balaka. First have to sell all fertilizer, and not all people can find money to buy their fertilizer, so it may take a while before ADMARC starts selling maize. They charge 55mk/kg, while at market 65mk/kg. and doesn’t know whether ADMARC will be offering low prices this year.

Chenawe still ill, looked weaker then before. Finished the pills that the hospital in [nearest trading center] had given her, hadn’t helped. The painkillers I gave helped a bit, child will come this afternoon to get some more. Her husband started planting on his field at his village. Haven’t bought fertilizer yet, maybe she will be going (dying), she said. Before people were able to make the rains come, especially the chiefs, she answers to my enquiry (we wanted to leave again, but she said we should ask whatever we want). But now they stopped doing it, the old ones who knew here died. They used to offer something like thobwa, and then when coming home they found the rains had started. In past there were no problems like this, that the rains would stop after people having planted. There were enough
rains and enough food.

Aisha, in her brand new home now, with iron sheet roof: planted 3 maize seeds + 1/2 nandolo + 1/2 pumpkin seeds per phando, all seeds kept from last harvest. Has finished, will not plant other crops. Has no g/nut seeds, she explains, and cotton is too difficult to do on her own [+no need because supporting ex-husband?]. Bought fertilizer, sharing coupon with someone from Mudzi A 2. will mix the types for it to be enough. I forgot to ask how she found the money to buy! [Aisha] Dann yesterday eat mango in morning, for lunch and dinner nsima with matemba. Matemba “some body gave her”, the maize for nsima :started buying now”, her ex-husband (father of the children) had bought for them in October, he is still coming (Gertrude also says she sees him there frequently), but not staying. When I say that it looks as if he still loves her, building her such a nice house, she explains it is just for the children, not because of her. He has promised he will take care of his children, not of her, but she doesn’t want to remarry, now she knows the problems of being pabanja. The advantage of being alone is that: she is free to do what she wants, no one telling her to do something for him first, when we left the man just arrived, one of the young boys, mango is in his hand, started crying because father hadn’t brought him mandasi.

Naima (with husband on khonde) started planting on 19th and has finished by now: local maize (bought in village), nandolo and pumpkin (both kept). Bought fertilizer with coupon she shares with Chikondi. Shit, I forgot again to ask where she found money! [Naima]Yesterday ate mango in morning, nsima with masamba for lunch and nothing in evening because lacking ndiwo. Bought the masamba, and also the maize, some days ago at [nearest tradingcenter].

Balakasi hasn’t finished planting yet, planted maize, nandolo and pumpkin (kept some, others bought). Will still plant g/nuts and cotton. Has a whole coupon for herself, but no money to buy. Will do ganyu when the rains start, will mix the varietie for it to be enough. [Balakasi] Yesterday morning ate mango, at noon she was not at home but children ate nsima (prepared by Esnart) in evening ate nothing because ndiwo was lacking, at other day they sometimes eat phala. But why not yesterday, and why did she get a whole coupon for herself?

Gertrude meets Pamela at the borehole, who points out a 7 yr old girl who she says is Grace’s daughter. Grace got pregnant while still at school (must have been 14 by then!) The girl now stays with Grace’s older sister in Blantyre, probably here for holiday, but mother is not here, nobody knows why she stays away so long, thinking she may have married again somewhere.

Gertrude asked Thokozani where her mother Rosemary is, I have been wanting to ask her what happened to her husband who we saw passing on the road one day, but not around her house for quite some time. Thokozani said that the man is ill, and staying somewhere else in Mudzi B. Rosemary is also staying there now to take care of him.

Magda planted 2 local maize seeds with 1 nandolo per phando, which she kept from last year, and some hybrid maize seeds (1/phando). Is now worried about the rains, she says, because people have been buying their seeds (would they have been so stupid to sell all of it, can’t imagine). Will still plant cotton and groundnuts, bought 2 bags of fertilizer, received a whole coupon, and will apply the
types separately. The first just after germination, the second 21 days later. Have no money to buy
more bags, “vuto la chuma”, [Magda] yesterday morning drunk thobwa, for lunc nsima with nandolo
(both own kept) and for dinner nsima with masamba, which their visiting daughter brought from
Balaka.

On way back passed by Hamra, who was just about to start making rope from the plant fibres she
prepared yesterday. Her sons were there to help her. First rolling 4 strings of fibre over leg, in such a
way that the strings are rolled separately as well as rolled into each other. That’s the beginning, then
after a bit simply start braiding like hair (vlechten). We left them to it to get camera at home,
and when we came back found Mrs Musitafa with daughters Florence and Saibi braiding the fibre
too, they wanted to learn to make that own rope too. They were saying that these days people in
Balaka and Liwonde are better off, while before people from there would come here to grow enough
maize. Now people are rather running away from here, when we left then, Florence joked that she
would come and eat with us, do so! Said Gertrude. I want meat! Florence said. Ah, you will have to
eat beans, doesn’t want beans, want meat or eggs.

Chenawe and Alida expressed their worries about the rains not falling, and loosing the seeds they
planted, others seem not stressed out at all. Like Florence said, people are used to it, last yr was like
this too. But he, Why would the seeds die? If they have not germinated yet, they can stay well for a
long period, I assume. They have been dried, can imagine that if they have germinated, some small
plant is already growing, that can die without moisture, but a seed not, I’d say.

Grandson of GVH came to bring a big bowl full of mangos, more and more. Gertrude said: “but not
enough space in our small stomachs, but cannot refuse them”. Will give some to child that comes to
pick painkillers for Esnart. Livia gave us mangos, Eveles, Lizzie. Pamela keeps saying we should
come to her tree and take some. A school boy from village kept some mangos for us, he shouted when
we passed the tree he was getting them from. Gertrude told him to put them under the tree, we would
come and fetch then when walking back home.

Went to Phingi who has offered Gertrude to use the sticks of the fence she just broke down for a fence
around our vegetable beds, to protect the young plants (if the rains come again any time soon) from
chicken and goats. Showed me the oven she is now making inside her kitchen, to be able to bake
more bread and zigumu. We also borrowed their machete (chikwanje) to cut the sticks in two, to have
more, since we don’t need a high fence. Grandson of GVH had agreed with Gertrude to make the
fence for us, for 50mk (or rather the bottle holder she closed for him + 10mk), but he hasn’t come to
do it. He will be ashamed, Gertrude thinks, when he sees we are now making it ourselves. While at
Phingi, she suddenly looked at her field behind her kitchen, seeing GVH taking firewood from,
stealing! (kuba), she whispered angrily to us, but didn’t do anything.

Daughter of Rosemary, Mphatso, is now married, or let’s say, living together with a man. Don’t know
if there has been any kind of ceremony. They first stayed in the house that Ainessi left behind, but
now built their own, exact same small, unburnt brick house with grass roof. Ainessi’s house now
empty again. In the time that we have been there, their compound grew from 2 to 4 houses (also
Thokozani & husband have their own house now there before stayed together in the tiny house of
Magda & in-law). Gertrude commented about Mphatso marrying: “in hunger season”. I wondered the
same, does this mean there is
an extra month to feed for Rosemary? Or may be the new couple will just be doing ganyu to buy their own maize? Actually, where does all the money come from to pay all the many people that will be doing kupalira for ganyu in the coming month? At least he has a bike, Gertrude added.

Gertrude talks of an old school mate who get married and lived in an expensive house, 2000 or 2500mk. At one point husband started sleeping somewhere else, leaving her to pay the high rent. She had not been working before, now started a tomato BS to manage, but it was not enough. Then she decided to go to the police, to call her husband to his responsibilities. The police indeed decided that he should either help her financially to pay their rent, or give her a letter that allows her to find another husband.

Got a text at 9:30pm from Marjolein, saying that Hazel become second in the big brother finale, just missing the big prize of 100,000 USD. Wow, that must be a big disappointment, she would have been settled for life (piad planned to buy/build houses to rent out). I hope the fame will bring her what she needs to progress in life. And I hope Malawi is proud of the good works and correct behaviour that she has shown in the house. Hope she will be a role model for at least some girls across Africa. That would already be a great life achievement. For now I am sure she is happy and relieved to finally go home - as I will be a week from now...

Nov 24 Monday

Dug holes around the veggie beds with the machete, put in the sticks/connected the sticks with smaller horizontal bricks, tying with a rope I had brought from Lilongwe. Put grass that has been blown from the roof of the small house next to ours against the wooden structure, and pick another horizontal branch against them to keep them up straight.

The airtime we bought in [nearest tradingcenter] costed 150mk per 100 units in stead of the normal 140mk. A small car (Volkswagen Golf) passed the marked selling the airtime to vendors.

Some of our maize seeds have germinated! Very few, but still surprising. May be the soil kept some moisture from the last (hard) rain on Wednesday afternoon. I dug a bit, and saw that also the beans have germinated, only that the sprout has not yet reach through the soil above it. Yesterday evening wind, lightning and far away thunder, but no rain. Nonetheless Jasmine and Innocent decided to start planting again, others still making ridges.

Naima found money to buy fertilizer through her husband doing ganyu. Mother Balakasi is not at home. I ask Naima whether she knows why Balakasi received full coupon, just luckily says Esnart, some others also received a whole one. So some are just lucky and others, like Saibi Musitafa, are just unlucky? I ask. Naima tells that also Suset (granddaughter of Kima) has not received a coupon (both young single mothers...), chief Mudzi A decided like this, the one who did not receive a coupon are those that do not actively participate in community development activities (chitukuko).
Aisha is inside her house when we come to ask her how she found money for fertilizer. We hear her (ex-)husband voice too inside. “so not really divorced,” says Gertrude when we walk a way a little later. It was also him who bought the fertilizer for her (anandigulira bamboo). When I asked whether she has ever done BS in her life, she said she has sold veggies, started because of problems, stopped because she got married.

Viola started planting, not finished yet. Local maize + nandolo + pumpkin, bought the seeds from Magda & husband for 800mk. Later they will still plant hybrid maize (“41”) and cotton (no g/nuts because “difficult to find seeds”). Bought fertilizer, sharing coupon with husband. Bought with the money he found through the road clearing project. (Viola says that people say it was not MASAF but another bungwe). They will mix the 2 types and apply it then on both their fields. husband grows hybrid maize only. [Viola] Yesterday morning ate phala, nothing for lunch to safe ufa (“things are difficult now” and for dinner nsima with eggs from own chicken. Maize for the nsima they bought last Thursday (buy bit by bit): 600mk, doesn’t know exactly how many kgs, sent boys to go and get it. At 52mk/kg. Viola has never done any BS: “basi mpamba palibe” [start up money was lacking] (and has husband who provides...).

Holy did not look healthy at all. Thin hair, swollen face, empty breasts with which she tried to feed her very small baby (too small for it’s age). Planted 2 hybrid maize seeds + 1 /2 nandolo + 1 pumpkin seed per phando, because “hybrid maize leaves enough space for other crops to grow”. Kept the nandolo and pumpkin seeds for last harvest. Bought most of the hybrid maize seeds (5 kg at Balaka for 1700mk), but it wasn’t enough for the whole field, so also planted some if the hybrid seeds she kept from last yr. later will still plant cotton and a small plot of local maize (“changa, ndimasungiira”). This yr will not grow pepper, because should have planted those in October, watering then by hand until rains start, but was pregnant/ in hospital by then. [Holy] Bought 2 bags of fertilizer, received a whole coupon because they would be able to afford 2 bags. Found money through selling maize. [Holy] Yesterday morning ate phala and mango, for lunch and dinner nsima with matemba. Nsima for own harvest, matemba from passing by vendors.

When we passed over compound of the Musitafa’s we saw mother knitting at khonde. Told Gertrude that she learned some patterns new from Innocent, who had learned them from Gertrude. So it is spreading now.

For several days already a radio is playing loudly at the compound of Elube. One battery costs 40mk, comments Gertrude, and they may be needing 3, is 120mk.

When back home Gertrude left to buy tomatoes, found some at Molly’s who decided to sell from home today because she has few left, will finish today or tomorrow. Now selling one for 10mk! And soon they will cost 20mk per piece. iiii, we stop buying.

In morning I had greeted the GVH back in chiyao. In afternoon chatted (minimally) a bit with Livia, or rather, I could understand some of the things she was saying to Gertrude, “he, building the fence, all alone?” I asked whether she had planted today; no maize still missing, money to buy too. Has got the hybrid seeds, but only wants to plant local, because ‘chotupa’ = higher yielding. Then I told her that Gertrude and I were talking about how people in the past used to wash (but Gertrude had to rephrase for Livia to
understand). Livia said the same as Gertrude had just been telling me, with okra leaves, leaving them to soak in water for a night, that water can now be used to wash with. But both have never done this themselves, but their mothers, they say. Why don’t people do that anymore? No! Now, there is soap, but those who don’t have money for soap? Rather just wash their bodies without soap, says Livia, maybe ashamed to be using thelere leaves, says Gertrude. We got to this topic because Gertrude was teaching me to make thobwa and chigumu, and was telling me that some people don’t add soda to the chigumu but make the soda in the “local way”, but putting ashes in a lichero (the grass woven lit of a dengu), pour water over it and use the water that drops through. But is difficult, says Gertrude, also because you have to know very well whether the wood of which the ashes are, are not a kind of medicine. Soda is also needed to cook thelere (only later do I understand that people mean the leaves of the okra plant and not so much the seed carrier). So far this also the local way is sometimes used. I asked about more old/local ways of doing things, Gertrude then told about how her mother used to make the hair of her daughters “big” (ontkroegen): putting cooking oil in hair and a sharp stone in the fire for 30-60 minutes, with stone slide over hair with pressure, but would smell! Also fire they could make with these stone, by rubbing them to each other. And maize would just be made in to mgaiaiwa in a mtondo, not to the maize mill. Thelere leaves for washing were available longer in past because longer rainy season, and afterwards people would keep them dried. Also pumpkin leaves for ndiwo, just leave them in sun for some days. Gertrude has never heard about drying mangos, (also not about making soap from ashes, something I have heard of) I should ask old women about this, and other traditional ways of doing HH chores. And next time that I am here try out some of these, especially the washing with thelere.

1069 Making thobwa: bring water almost to boil, add mgaiaiwa so that it becomes like phala, leave to boil for 10-15 minutes. Take off the fire, put in a basin, leave (without lit) for some minutes, then stir and leave for another hour. Add grounded mawere sprouts, leave (without lit) for a night, then boil for another 10 minutes the next morning and drink instead of tea.

1070 Chigumu: mix mgaiaiwa with salt, sugar, soda and water and pour the mix in a greased pot. Pat pot above glowing charcoal and put fire on the lit, leave for 30 minutes, while keeping the fire going on top of the pot. Those who don’t have oil, use sugar to keep cake from sticking to pot, and if no soda, make from ashes, as described above.

1071 Rains came around 3pm, at last, so people will continue planting tomorrow. We will see in a few days how many seeds have survived the drought, there were nothing germinated, a new seed will be put. Rain continued till about 8pm, part of the fence we made was blown down, rain entered my room through the 2 ½ brick opening, bringing in a lot of mud from the unburnt bricks it passed in window frame. Gertrude and I spent the afternoon knitting, others will just be gossiping, Gertrude answered when I asked what those who are not knitting do with such compulsory inside-house hours. Have nothing else to do and nothing else to talk about, so will gossip, if only I could be there, and understand what they are saying. Gertrude plans to hang a string on the veranda with on it the knit wear that she wants to sell. May be even go to [small crossroads market] or [nearest tradingcenter].

1072 Livia has just like mrs Agnessi Musitafa been participating in the tailoring training in Balaka, going there 3 days a week, but not now, break for planting. They are expecting to finish and receive a sewing machine in December. Livia already did tailoring before, but her brother took the machine
when he went to live somewhere else. This is also where Livia taught mrs Musitafa the knitting patterns that she herself had learned from Gertrude. Will just be tailoring here in village.

**Tuesday Nov 25**

Drizzling again, many people planting now. We planted 3 pumpkin seeds (when Innocent came to bring in morning on behalf of mother) + 2 maize + 2 mseula seeds (given by Jasmine on 19th). Gertrude had received 3 small maize cobs from a friend when she was in Lilongwe shortly in September, kept them for planting.

Gertrude over heard GVH talking with several people (while working on the field around our house) about news that the wife of the owner of our house is now pregnant by another man. The owner of our house told his mother, GVH, to go and collect his bicycle and sewing machine that are with this woman. But she refuses to give them, saying she has children from her now ex-husband, who will be using the bike and machine. Gertrude also overheard, while making ridges this morning), Livia telling grandson of Jasmine that she will sell her (only) goat to be able to buy fertilizer. Wants to sell it at 9000mk, the brother laughed at her, who will be buying in this season; “nthawi ino ndi ya mvula palibe amene angagule”- there is nobody buying in this season, people have to buy fertilizer themselves, hire ganyu, buy food. May be at 2000mk, but not at 9000mk, still, Livia thinks she will be able to find somebody. (Lovely’s husband had told her fro SA to buy a goat in this season, because prices would be low). Livia received the goat from her uncle, who told her to share with her sister in Mangochi after multiplying.

Drunk the thobwa we made yesterday, good one, healthy too, because of the sprouts, I think. Strange how tasteful, just maize and mawere, flies much attracted by it though, completely lost interest in mango juices! Gertrude told that when cholera breaks out, thobwa is prohibited at markets, just like other foods that attract flies (mangos, cooked food). Gertrude doesn’t know how to make masese beer, says it is just leaving thobwa to ferment. At her village in Dedza every Sunday masese was brewed, men and women, young and old would start drinking after church till 6pm, and dancing.

Rashida passed by on way to borehole, complaining to someone else that she had agreed with someone [mr Ntawanga] to build a house, and she would pay him 500mk at the end, but he never comes to continue what he started. (unburnt bricks, foundations are laid, some parts almost a meter high but most parts not).

Hamra also passed by to borehole, spotting a snake and asking Gertrude for a big stick from our firewood. On her way to give the stick, Gertrude saw another snake. Hamra smashed them both dead. Boys then came running quickly to see what was happening, and said that the head must be cut off otherwise it may still continue to multiply. Gertrude got ourknife and one of the boys cut off their heads.

The grandson of GVH that worked on field next to our house in past weeks this morning passed from somewhere else (direction from Mudzi A) with 2 bags of hybrid maize maize seeds. Gertrude
speculated that some people may be selling the hybrid seeds they received together with their fertilizer, eg Innocent, who says she will only be planting local maize.

1081 Jane in afternoon (4pm) coming to work on small plot on opposite of road again, says to Gertrude that in the morning it’s okey to work on her grandmother’s field, for her daily nsima, but in afternoon, that’s ganyu. Later a big discussion follows between Jane and GVH. B says the field is big, she should receive 800mk ipv 300mk. GVH says she is not a mzungu [white person] who can just pay 800mk, that her husband is ill, can’t sleep at night, keeps light on, which costs her paraffin. Jane is being helped by a friend and also the other (younger) granddaughter of GVH is helped by a friend (this g.daughter receives 200mk, being younger).

1082 Gertrude is getting prepared for the kupalira season: knitting baby shoes etc for people to be buying with their ganyu money.

1083 Grandson of GVH was today afternoon still working on field next to our house. Told Gertrude he will get 1000mk.

1084 For kupalira, people last yr got 20t per phando or 25t. Gertrude thinks 1 acre can be done in 25/3days (morning hours + late afternoon).

1085 From around 4pm till 8 rain again, not very hard, but at least long. While inside Gertrude told me her education had been free up to form 2, at the mission boarding school where her father had worked. Her mother used to teach girls there about knitting etc, and received assistance (financial, Gertrude at their boarding school) for it. Girls at the boarding school were not allowed to leave the compound, only on some Sunday’s to go to another church. Other Sunday’s praying in capel on compound, even holidays inside. Still some girls managed to sneak out at night and get pregnant. While in form 2 the Italian missionaries helping them so much died (car accident, I think she told me earlier) and mother decided to move back to her home village. if she would die, her children would not know where to go, have to know their home village. There a pastor related to mother was willing to pay school fees so Gertrude could continue her secondary education. But shortly after writing JSCE examinations the man died. An aunt in LL said Gertrude could stay with her, she would take care of her. But after a month Gertrude was still not going to school and decided to look for her own money. By fetching water for many houses/houses to be constructed, she earned her way through form 3 and 4, choose to go to a private school because those could be paid monthly, while gov schools per term, which she couldn’t manage, getting her salary monthly. Paid 650mk/month, other girls would come to school in boyfriend’s car, got pregnant, by now have several children. Gertrude was one of the only 2 to pass exAamilations. Says now, without me asking, she just didn’t consider doing BS at that time she was trying to find money for form 3 and 4. Could knit, but didn’t realize people could be buying that. Didn’t think about marrying either, was only focussed on finding ways to finish secondary schooling. When young had seen people go off to somewhere everyday in nice clothes, and her mother go to “meetings” sometimes, and was intrigued by what these people would do.

1086 Gertrude didn’t drink anything today, because water too cold!
Many people working on field this morning. Some still making ridges, others planting, chief Mudzi A was planting maize on a field on which he had already made ridges in May. Therefore ridges had become very hard, took some rain before it was soft enough to be able to plant. Last yr grew tomatoes on that field, will plant these this yr on a field at more distance. Saibi, with baby on back, was planting pink coloured cotton seeds, 5 to 7 per phando because grasshoppers destroy many, ondanks the mankhwala. After germination just take out the sprouts that are more than 5.

On our way back from Mudzi A 2, at 10am because many people not at home but at their fields) + 1 to Balaka, Sandala to Blantyre for funeral), selina, chief Mudzi A and GVH still planting. Some children busy taking zirombo from their holes, we stopped at chief Mudzi A’s field to ask him why people were selected to receive a whole coupon while others half or even none. Didn’t give clear answer, said that at registration everybody registered to receive a whole coupon. When they later found coupon were not enough, he asked everybody one by one whether they were willing to share (& advised every body to mix the types so as to apply on bigger field). Those who recewived a whole one were not selected for any specific reason, just lucky. When we stepped through some high grasses to reach back to the road, Gertrude spotted a big snake just near us, high in the grasses. Chief Mudzi A went to break off a big branch, but the snake disappeared in the grass. Chief said he will cut the grasses to a low level. Reaching home Levison was also killing a snake.

Victoria already planted fodya (this yr first timeoz it gets a higher price than cotton, will sell in Blantyre, send it with people who go there, few people grow tobacco here “because it takes a lot of work”. The crops are ready growing, so she has been working hard already to get to this stage before rains started) + local maize + nandolo + pumpkin + khobwe + nkhungudzu, all kept. Only tobacco and cotton seeds she acquired. Will plant her cotton tomorrow, and g/nuts later (also kept). [Victoria] Bought 3 bags of fertilizer, because also received the coupon of her mother, for the tobacco. Sold 1 goat to find the money, to a butcher from Balaka who sent people passing through villages to buy, at 4000mk. Will apply only 1 type to the maize and 2 to tobacco, separately. [Victoria] Yesterday morning ate mango, for lunch nsima with zirombo (kids found) and usipa, dinner also nsima with usipa (bought from someone passing by). Nsima still from own harvest.

[Victoria] Did a BS once, in 2000 for 1 yr: buying plates in Lilongwe with money from selling cotton, selling them here, because “mavuto kuchuluka”. Stopped because people delay paying for the plates, making it difficult for her to get enough money to continue.

Passed by grandmother of Ganizani working on field. She said that on her other field the heavy rains already washed her first maize sprouts, will start replanting there tomorrow. Esther working on, indeed, a huge field, with a small boy (1 or 2) that she looked at with loving smile. Her daughter working on another part, not staying here, just came to cultivate her field.
Josephine just back from field, has already planted maize, nandolo, mawere, pumpkin, mphonda, mseula and g/nuts, all seeds kept. Now she is planting cotton, bought 1 bag of fertilizer, sharing her coupon with Bisiweki. Found money through ganyu, this woman she shared coupon with is married at [small crossroads market], so it will be difficult to mix the types, so Josephine will just apply one type only. Yesterday ate mangos until dinner, when she ate nsima with zirombo (caught). The maize she bought last week at K. village: 1200mk for 3 x 5 ltr. She has just now finished her own harvest maize, and now put grounded maize in water to make ufa woyera of the bought maize. [Josephine] Has never in her life done a BS: “ndimasowa poyambira ndalama”.

Zara also just coming back from field. Planted maize, nandolo and pumpkin all in one phando. And g/nuts at a separate field. Kept the first ones, mtedza bought at [nearest trading center] for 200mk = +/- 1/4 acre. Will not plant cotton, because does not have enough field. Bought 2 bags of fertilizer, not sharing her coupon. Says; that the one who registered them, Victoria, told them that those who shared last yr would get a whole one this yr and other way round. Used the money she received from orphan care for her younger sister. Will mix the 2 types because it is a lot of work to apply twice. [Zara] Yesterday morning ate mango, lunch and dinner nsima with nyamu (zirombo). Started buying maize last month, from vendors at [nearest trading center]: 28kg for 2000mk, borrowed money from her mother-in-law, will pay back through working on her field. Her husband has called from SA, but didn’t say whether he found a job. She has never run a BS: “Sindingakwanitsa” = cannot manage, says it is too difficult for her to be walking around selling.

Belita (I hear some pigs in khola), also coming from field, has planted maize, nkhwani, khobwe, nandolo, all kept. Will still plant cotton, g/nuts, nkhungudzu, kalongonda and soya. Has all of these seeds. Bought 2 bags of fertilizer, not sharing coupon, says there were enough coupons for everybody in the whole of Mudzi A (Mudzi A 1), because it is a relatively small village. Found money through brewing and selling beer, kept bit by bit. Started seving in Sept (brewing about 5 x per month). Will apply both types mixed, because her field is already quite fertile. [Belita] Yesterday ate unboiled mangos until evening, then ate nsima with mafuluufute (zirombo). Maize is still left from her own harvest, is saving to avoid that it will finish soon.

Serena was planting g/nuts when we were on our way to Mudzi A2. on way back she is putting grounded maize (most are still unbroken, just without skin) on 2 mats to dry. Had left it in water for 2 to 3 days after grinding. When it is dried, will take it to the other machine in the maize mill to make ufa woyer. Planted local maize, g/nuts, nandolo, pumpkin, khobwe and cotton. Will still plant hybrid maize, soya and nzama. Kept all these seeds except cotton and hybrid maize, received these with the fertilizer. Bought 2 bags of fertilizer with the money from her kanyenya BS. Received a whole one because she has children with own fields with whom she will share the fertilizer. Will mix the types. [Serena] yesterday ate only mangos, lacking ndiwo and ufa also finished, today making new ufa of the last maize she kept after harvesting. These 2 mats with one layer of maize seeds will not last then till end December. Says she was too busy on the field yesterday to be catching zirombo like other did.

Saw a goat eating mango peel, (really almost trashless society (batteries are only things I can think of and condom wraps. Even plastic bags are preciously reused). Gertrude said she also saw them eating the
mangos we threw away after getting too old.

Ada came to knit with baby and 2 young girls. One is daughter of Levison and other mother than Thokozani, the girl stays with grandmother Florence. The other girl, Thokozani’s daughter from other man, when she was still at school (very different from what Thokozani said in interview!)

Went to see Eveles who was working at dambo, planting rice (no ridges, just ploughing). Two women passed by (walking back from Balaka where they had gone to buy maize seeds), one of whom joked to Eveles: Just get married so that husband can help you! Eveles answered she couldn’t manage to fetch water for a husband...

Eveles is older sister of Alma. Now staying (since last Saturday) with Alma to work on her rice field without walking all the way home. Also eats there Currently Alma’s (fat) daughter from Blantyre is with her to cultivate her own field and she is the one cooking for them = brought food/supplies food.

Doris passed by with friend advising her not to wear a shirt with split, because it will attract boys to sleep with you. Gertrude laughed, should she say.

Earlier (dzana?) Livia had called for Gertrude, asking her whether she not wants to buy Livia’s goat, Gertrude had to laugh hard, what will she do with a goat?

This morning Innocent was washing cloths, leading Gertrude to conclude: that means they have money now (after I said that I was hoping Jasmine would be making bread today to sell at [small crossroads market] tomorrow. Gertrude thinks they may, because apparently they have money now to buy ingredients, considering that Innocent had been able to buy soap.

Emra making ridges next to her house, radio still on.

Eveles is thinking of eating all the wofiira (cg??) seeds kept and instead plant chalimbana this yr (from sister Alma) because wofiira rots quickly.

Fields between borehole and Mudzi B 2, lying in a bit of a valley, somewhat lower than surrounding fields, already suffered from rain. Saw dried up mud streams washing away the ridges and maize sprouts. One field is from Lovely, another of Sweetness. Why did they not plant grasses like people did in Mudzi A to keep the water from destroying their fields like this. Why did they plant maize there anyway, knowing it would be destroyed. I am sure the same thing must be happening every yr? May be taking chances that hard rains will come only when maize stems are strong enough to survive.

Difficult to keep such a BS going, Gertrude said, referring to selling only once a week, (at market day). On Thursday you sell, make profit, but on Friday you need to eat, Saturday too, all days up till Wednesday
when you need the money to buy ingredients.

When GVH was working on her field at the opposite of the road from our field, Gertrude heard her say to some people that she felt too good to participate in the ICRISAT g/nut project. She had planned, had told us this before too, to plant the ICRISAT seeds on that field, but later found that only 6 people were allowed to participate and she was not chosen by Mr Chikombo and Mr Ntawanga. She had gone to the meeting in Balaka anyway. Now she was saying she as an akulu did not want to occupy herself with the 4 ridges that each participant was supposed to plant + felt she reserves. She wanted a whole field, not just 4 ridges.

Passed by HBOf Amila working on field, saying he begged seeds from relatives in his village.

Thursday Nov 27

Innocent passed by at 5:30am, on her way to borehole, telling Gertrude enthusiastically that she will go to [small crossroads market] today for a meeting of CIUM because she wants to take a loan together with mother and start a BS, didn’t say what kind of BS. They didn’t make chigumu to sell at market today, no money. Today CIUM will punish those borrowers who have not been able to pay back, by confiscating their property, says Innocent. First they will be explaining about this procedure. Jasmine sends Innocent to hear what it’s all about. Coming Tuesday there will be an informative meeting for those who want to take a loan. Jasmine wants to start selling fish again.

Jasmine told me to come and look what she is doing in her kitchen (when we came to borrow a chikwanje for fetching firewood). She caught many zirombo in the night (making fire in middle of night near a hole from which the winged worms fly that little later will loose their wings and procreate). Many many, now she was frying them on a clay pot on fire, still with wings. After this will put them all to dry. Then the wings will blown away by wind, or at least easy to take them off. We keep these for ndiwo, together with pumpkin leaves, last yr she also sold them, at 10mk per small plate. In Balaka, where people don’t have these zirombo near by.

The bush where we collect firewood is clearly burnt regularly, otherwise people are afraid to go in, thinks Gertrude, people may be hiding in it. Now at least you can see whoever is in it. More difficult now to find small trees that are dried. I thought many were dead, because of the fire or so. But now that the rains have come all seems to get back to life again, hence more difficult to just break them off. Need chikwanje to cut them.

Rosemary working on land of husband, she tells us when we pass by with nkhuni. Finished planting on her own, now preparing his field to plant cotton, because that’s what he wants to grow there. Only laughed when Gertrude said: we just see you coming and going at home, didn’t say she goes to take care of her sick husband who is staying else where in Mudzi B, as Thokozani told Gertrude. so: through this marriage Rosemary’s fam have access to more land. Unless husband will just use the cotton money for his beer, may be by working on it now, Rosemary increases her right to some of the money later? Let’s see what happens when he sells.
Went to grocery to see if there are still tomatoes to be found + charge Gertrude’s telephone. No tomatoes, what a, too expensive for the BS women to buy and too expensive for local customers to buy, I guess. Bought body lotion name “sweet heart” with picture of (black) girl (contrary to most other lotions with white photomodels), a small pot of 100 grms for 35mk, at the biggest (small) grocery shop at [tiny crossroads market]. Other lotion was called “follow me” with as subtitle the attractive “petroleum jelly”. The one I bought earlier at [nearest tradingcenter] , called “Lisa”, with indeed picture of blond Barbie-type head, is actually quite good. Contains cacaobutter, and “enriched with glycerine and lanolin, 65mk. The sweet heart says “Body crime lavender, enriched with vitamin Venesi, lanolin & glycerine. Also has a very small drawing of 2 embracing/kissing people, produced at DSM, TZ, EA (?), while Lisa is from Malawi, Limbe.

No women selling at grocery, one of them was at the watertap nearby, greeted us and said that the tomatoes were finished, only a man under a tree, selling dried fish. On our way back saw mats with many zirombo being dried at several houses. Gertrude said her sister always liked them a lot, and continued eating them even though afterwards she always complained of stomsach aches. Also saw a young boy, I’d say younger than 10yrs old, working on field alone, making ridges. Yesterday on our way to Mudzi A 2 saw the same thing. Passed by husband of Amila who was also making ridges (with very young daughter playing with a hoe him). He said he had begged seeds from relatives.

Daughter of Alma (fat, from Blantyre, married to a driver) will stay until after applying fertilizer, then later come back at harvest time. People will first weed (indeed in a low field without ridges the weeds/grasses were already coming up plenty), then apply fertilizer.

Grandson of Jasmine (the younger one) passed by chatting with friend, saying that his girlfriend (daughter of Fissa) begged him for thread to braid her hair, but he saw her with a man yesterday at the football match in [small crossroads market]. What to do, he asked his friend, friend answered he should just be open about it, shouldn’t hide what he has seen just confront her with it.

Coming back from Mudzi A 2 in afternoon (to increase chances of finding women at home), chief Mudzi B and Jasmine had just returned from the meeting they were called to in [small crossroads market]. Both complaining fiercely that they had thought it was something important, to be calling people at this important planting stage away from their fields. But the only massage was that they should not sell their votes, but vote what they really want. And the sun moved through the sky, chief Mudzi B gestured, njala! Only GVH received a coke for lunch, nobody else, not even chiefs. Now (3:30pm) they will still have to go the field, ah, this land Malawi! Sighed the chief shaking her head. Other people later also complaining that GVH had said only 10 could go, while at hind sight everybody could have gone. They thought those few selected would receive money, Pamela and Kondwani were discussing on road.

On way to Mudzi A 2 we saw husband of Elube throw stone to a goat that was not tied, like most others are by now (also saw a boy catching the goats for tieing, still when we came back). Mr Ntawanga passed by on bike, husband of Elube told him it was GVH’s goat. Mr Ntawanga greeted us and said, if GVH is not even tieing her goats, then other people will not do it either.
Esther was sitting with lichero with maize seeds, while one of her adult granddaughters (she said daughterts but seem young) was cooking nsima. Planted local maize (3 seeds) + nandolo + 1 pumpkin seed per phando. All kept. Will still plant g/nuts (kept) and hybrid maize (when I asked about this) and cotton. Bought 1 bag of fertilizer with the 1000mk that her daughter had given her some time back. Sharing the coupon with one of her daughters. Will mix the 2 types. Yesterday ate mangos until evening, when she ate nsima with moRoda (musamba from bush). Nsima from maize that she had to start buying last month, bought it from people in village. Daughter was now also preparing ngumbi (the same zirombo Jasmine showed this morning), Esther said she was not going to eat them. Ate them as child and got sores in her throat, so stopped eating them since. Will eat mango, is enough for her, says some people did and do dry mango, but herself, she is “too busy”. When mangos finish, she says some people will just sleep without food, others make phala. Never did any BS : “palibe chifukwa”, there was no reason to, parents were doing well, so could provide all she needed.

On way to Mudzi A 2, I was wondering about whether people would change to other ways of cooking fuel rather than cutting all trees for firewood, causing all those landslides that already after few rains destroy crops. Some type of oil/gas/gel, but then they would have to pay something, while now nkhuni is free of charge. But someday in past people did also change from the free way of making ufa (in mtondo) to paying for maize mills. Asked the 2 old women we found in Mudzi A 2 about this, Esther said the first maize mills came in 1930’s, when she was still in chiradzulu. There was only 1, far away, but people walked that distance. Says the ufa/nsima was different, didn’t explain further but presumably the flour is finer from maize mill.

Faith (sleeping in house) planted both local and hybrid maize, mseula, pumpkin, g/nuts and cotton. After finishing cotton will plant nandolo. Bought 2 bags of fertilizer, “no one to share coupon with”, kept money for fertilizer after selling one goat to a butcher in Balaka via messengers sent by that butcher, in early November. Will mix the 2 types for it to be enough for whole field. [Faith] Yesterday morning ate mango, for lunch and dinner nsima with ngumbi. Nsima from the last maize left from harvest. [Faith] Traded bananas in 2000, to find money for soap to go to school, found investment money through ganyu, did this for 3 months, then bananas became difficult to find and expensive. In 2003 prepared and sold boiled potatoes with tomato, when she stayed in Blantyre. Stopped when the potatoes became expensive. We had seen her husband each time we go to “grocery”, where he seems to be running a barbershop (3 walls of grss, basi). Maria says he is just here temporarily, will return to SA next yr, when they have finished working on the land. Says he is here to help her harvest enough, but I am sure it’s cheaper to send money for ganyu than stop working and travel all that distance yourself.

Mery planted local maize (has no hybrid, she says, strange story about being told her letter for receiving hybrid had gotten lost), nandolo, pumpkin, mseula mixed with khobwe, a bit of mawere (but doubts it will germinate because of the days, of droughtdzuwa after first rainfall) and bit of g/nuts. Had kept all these seeds, will still plant cotton, just a bit. In past husband used to grow a lot, but for years she hasn’t now. Decided to try again this year to find money, chithandizo, “to be able to buy a chitenje”. In past Mery brew beer.

Sofia passed by while we were knitting, explaining to Jasmine’s grandson that if she would keep
quite to her husband when he came to see her he would not be providing for her, therefore she has to shout to him and then he does provide.

Nosalt (sleeping inside) planted local maize, pumpkin, nandolo and msewula --> bought all of them because she hadn't harvested enough for fod, finished last month. Bought half a bag of fert because not enough money for a full one. Received money to buy from a relative. Yesterday spent morning till afternoon in field, ate mango's there. In evening ate nsima with matemba (now ngumbi drying in lichero on roof). Received matemba from mother, begged maize from father's younger brother. As she is just alone, it takes her far, will pay back with maize after harvesting. Never did any BS because of the (mental) health problems she told us about earlier.

Meriam (wearing 2 necklaces, earrings and a simple bracelet) has not finished planting yet: local maize with nandolo & pumpkin. Mawere separately in mapando in between maize. Also planted cotton (bought: don't keep because difficult to remove seeds, is done with machines). All other seeds kept from last harvest (didn't keep g'nut seeds, maybe will but to plant). Will still plant hybrid maize. Bought 2 bags of fert, not sharing coupon. Sold kachasu to pay fert, since Oct, borrowed money to start (1000MK from relative in vlg). Always does BS when she is in need of money. husband told her to start again now. When she registered for the fert coupons she heard that she would receive a whole one, and since there was no MASAF this year, she had to find money elsewhere. BS of beer brewing because that's something that many people buy. Nonetheless, today no one came. So still she will be doing ganyu in Dec, because there will be a lot of work to find. Yesterday had 1 customer who bought 1 coca-cola bottle of kachasu for 100MK - with which she bought matemba for dinner [when I bought full liter bottle kachasu from Kima, she seemed not very happy - maybe preferring that money dripples in ipv lump sum at once]. Will continue BS even after she bought the fert, because coming months will be difficult - food-wise. Usually people brew especially during cotton season, but this yr she didn't because heard from others not many customers. Yesterday ate only mango's untill evening because lacking ndiwo. But in evening nsima with matemba, thanks to kachasu customer. Maize for nsima bought last month at [nearest tradingcenter] for 1000MK: 70MK/kg, "very expensive, these vendors, they buy cheap just after harvest and sell at high prices in this season," she complained.

Phingi now paid for the ganyu done on Livia’s field, the ganyu that the father of her last born told her to hire at his expense. Livia must pay mother back when ever she finds the money. “Do you see now how has been cheating you!?"

Chicken disease killing chickens now. So must kill their chicken when they see first symptoms, therefore also few/low eggs available now.

Friday Nov 28

Gertrude listened to “za m’maboma” on radio yesterday. One of the stories was about a woman who told her husband she was going to get matches at 7pm. Shop man told her could get the matches for free if she slept with him. husband got worried, followed wife, found her having sex with man of shop, her parents are priests, making people to laugh at them, as their own children were behaving as the parents preached. Mother then defended daughter, saying she not even did it out of “maluzi”, according to Gertrude coming
from English word loose or lost, meaning to be without any money in pocket.

Collected firewood in morning, found Livia with Hana on back and Phingi planting local maize and nandolo. Aisha with kids eating mangos and Rashida and daughter making ridges. Livia said mother should be taking baby on back. Phingi replied she was tired of taking care of Livia’s baby, laughing. Eventually, I took Hana, who peed on my back and started crying little later, Livia came to get her.

Later in the morning Innocent passed on her way to [nearest tradingcenter]. Gertrude fired questions about she looked well washed and dressed, whether she was wearing a new (used) T-shirt (no, just doesn’t like wearing it), and took small plastic bag that Innocent carried to check inside. A bigger plastic bag to buy maize for food, and a coupon for fertilizer and another for hybrid seeds, and a registration form from CUMO. Says she borrowed money from her grandmother in Juma village, 1500mk. Will buy fertilizer with that and ingredients for zigumu. Gertrude later says she may have sold her goat, instead of borrowing from her grandmother. CUMO is the microcredit department of concern universal. Before, Innocent said Concern just gave handouts of seeds, now they are giving out loans and changed their name. But some regulations: max 5000mk, first pay back after 2 weeks 750mk. Innocent will only borrow 1000MK, to continue her zigumu BS that she plans to have started by then. When mangos finish many people will be buying zigumu, she says, and by then they will be used that they can buy at her. But it does cost a lot of firewood, she complained. Gertrude laughed, but you can just get it for free! Jasmine will also take a loan, plans to buy fish at lake and then sell at Liwonde turnoff. The only other one from Mudzi B is Venesi, Gertrude wonders what happened to Pamela, who had earlier told us that she was writing left handed at adult school in order to get a loan later. Suset (g’daughter of Kima) will also take a loan, they just have to enlist, as a group, everybody can participate. Don’t have to mention the type of BS they want to start/continue, but do have to list the kind of property they have. Depending on the value the property they can borrow a certain amount, this is the property that will be confiscated if they can’t repay. But plates at value of 200mk, Innocent had to laugh shyly when I asked her what kind of property she had said to have, “mbuzi” [goats], she finally confessed.

Sofia in morning asked Gertrude if she could get/buy some pumpkin leaves from our vegetable bed. But Gertrude said she doesn’t want to give,”plan to use them myself today”. When one finds out Gertrude has been giving someone of our leaves, others will come too, and be angry for not getting. Sofia then decided to walk to the dimba to buy masamba.

About 1pm, Phingi came to pick up the chitenje she borrowed to Gertrude to put between her head and the bundle of firewood. She had been collecting firewood since we left the bush around 9pm. Made a very big bundle, she says, and asked Gertrude to tell her friend Livia not to leave her young children to be taken care of by grandmother when she goes far away. Should just take the baby, Phingi has also been taking care so much of Joy, the elder one, when she was still baby, enough now. Told Livia this herself, but won’t listen.

Unfortunately bike not ready! There is suddenly radio sounds and 2 bags of fertilizer, but “the 2000mk you gave were not enough for parts, are expensive now”. In stead he finished making the big bike that he was already working on. But we need a small one for Gertrude, he will now find other customer for the big one, and begged for the whole money so he can make the small one, will only be
making small profit. Gave him 5000mk, still 700mk short, says he will have it finished by Thursday, hope so!

Holy looked even more ill now, with baby on lap that hardly moved. Laughed when we arrived because she was just discussing with daughters that she would like to make a picture of her baby. Last yr mixed her fertilizer, and didn’t see any difference with applying the types separately. But on Sunday her husband will come back so they will be able to do it together, so probably will apply separately.

Eveles joking again about she wants to call my husband herself because I will get jealous when she asks me to greet him each time. Then was telling how in past there was no jealousy, 2 wives would even share the same bed with the husband. That was “chibwana”, childish, though, now this can’t happen, the only reason that I took my husband to her was because she was old anyway, otherwise I would never have "shared" my husband like that. Bcoz of her age, I didn’t feel jealous or scared, I would lose him.

Girl who we interviewed at ‘grocery’ selling mandasi, helping mother take care of all younger siblings after father married elsewhere, came running to the road as we passed by on way to grocery to pick up charged phone, just to greet us. Now stopped selling, money finished, may be continuing next week.

Passed Amila with baby on back and child on shoulders + Tumanene on their way to ‘grocery’, when we walked back to Mudzi B. Were going to buy nandolo seeds, Gertrude summarized for me that one day Amila had said at borehole that she had bought maize at ADMARC (before fertilizer was sold there, I guess) and some days later that she received MASAF money and would be buying fertilizer with it (which make sense to Gertrude because apparently she already had maize).

Thokozani just went back some with bucket of water on head when we passed borehole. husband still hasn’t come up with coupon, she went to ask his friends who said the police-stiry is not true. He hasn’t spoken about it any more, he was making ridges in front of their house when we reached there. She had been working on that field in the morning.

Went to GVH to pay rent and say goodbye, inform her I am going back to Lilongwe until January, next yr. You’ll find us eating pumpkins already when you come back! Especially from your own field, will be first. I asked her to sign receipt of all the money paid so far for home rent (7000mk, 4 maanden), she wrote Mudzi B very slowly, with difficulty.

DIL of Eveles was preparing ngumbi, Eveles says she likes them a lot, Gertrude and DIL discussed that now ndiwo is becoming widely available, and nsima will soon be lacking. Earlier Gertrude had said February is usually the most difficult month for people, food (= maize) finished almost everywhere, no ganyu to be found. In December at least kupalira, in January some kubandira, but now I hear that mid/end Jan, early Feb people will be able to eat pumpkin, so actually, January is the month with least food available, only for those with money.

Jasmine and husband passed by with 4 tied goats. husband did not receive coupon on his own, the one she
received is for them together, sharing with Innocent. For remaining field then will apply the manure
from the goat khola, adding some water to it, leave it for few days, then put on ridges. Learned from
Mr Chikombo, doesn’t sell her manure, nobody buys most have their own goats.

Was saying she is old, most girls will not reach her age because of that disease now, uh, (pointing to
where we had the tree and HIV/AIDS seminar), edzi. In past girls, like her used to run away when
men wanted something. Told again how she fled to the nkhoke at night when recently married, even
run away for a whole yr, then husband’s fam went to police (Gertrude rightfully asks whether husband
wanted marriage or arranged by parents?). Now girls, even this high (girl of about 10), just allow
when a man propose laughing shyly, basi. Confirms Eveles’s story that in past, their grandmother’s
generation, 3/4 wives would all live in the same house. Maybe came to talk hoping for some
nkhwani? Was herself too lazy to continue watering her garden, she confessed. Gertrude just
encouraged her to work harder next yr, then she’ll have what we are having. Can’t you send your
granddaughter to fetch the extra water? Akukana: she refuses.

Innocent came back from [nearest tradingcenter] at 6:30pm, ADMARC starting selling maize now, at
52mk/kg. but also still sells fertilizer, bought seeds to plant, and wants Gertrude to bring her nandolo
seeds from Balaka tomorrow. Declines the offer of me asking the ICRISAT driver to take tomatoes
from Lizulu for her to be selling here, no money, will just make & sell zigumu together with mother.

People will be buying cheap maize at ADMARC to be selling it later, when ADMARC stacks finish,
at higher prices. Government advises people not to buy more than 50kg, so vendors just pay people to
buy for them little by little.

Why don’t people make goat milk/chese? Do they have any calcium sources?

Didn’t have anything also to do. Joked about coming to beg for nkhwani, had already sent
Innocent for ndiwo at [nearest tradingcenter].

Rosemary was about to finish making ridges on her husband’s field, when we passed in the early
morning to get firewood. Said that her husband had gone to Balaka to sell grass to buy seeds, they
take turns in working on the field and founding money, she said when I wondered why she was
working alone on the fiel, without her husband helping.

Eveles says Alma harvested 7 bags of g/nuts, while Alma said only 3 in interview. Seven makes more
sense, considering how much she seems to be selling.

Son of Eveles told us he used to be a shoemaker, then Mr Musitafa came to learn from him. And then
there were 2 shoemakers in Mudzi A, so this one changed to repairing and making bicycles, which is
a good BS, he says many people need his services. Yesterday he had a customer who paid 1300mk
(but eh, how much of that was profit?)

Jasmine asked Gertrude if she didn’t mind that people say her name when talking to her. Here in yao-
tradition one feel offended when people address them by their name (so when saying one’s name directly is also meant as an offense). At initiates girls get other names, after initiation girls are also encouraged to practice the instructions they have received about sex. When still in Mangochi Gertrude and sisters were prohibited to get out of the fence when girls came out of initiation and danced. (They climbed in trees trying to get a glimpse of what they were not allowed to see).

**Nov 29 Saturday**

Some rains in night, not long at least a bit hard. Many people in fields again making ridges, planting or replanting where maize has not germinated. Also in our field Gertrude is now putting new seeds in some mapando, about 12. Gertrude heard from chief Mudzi B that she was going to plant cotton, GVH finally tied her goats today.

Went to Holy to make the picture of her baby, as she wished. Baby incredibly small, 3 months old! Getting milk from bottle, Holy said she is happy because this baby she can buy powder milk for, while for her previous kids she couldn’t.

Recollections = not sure whether these were written down already.

Jasmine asked Gertrude whether she doesn’t mind being addressed by her name. Is perceived as offending here.

Gertrude cleaning our pots with sand after every meal, meanwhile explaining that this is also something that women feel competitive about, competing with the other wives/lovers of her husband, he may say the pots of the other are cleaner = better wife.

**January 12, 2009, Amsterdam**

Remarkable: the acceptance of times with less food available. Laconic: Jasmine saying that “just after harvest, we eat big plates of nsima,” and Livia saying “we are stupid selling maize at low prices just after harvest, as if we have completely forgotten about now” - in hunger season.

**February 6 2009, Lilongwe**

Gray, Thoko, Karen & Baleke commenting in staff bus on girls in area 18: we drove past a woman wearing a nice, shiny pink 50’s dress, a bit tight on her fat belly, which led Balake and Karen to comment on the many girls that come out on the streets around this hour of the day (5-7pm), especially in Area 18, looking for men. I inquire whether they are like prostitutes, or looking for marriage partner. No, no prostitutes, said Baleke, followed by saying: These girls come from well-to-do backgrounds. But also not necessarily looking for marriage, added Karen. For money rather, said Karen after some more talking, she said this in a way that this was the most correct, conclusive answer to what these girls are looking for/doing on the streets. Some more probing did not lead to a clear
answer on the exact kind of transactions the girls look for. How can men know which ones to approach and which ones are really just on their way to somewhere? You can tell by how they look, Karen answered before she got out at her house. Then I continued the conversation with Gray, who saw these girls more like prostitutes than Baleke and Karen seemed to, saying that they will tell you how much you have to give them. (They have the deal ready, oid), and that they may have up to 5 or 7 lovers per evening, depending on their looks. We men know that in Area 18 we can find more sophisticated girls. Oh you should see these streets between 6 and 7 pm, full with girls! Families find it embarrassing what happens, but there is nothing they can do about it. They cannot keep their daughters inside the house, things have changed (because of television? He said something like that, but I don’t remember…)

At airport I had the following conversation with one of the young man standing outside, hussling for taxi drivers: He was born in 1980, married in 2004 with girl born in 1985, have a 4 yr old daughter. Says they met in church choir, when I asked whether he proposed at the very first time he saw her, he first said “yes”. Then I asked he knew she could be a good wife for him and then he told me a different story, that they had been chatting, that he has visited her parents etc before proposing to her after 6 months. Then they stayed in a relationship for 3 yrs before getting married through a catholic ceremony. They took time so that they could get to know each other better. “There is this disease these days” he added (without me asking about this). Says that he has not proposed to other women since: “I love my lady. And she loves me”. He said with a sweet big smile, he has a driving licence and would like to become a taxi driver, but he has not been able to buy a car. For now he is washing the cars of taxi drivers to find money. His wife is not working, they live at Domasi trading centre, he wants 2 children, “some people have many children which they can’t take care of”. To manage not having many children they do “kulera”, his wife takes injection every 3 months.

When I later asked Gray how I should interpret the fact that this young man first said that he proposed on the very same day that he met his wife (like many women in the village told me!), but later said they chatted for 6 months, Gray said he had never heard of proposals being made at the very first encounter, at least not in town.

Lilongwe and surroundings are very green, some maize have cobs, others not yet. There is hunger, Gray says, but not as bad as some yrs back because at least ADMARC has maize. So if you can find money, you can buy. Gertrude told me on phone that people have started eating maize now (no! so I missed the end of the hunger season, have to come back next year), which surprised my colleagues at the office, so early. Must have planted early, they assumed, but I don’t think that was the case.

On way to Lilongwe we saw a man ploughing his field, preparing to plant potatoes, said Gray.

**Mudzi B, February 8 - Arrival in village!**

Very green, when arriving towards Mudzi A, Gray commented that most maizefields looked like fertilizer had been applied, though not all. He saw signs of a dry spell, last rains (heavy down-pour) 2 days ago, people are already eating ndowe [green maize cobs] now. Indeed, once arrived chief Mudzi A and Innocent came to bring some ndowe. Chief Mudzi A says stealing of ndowe has begun now, the
kanyenya woman spends her night guarding her cobs now after some had been stolen.

Livia and Sofia were the first to come and greet me. When I gave them some of the pictures I made of them, they all (Livia & Sofia & Gertrude agreed that Sofia looked like a business woman (“gain”) on her picture, meaning she looked well, fat, said Gertrude [hence, ambivalent attitude towards BS women, both pos and neg].

Many stories have been going on, says Gertrude, she doesn’t know where to start. Many divorces and new marriages, amongst others.

Our maize at the place where we throw our garbage (most of it natural, decomposable) looks spectacularly better than the other maize. The last one received fertilizer, while the first one did not. Indeed, confirm Gertrude and chief, manure is better than fertilizer, among others because it cannot be washed away by rain, best is to make ridges right after harvest, commented chief, and than leave the dried maize stems and leave to rot on the field. But few people do this (he did). They know about it, but “ulesi”. Also theft (for which both him and more explicitly Mr Ntawanga came to apologize, saying how worried they were, that the thieves were certainly not from within this village (“he has been chased away,” probably referring to the husband of Selina). Mr Ntawanga told me he had reported it to Mr Chikombo and together they went to the police in Balaka. I thanked him a lot for his help. Grandson of GVH also came by, I gave him 1000mk for spending 3/4 nights per week here at the house to protect Gertrude (although had made clear in beginning that it was no ganyu). I suggested to the chief whether it was because of njala that people are now stealing, but he and Gertrude agreed that is rather “ulesi” [laziness]

Husband of Blessings sent her blankets and zitenje from SA which she sells at 9000 and 800mk, people buy to be paying later with cotton money.

He also said that that many people are borrowing now, may be 1000 MK, later paying back 2000 MK. Within village? I asked, yes, one cannot go to a place where they don’t know and trust you to ask for money. For example, the (ex-husband) of Esnart, who came back fro SA, loans out 1000 MK but wants 50kg of maize in return for it. Maize is currently being sold by ADMARC at 56 MK/kg, but much of it is bought by vendors who sell whenever ADMARC is out of stock for 75-85 MK/kg now = 4500 MK/50kg! why does nobody report these illegal vendors to the police, I asked the chief, they are friends with the police, give them money.

The chief himself bought a big bag of salt (showing the height, about 10kg?) for over 1000 MK (1400?) which he now sells in exchange for maize after harvest (1 small plate of salt for 2 bigger plates of maize). He found the money for the salt through MASAF and he also asked to make mat (mkeka = knitted, not like mphasa which is more difficult). He followed the example of his wife selling salt like this.

Bcoz of sun, rain, heat, maize is maturing early, compared to late of planting. Chief expects people will harvest end March/beginning of April. Cotton end of May/beginning of June. Now people are planting potatoes (sweet) which will mature in 1 month. Jasmine said people are now getting worried because it has not rained for 5 days, bad for potatoes and maize, which will die after 2/3 weeks of
drought. Cotton is stronger than maize, said the chief, will not die as fast, Jasmine was first praising the good weather so far (kutentha) which led the maize to mature quick. But the rains have to continue up to the end of February. Gertrude and chief discussed that many people planted more cotton than maize this year, because of the promised increase in price: 100-120-150mk/kg. Gertrude concluded that this will lead to more hunger next season than this season. People prefer/ are seduced by the prospect of money they can get through cotton, said the chief. I asked why people did not plant potatoes earlier, hearing that they mature so quickly. Gertrude then said she had been enquiring about the same, but had not found a satisfying answer yet. Jasmine answered me that they had been too busy on their fields, planting/taking care of the maize and then the cotton. Priorities, thus, to Gertrude someone also said something about rotting quickly if potatoes are planted early.

Ada came, with her babygirl, to have her own braided hair by Gertrude (which has also braided Sofia’s and Innocent’s hair, and many others, which takes her less than half an hour!). she looked more skinny than before, Innocent, Jasmine, Joy are as fat as before, or almost at least,

While braiding, Gertrude was called by the new lover of Venesi, who wanted to speak to Venesi. Gertrude gave the massage to Ada, so later Venesi came and called her new husband on Gertrude’s phone. This morning Venesi had come to Gertrude with a note that Venesi wanted Gertrude to text to the new husband: Wandalama uja wabwera ndiye inuyo musalephere poti akudikira ineyo kuti ndimasule ngati ndalephera kapena ayi. Tunga. Translation: “the one of the money came so you, do not fail because he is waiting for me to let him know whether I fail or not” [will take the money or not] This man is married somewhere else and asked Venesi to borrow money for him to use at home, with his other wife! And she does! How strange……. She recently went to his village to attend the funeral of his grandmother. When she called him just now she stepped away, besides the house. When she came back Innocent asked laughing whether it had been her husband that she talked to, which Venesi confirmed. Jasmine told Venesi to be open about it to her, because this man is related to Jasmine, so Venesi can be open to her. Venesi then said about that funeral that she had gone to. Jasmine said that Venesi should have informed her, then they could have gone together. The man sometimes spends the whole day at Venesi’s house, Gertrude saw him go at 9am and return at 5pm. She considers herself married, calling him husband (mwamuna wanga) instead of chibwenzi, may be because he really spends time at her house regularly? But there has been no ceremony and nothing has been paid to the chief, which should be done when 2 people start living together. How much? How does this go??]. For example, Pamela was seen working with a man in her field for about a week, then she told Gertrude that they were living together and that the man was going to go to the chief to pay this “marriage” money. But app 2 weeks later Pamela told Gertrude that they had never reached that point because Pamela had sent him away because of his behaviour.

I bought sugar and 2 bars of soap for chief Mudzi A & Mudzi B & GVH, I now regret that I did not also bring tea for them, what else can they do with sugar? It was Gray who said sugar is better than salt…. Ah well, with the maize coming up soon they will be able to buy tea themselves, said Gertrude. And they can put it in their phala.

First topic of Jasmine was also how shocked and worried (kudandaula) she/they had been because of the thieves entering Gertrude’s house and truly stealing everything they could, even the blanket she had thrown off (but not the one over her sleeping body). Even the chigumu, but they were so kind to leave her some mgaaiwa that they pore in a bowl, taking the rest. Jasmine said they often kill (signalling her
throat being cut) the people they stole from. Gertrude is a bit happy with the protection I bought (doom insect repellent to spray in eyes, and air freshener with lighter to blow fire) but said that thieves often use traditional medicine to make sure that someone does not wake up while they are inside the house. She seems feel safer now that I am back, saying that the grandson of GVH does not need to sleep here anymore now that we are the two of us.

No funeral in the past 2 months [Dec & Jan]! Chikondi gave birth to a baby boy twin. The father is back again, since little after we chatted at her house, she has supposedly been saying that I will be helping her financially, leadind other women to say that they have children too and deserve the support just as much. Gertrude made her hats and socks for free.

Evelin is on ARV! Or at least Sofia told so to Gertrude. Also told Gertrude that Evelin has an affair with the husband of Elube and the husband of Nola. This last one is said to be the father of the baby of the young daughter of Venesi.!? Say Sofia, Innocent, and Jasmine (who are all of the same compound though), who say that the head of the baby resembles the head of this man….. But what evidence is this gossip based on?

February 9, Monday

GVH came to greet us when we had breakfast (boiled g/nuts which I had bought from Balaka and boiled maize cobs). First thing she said was how sorry she was about the theft, and how lucky we have been that Gertrude was still alive. But meanwhile GVH has done little to help get the suspect caught, Gertrude asked some boys from this village to assist her to physically catch the man (the police called 3 x asking whether she caught him already), but they refused saying that the GVH should decide so. Sweetness’s husband who was the only (sane) one who went with Gertrude to F. village to try and catch the suspects (besides husband of Amila) has been threatened with death by Ainessi’s husband, Rose told us. She seems to approve of the idea to at least gather the GVH and chiefs to pursue the issue, “he has bought a very expensive blanket for the baby that Ainessi gave birth to, and he came to sleep with Emra again last night, so he seems to have forgotten that people were looking for him”. This would be a good time to catch him, concluded Gertrude. Rose said that many thieves are around now, more and more, because of all the maize in the fields, people are afraid of theft, so it would be good to go to the police, most people don’t report. It would set a good example to others who have been robbed, as well as to thieves.

Livia has several zibwenzi, or at least had them in the past months. Was proposed via letter via Suset, spent nights at Fatima’s ex-husband (Fatima left him because she suspect he was seeing someone else, coming home late at night, but she didn’t know who could have been Livia, but Tinenenji and Dorica also were/are with him, Tinenenji told Gertrude), also seems to continue seeing the father of baby Hana (whom she had tried to abort, she told Gertrude, by 10-15 painkillers and a cup of aloe vera drink), one at [nearest tradingcenter] hospital (she showed Gertrude) and one from M. village who is now talking to her brother about marriage, friend of mother staying misomali found him for her. So, Gertrude concluded that probably her saying that she got injection without knowing purpose was not true. The fact that she takes injection leads to think that she doesn’t use condoms.
Jeneti passed by after we had not found her at home, to give her picture of daughter Ellesi. Very sad about sewing machine being stolen, may be hoped I wanted to assist her when hearing I had been at her house. Has not reported to police because thieves use traditional medicine, so what can you do? Traditional medicine protect house does exist, she knows someone who can get you those, but she has no money for it. Do we may be have some sait? Ah, not anymore, says Gertrude, Gertrude has been giving hands of salt to some women at onme point.

Blessings lost weight, which surprised me because she seems to be well supported from SA. Venesi, Chisoni, Lizzie, Molly all look the same still. Belita commented on her picture that she had lost weight (kuonda). She is not brewing beer at this time because she doesn’t even have maize to eat. After harvest she will start again, people still buy though, that is not why she is not selling.

Price/quality differences between the various zigumu bakers: not really, says Gertrude. Jeneti once tried, but people didn’t like it, had many flies. Jasmine’s is liked best, Jasmine has not baked bread since I left, saying that people prefer the heavy zigumu.

Ex-husband of Esnart (south of our house) called his nephew or younger brother back of 1,5 yr in Lilongwe (went there after finishing school, speaks English and sold cooking oil) to take care of his house now that he has divorced and will build a separate house for Esnart & kids to live in. boy is fatalistic about his faith, simply obeying as he was told, will survive, he says, but will not continue his BS as people in village don’t use cooking oil, just water. Tells Gertrude that his brother/uncle did not make public that he will be going back to SA “because a lot of people are using witchcraft in this village,” did not want anyone to be jealous and bewitch him so he said he went to Zomba to new wife, but not that after this he will continue his journey to SA.

Sandala + wife of [Bicycle maker] passed by on their way to a meeting of the tree project which only selected people could attend. Christina has stopped selling mandasi now, people have no money, including herself. Indeed, I said, when I passed [small crossroads market] I saw the market place overgrown with tchire, next month people will have money again. At least now people have started to fill their stomachs with green maize, so they can eat just a bit of nsima. Ndiwo there is enough, especially masamba, but also mseula and thelere.

One of the mandasi girls which we interviewed at grocery has started coming to our house to learn to knit. Also came today, Gertrude was going to try to find out how she became involved with boyfriend (told Gertrude earlier that she may marry him while told us last time that I was here that she does not want to marry yet but help mother take care of younger siblings. Tinenenji and Elessi also came to knit/closh. Tinenenji, while closhing a decoration for Gertrude to sell in Lilongwe, meanwhile had her hair braided by Gertrude, until she was called by Ada who said that ex-husband of Fatima wants to see her.

Jasmine asks Gertrude how she is doing, Ah, a bit ok, answered Gertrude why? Chimanga.......earlier she has put cobs on fire to boil for app 1,5 hour, which led Ellesi to comment that this is the season. After which all (Gertrude & Ellesi & Lucia & I) were saying that later on everybody will be eating maungu in
morning, afternoon and evening, like now maize, and during mango season only mango.

Ellesi said that Grace also started BS of kuoda sugarcane.

GVH passes by, coming back from hospital, at dawn, saying that if she had been in a new marriage this late return would give her problems, joking. Tomorrow at lunch meeting with chiefs & Mr Ntawanga.

Dorica indeed went back to school but at [small crossroads market]. Mr Chikombo (headmaster at [tiny crossroads market]) complained about this, suggesting she was having a boyfriend there and therefore choosing to go to the far school. Mother was not happy with this, afraid that Mr Chikombo just wants to be in relationship with her (Gertrude heard her say while doing MASAF). But now Dorica indeed decided to go to [tiny crossroads market] again. Jane was told by mother not to go back to school “because you will end up pregnant”.

Dora & Auleria (daughter of Thandizo) started selling tomatoes from their dimba fields. Gertrude people are starting to speak up against GVH, for example at the distribution of nandolo by concern universal.

husband of GVH decided to work alone on his fields, not hire ganyu, when his wife told him that ganyu now costs 30mk/phando, not 20-25 llike last year. Nobody offered him to work for him at lower price, so apparently there was enough ganyu? Sometimes tells his grandsons he won’t buy them ndiwo if they don’t help him on field, or promises them to buy them the head of a goat.

Mphatso lost baby in early stage of pregnancy, mother Rosemary went to Jasmine for traditional medicine, but Jasmine said they had to go to hospital for this problem. Now Mphatso is better again.

**February 10, Tuesday** - rains in night, not very heavy.

Footsteps of a dog around the house, which worries Gertrude as it is said that ‘the thief’ moves around with a dog.

GVH sent several people to receive money for her when MASAF paid, “ah, she received a lot of money,” says Gertrude even Mr Ntawanga did the same! And chief [tiny crossroads market].

Alida & Thokozani selling sugarcane at grocery, buying before at Liwawadzi, now move nearby. Innocent made and sold kanyenya 1 day at grocery, and contributed the money for HH food after Jasmine complained that she is the only one buying food. husband first refused to use his money to buy food (stopped buying food for fam after 2 or 3th child, when Jasmine got own income through BSs) but finally gave 1000mk. They and Jasmine are sleeping in separate house at same compound, when Gertrude asked why, Jasmine just said that they are old now, he washes his own clothes, but does eat the food prepared by Jasmine.

Gertrude encouraged and taught Innocent to dry nkhwani = pumpkin leaves to save for later (Oct, Nov)
which first she didn’t do but now decided to start, Sofia followed her.

At 8am Jasmine, Innocent, Suset and we, went to [tiny crossroads market] (sat in shadow of church) for CUMO meeting. Again the (young) field worker had to disappoint the group, telling them that the loans that they have been waiting for since Nov/Dec cannot come through. He showed Gertrude and me a print out on which it said that this group (BAK 14, mthundu) had 2 outstanding balances (first loan was a total of 98000mk, outstanding little over 2000, which according to his story started with an small outstanding balance of only 54 on top of which a 750 MK a fine came etc. the second loan was 53000 MK, which according to his story included the 2100 MK debt of the previous loan. Of this 3800 (app) is still outstanding, but after a lot of explaining he claims that this is only a computer mistake at the office, actually all loans have been paid off, they just need to wait until this administrative problem is fixed. Group complained that they have been waiting for so long now, they rather stop here and join MADEF at [small crossroads market]. The mlangizi told them to write a letter so that they can get their savings back, after which he dictated the letter to secretary Suset (who wore a chitenje with computers depicted on it). The others did not really follow what was written done, nore were they told afterwards, not read aloud, signed by all oid. Suset had a track record book, so at least the mlangizi cannot cheat them with the amounts they gave for savings and received and payable back loans.

At [tiny crossroads market] school Saibi and Tinenenji were selling sugarcane, Jasmine brought a bucket of zigumu to [tiny crossroads market] and sold some on the way. Had made them on Sunday and had gotten worried now because still not sold all of them, lowered her price from 10-5 MK and sold some.

On our way to [tiny crossroads market] Suset said she wants to sell her voting registration card at 4000mk to people who come from Blantyre to somewhere here in Balaka. The women wondered how those cards can be used by others since there is a picture on the card. They further discussed that under Bingu there maize at least for sale, while during Bakili there was hunger. Even though most maize is bought and resold by vendors, at least there is. Gray had mentioned the same.

Phingi showed a little red flower, explaining that it will prevent your child from falling ill if you sleep with another man than the father of the child. Livia was very interested, later Gertrude told me that Livia had been called by a man from Balaka whom she then promised to meet on Monday, when she went there anyway for her tailoring course.

After meeting met with headmaster of [tiny crossroads market] primary school to arrange that I can come with Tjeerd’s drawings and have children here draw about Malawi.

Then moved on to Venesi to take picture of her cotton field, as she requested yesterday. Her field is about 1,5 acre and will hopefully bring her 20.000mk when selling. Passing by another cotton field we saw a young man spraying his plants, farmers can rent this spraying equipment at 20mk/day at the same place that buys cotton, plus a bottle of mankhwala for 15ltr of water, spraying every 2 weeks.

Passed by field with small yellow maize plants and lot of weeds, hardly any cobs. Field from Grace Phiri, said Venesi, Gertrude later tell me that Grace complained that her mother would share fertilizer coupon with her but then bought and used the bag alone. Possibly because Grace had just disappeared to
Mzuzu without a word…. Gertrude said: “and she hasn’t planted cotton either, I don’t know where she will find money/food”. Some maize fields were flushed just after applying fertilizer, maize looks bit yellow and smaller (Elube, Lovely)

1212 Husband of Julia passed with his bike and a dengu full of dried fish.

1213 GVH, chief Mudzi A & Mr Ntawanga gathered at our house as I asked to beg their advice on how to proceed with the theft follow up. Nobody seemed to doubt that Ndaba is the main suspect, and the question for them was rather how to catch him. GVH first claimed that he was not around anymore, gone off to his home village in C., but Gertrude, N & chief Mudzi A said he still comes at night to sleep with Emra. Chief Mudzi A also said that although Emra claimed that her radio has been stolen the same night that thieves had entered our house, he still heard a radio at her house. Especially my argument that thieves are a big problem to all the maize and soon the cotton in all the fields seemed to trigger the attention and agreement that something should be done. Although GVH felt asleep during meeting, besides shamelessly eating almost all the traditional Dutch biscuits that I served. Mr Ntawanga suggested that sub-TA [small crossroads market] should be asked to sent 3 strong boys who together with 3 strong boys from Mudzi B can catch Ntaba, tie him to a tree and then the police can come and get him. The police already told Gertrude that there are many theifs but few people who actually report them, let alone catch the thief. They may throw him in prison without further ado, I get the impression, first GVH tried to shift the responsibility to the chief of F. village, where Ntaba resides. But Gertrude told them of all her efforts so far. Eventually it was agreed that a massage would be send round to all 6 chiefs of group Mudzi B to gather tomorrow at 3pm and discuss the issue of theft in general and this issue in specific. After GVH left, chief MA said he will get involved himself, making sure that indeed this happens because GVH often says she will do things and then does not.

1214 This morning GVH + husband working in their fields around us weeding. husband of Jasmine was also weeding his cotton field.

1215 Visited Chikondi & twins (K & L) of whom she wanted a picture. Babies are 2 months now (born 7 Dec), small but do look fine, although K looks weaker than L. Chikondi has small breasts, and says she already started feeding the kids porridge. When I inquired she said that the father of the babies now also stays with her at night, he is a drunkard though, I read from Gertrude’s notes.

1216 Evelin told Amila at borehole that she is too weak to go to Liwawadzi to buy sugarcane for sale, cannot manage. Physically challenging... Cotton has to be weeded about 5 times, but only first time is lot of work.

1217 Little ganyu now. Indeed Gertrude asked Amila, who usually goes for ganyu, and Amila answered that there is no ganyu to be found now. That’s probably why many women are now trading sugarcane, says Gertrude. Zigumu is not attractive anymore because everybody can now eat maize. Before some kids took money to school to buy some snacks, now they bring maize, Jasmine complained about this too, having problems selling her zigumu and therefore lowering her price.

1218 Suset looks weak, noticed Gertrude, Venesi said she had malaria for long time, 1or 2 weeks. Pamela also had
malaria, but is better now. I asked her whether she has a mosquito net, she said she does, but I have not seen yet. Gertrude says Sofia (at Jasmine) has, Jasmine says she also has one. Gertrude says people receive after giving birth at hospital, but some sell at 50-200mk. Gertrude bought her own at 150mk like that in Lilongwe. She thinks that most people here don’t have a net. Rains in afternoon.

In morning Esnart said that her husband called her this morning to tell her that he reached South Africa.

Husband of Jasmine doesn’t bring in money for HH food, (Jasmine complains) but he works in their fields a lot, while Jasmine not, often busy with her BSs.

All Venesi’s children are from different fathers, Livia and Sofia told Gertrude (separately from each other). They said so following fact that Venesi now has new boyfriend, “oh, there comes the next one”.

By now no one selling masamba at [nearest trading center], says Gertrude, enough to be found everywhere. Also very few people selling tomatoes, the woman that we interviewed there selling mandasi stopped soon after our interview. Gertrude met her and enquired; no money to continue.

February 11, 2009 Wednesday

Just asking more questions is useless, I fear. Gertrude wrote about Jasmine asking Emra where she found the money to buy mgaia for zigumu. Esnart answered: “masiku ano asamafunsana”, making friends gaining trust is the only way to find some honesty, I get the impression. Although I fear it will be very difficult to overcome my position as ‘the researcher’. Especially if I continue explicit interview, making friends through gifting will also make enemies. I would like to buy some formula baby milk powder for Chikondi, for example, but her suggestion that I will be helping her when her twins got born already led to other women complaining that they also have children, that they also struggle. Fortunately Gertrude is in close contact with many, she is my research tool, so to say, but what can I add with my presence?

The kanyena woman and Venesi were proud of their status as BS woman: amayi a geni. That makes it easier to talk about that topic with them. But if they would also get financial support from boyfriends, for example, they are not very likely to tell me. Nor Gertrude, by the way, that kind of info rather comes from third persons gossiping. To Gertrude while they are knitting here, or at the borehole or via Livia who then tells Gertrude.

The favors that have been appreciated so far were the soap and salt at the first interviews, and the photographs. Some, eg Venesi and Holy, even asked me to make specific pictures of them (in cotton field and with new born respectively, and Chikondi of her twins, and Alida of herself). Help in fields? Also leads to jealousy, would people not see the exchange-deal: info/honesty for support?
Is the recording of life histories feasible? So much lying and hiding of facts, not only to me, to everybody, then why would they suddenly be open to me?

Do more interviews with project staff and leave inside info from villages to be collected by Gertrude? still, I would really want to become somewhat more accepted, appreciated, liked in community. Is so difficult without speaking the language. More interest and explicit valuing of people’s daily activities? Like Jasmine making bread, Hamra making robe, fetching water at borehole, fetching firewood, cooking, washing clothes, maize mill, working on fields, just be more visible and insist women to teach me brings. But washing with thelere, weeding, harvesting maize, making ufa.

Gertrude thinks by end March people will harvest maize, but they will stop eating green maize by end of Feb, when they get dry. And pumpkins will be available, at harvest time people will work on field but also do ganyu. Harvesting cotton is more labourous, will take 1-2 weeks. Gertrude says that Innocent told her that people harvest and sell some, harvest more and sell.

Gertrude looks through my pictures of all the women we interviewed and commented the following on some: Lucia (girl from grocery) told Gertrude that she had a boyfriend for some yrs but her grandmother was not happy with it and eventually told him that Lucia has 2 children and is very rude.

About Aisha people commented (when she passed by at pay out MASAF) that she is “olongolola”, rude, talkative and that is why her marriage ended, but ex-husband still comes sometimes.

Gertrude saw Nelia sell mandasi at [small crossroads market] several times. Paula stopped selling at grocery, saying that she had no money. Gertrude saw her at MASAF pay out receiving money, but also afterwards Gertrude did not see her selling again. Nelia came one day to bring back the shoes she had bought before from Gertrude to give to someone else (so not used yet) to get back 30mk that she paid for them (simple shoes without partten, because Nelia had only 30mk, not the 40mk that Gertrude usually charges for shoes), which Gertrude gave (Suset later bought the same shoes). Nelia gave Gertrude a story that the money she received from MASAF was stolen with traditional medicine (so just disappeared from the knot she made in her chitenje) when she went to Balaka to buy food.

About granddaughter of Magda people complained/gossiped that she had many boyfriends while she was still at school. Now that she finished school she has gone to join her mother in Lilongwe.

Naima told Gertrude that her mother Balakasi now has cellphone, but didn’t say how she got it. The father of Joy came one day to give Livia some money to take care of Joy, but he didn’t find them at home. Livia and Phingi had gone to Phingi’s friend who had a potential marriage partner for Livia. When coming back Phingi complained that he hadn’t left the money with someone else? May be he wants to get back with you, she said to Livia.

Gertrude and I were wondering about benefit of current boyfriend of Venesi. Jasmine had commented earlier
when Venesi passed by with new boyfriend that ‘this is how men in this village are’ they come to eat the maize that they did not helped to cultivate, and then the relationship ends again. When Gertrude heard that this new boyfriend wanted money from Venesi, she thought Jasmine’s words may be true. “And Venesi has a lot of cotton, and enough maize on her field to feed her children. I don’t understand why she takes this big responsibility of also feeding an extra man.

1237 Sofia came saying she wanted to check how her pumpkin is growing which she planted at the collapsed house of Kingsley. Had seen somebody with a full grown pumpkin already, but now saw hers are not ready yet. In morning had eaten phala, asked to leave them some seeds of the variety I brought from Lilongwe. And asked what GVH & chief had come to do yesterday, Gertrude stayed vague, saying they came to discuss something.

1238 Rains from early morning till next morning!

1239 Gertrude: some people prefer to eat heavy in the evening (if they have for only 1 x nsima per day), because the night is long, while during day one can eat small/light bits at various times to keep stomach filled.

1240 Gertrude: people are surprised that Jane found somebody who will marry her, probably because he is from Balaka, so he doesn’t know that she has moving around a lot with boys. Somebody fdrom this village could not marry her.

1241 Gertrude: at borehole women were wondering (in Jan) whether they would not die this hunger season, considering the wide spread lack of food. People are now very happy, Gertrude suspects, because they had not expected to be eating maize so soon.

1242 husband of Elube is working in Balaka these days, building at hospital, comes home at 6pm every evening.

1243 Blessings & Fissa, Holy, Magda, Naima still have maize from own harvest, not selling though.

1244 Jasmine and Teleza pointed out to complaining women that I had only come to learn about their daily lives, not to give money or medicine. So why don’t you just start a BS or do ganyu, said Jasmine, Pamela told Gertrude that if indeed I will help Chikondi, “we will come to beg too!”

1245 GVH came by to greet, saying that at ADMARC they have started selling maize at 45mk/kg. First of all the chiefs can come and buy, then other people (she bought 50kg). Also [GVH] said that she is tired of taking husband to hospital, therefore now on her way to find some traditional medicine for him (walking with chikwanje). She [GVH] was now finished planting her maize, earlier she had complained to Gertrude that people here are lazy, not cultivating at dimba. Said that she doesn’t know whether the chiefs will gather today following the massage from chief Mudzi A because of the rain today.
Granddaughter of Jasmine had been sent to put a bucket under our iron sheet roof to catch rain water, just like Gertrude is doing. Gertrude is surprised that not more women come to put their buckets under our roof.

Livia used to go to Balaka for tailoring 3 x/week :Monday, Wednesday &Saturday, but they have still not given the promised sewing machine and she is now tired of going up and down all the time, goes sometimes.

Christina is pregnant, we saw, Gertrude says that at borehole people commented on fact that her last born is still very young, and already she is pregnant again. Rather than fact that she has no husband, at least at time of interview her husband had disappeared to Mzuzu to marry another wife there.

Livia came back from tailoring course in Balaka at 6pm and asked Gertrude to keep a new skirt and new shoes from her new boyfriend there (the one that she met on her way back from nearest tradingcenter) where she went to see her ex-husband, who then proposed to her and gave her his telephone number). He works in a china shop in Balaka, Gertrude doubts whether he may have stolen the items from the shop where he works because it is inly mid month, not yet end of month when he will get his salary. Livia afraid that her mother will see the clothes, first has to tell her that she has this boyfriend, then tomorrow she can show them. The man is serious, she says, already buying her clothes, but she hasn’t told him yet that she has children. “Ah! That is why you went without chitenje today!” laughed Gertrude, dressing like a girl, that has no children yet. Other days she takes Hana with her, but today left her at house.

February 12, 2009 Thursday

“Pumpkin is stronger like nsima”, said Gertrude when eating the first ripe pumpkin for breakfast this morning. People like it better than green maize,

yesterday evening at 7:30pm the husband of Amila had come to beg ufa, saying he doesn’t have anything at home. Gertrude told him we don’t have, expecting he wouldn’t stop coming if we gave. She suggested this morning that we should go to Amila and ask if it was true. Since we were the first ones to plant pumpkin, we are the first ones to eat now, and we have many. By next week others will also be eating from their field, guesses Gertrude. I suggested we take a pumpkin to Amila, but then realize it would cause problems, which Gertrude confirmed. If we walk all the way there with a pumpkin everybody will see that we went to give her one. May be better tell her to come and get one, and urge her not to tell anyone.

We found her not at home though, went to ADMARC at nearest tradingcenter, also chief Mudzi B had gone there. Jeneti was weeding her potatoes. Esnart came to tell this morning that she is charging phones now. Met Rosemary on the road, looked unhealthy, thin bad skin.
Mr Ntawanga showed us the field (1/4 acre) where 1 variety of ICRISAT g/nut has been planted (but late as the seeds came late 15 Dec). Even though initially 6 people had been appointed to each grow a certain small number of ridges, this field has been cultivated by the couple living next to it. The woman told us she had planned to grow maize and sabola on this plot, but planted these somewhere else now. The deal is that 35kg has to be given to ICRISAT for further spreading while the rest can be kept (I wonder whether she or those appointed 6 will take those g/nuts). They think app 90kg can be harvested. Weeding has been a problem, the woman said, since she had to do it all alone, ICRISAT did not supply money for ganyu. Termites are also a problem, don’t know the variety, they just write down ‘nsinjiro’, said Mr Ntawanga. The woman was instructed by Mr Ntawanga (ridges 25cm apart, 1 hand width between the phando’s, only 1 seed per phando, who had been instructed by Mr Chikombo who had been to Balaka to receive instructions from ICRISAT. “The people from Lilongwe” = ICRISAT had promised to come by yesterday, but they didn’t, we also passed by a maize field from the wife of bike repair with maize trial from Bunda college. The crops weren’t pretty though, so she had not received plates with the names of the varieties like Mr Ntawanga has. Florence is the other one who was selected for the trial, with a field next to road. After harvest they can tell which variety they like best and then a distribution project will be started, says Mr Ntawanga. Bunda college also gave some g/nut varieties to test to the 3 participants in Mudzi A.

At this house I saw the goat khola which they built some months ago had collapsed. FIDP had not sent the iron sheets that they had promised, some have gone to the FIDP office, said Mr Ntawanga, to beg for them and they were told that they will receive them in the next round in April. Then too chicken, bec and pig activities will start. The village has already received a new male goat of a different kind to be multiply with the females already distributed. FIDP’s aim is that eventually every HH in the village will have goats. Another male goat will still be send for Mudzi A 2, there they also did not receive iron sheets, so they put on grass themselves. In Mudzi A I they didn’t, “because lacking materials”. Still Mr Ntawanga emphasized that FIDP is really helping them.

We continued to grocery to pick up Gertrude’s telephone and give pictures but no one was there selling (app 11am). Mr Dauda from the phone charger has been told that he has been elected as vice-chairman of the village development committee. He didn’t even attend the meeting himself, so after being told he went to GVH to ask what this was all about, and especially why the previous chairman stopped prematurely; a chairman usually stays on for 5yrs, but this one was only in his 3th yr. GVH made clear that she wants one who listens to her. Mr Dauda gave example of the tree planting project, 39 people were to be selected from each village, but the one responsible for agroforestry at district level said that 35 could be put to work and the remaining 4 salaries would be for him. GVH also took 13 and somebody else also some. So eventually a much smaller number could actually work, not everybody could join. This is bad and should be addressed by the VDC who work at group level, receiving instructions from government and organizations about projects to be undertaken within the group of villages. The VDL then tells the GVH who tells all the chiefs, is GVH in VDC? But in practice the GVH has power over the VDC, concluded Mr Dauda from fact that she had been able to have the previous chairman replced. He doesn’t see any benefit if he is only to listen to the GVH, had her say that they will both listen to each other, he plans to gather a meeting with all chiefs as witnesses where she will repeat this.
Gertrude confirms that people talk a lot about what they have been eating.

Tumanene came to ask me if I can buy her a new face telephone next time that I go to Lilongwe. Here they cost 400mk while there 250-300mk. Sure, but not ask your husband in SA to send? Ah, nobody coming this way anytime soon. But Gertrude later said; she received a phone from her husband only recently but already now it looks very ugly, she is probably afraid that husband will see this.

Livia sent Fatima this morning to Gertrude with little note saying that she is going to buy units and will come to use Gertrude’s phone later on. However, she came later, saying that she failed to go and buy and gave 80mk to Gertrude for when we go to grocery = 50 units.

Lucia came at 12:30 to further learn how to make a shawl for baby.

Gertrude showed me how to pick pumpkin leaves and clean them. Earlier we picked some mseula from our garden, which I later peeled with Lucia and Livia who visited. Evelin also joined us with daughter. All knitted; Evelin and daughter also had their hair braided by Gertrude. Livia is making decorations which Gertrude learned from Lucia. She wants to make 10 of them and sell at [nearest tradingcenter], Lucia is learning how to make baby shawl, Evelin baby shoe.

Evelin soon started asking whether we eat and cultivate mseula in Netherlands, so I told her no, no maize, no nsima, but especially potatoes and wheat. Showed her the calendar with typical Dutch pictures as well as the picture of my family. Later I also served stroopwafcls which I had brought from the Netherlands. Ah, I was very happy to be bonding, to have some genuine social contact, to have people ask me questions in stead of other way round. Whether all my sisters work, whether we live in 1 house, at what age we start having children, how many children most people have. How we avoid having many children after reaching the amount we want. What happens when a man catches his wife cheating on him. I said that usually leads to divorce, here sometimes divorce, sometimes they talk about it and continue their marriage. I said that can also happen in NL, if woman says she is sorry and won’t do it again. But that it is usually the man who cheats, and here? Here 50-50, answered Lucia. Evelin asked if it is true that if you have sex just after menstruating you cannot get pregnant. Then Gertrude brought up condoms, after which Livia said: sindipange, and brought up the usual, can’t enjoy a sweet with it wrap (“sumamva kukoma”). Boys here don’t allow, say they can’t enjoy sex like that, Evelin just laughed, Lucia stayed quite. Livia said boy and girl should both get their blood tested, and when negative can just have sex, no need for condom. Livia also mentioned “kuthira pansi” as a birth control method = leave church before singing. But also that boys don’t like, can’t enjoy they say, and refuse, if you ask about condoms, boys say you don’t love them - chikondi. Livia has never used. Funny, I was confused because they asked about birth control after having children, while amongst any peers the issue is rather before being in time before fertility stops. I hope we can discuss more tomorrow when going to have blood tested with Livia. Livia asked if there are also prostitutes in NL.

Tinenenji also passed by and said that she will not stop coming even though people say that she only comes to beg soap.
When we visited Pamela we sat inside “m’thunzi”, to be in shadow. Sometimes people can also be ashamed because they haven’t swept etc.

Then Gertrude also asked, as I had asked her about how much is paid to the chief for marriage. Total amount is 700mk, said Lucia: 300 for GVH, 200 for chief and 200 for parents. Besides this there is a meeting with the ankhoswe during which the newly weds are being advised (about what?). Sometimes at same day, especially when girl is pregnant which is often the case, then they hurry, but not necessarily. If a couple starts to live together without paying this, the chief won’t help when they are fighting and won’t arrange the funeral when their child dies, but he doesn’t go to claim his/her money. The amount is not the same everywhere, can be up to 1000mk.

When I asked Lucia why she stopped mandasi BS, she just answered “ndaduka”, had no money. How do you find money now? Ganyu, but is ganyu to be found these days? No, but at weeding time there was.

I asked Gertrude whether it was just her assumption that Tinenenji wants children but fails to get them, or whether she heard other or Tinenenji mention this? May be she is preventing, I said. Ah, according to village life, I don’t think she can be preventing... Especially since her husband already has a child elsewhere, she has to give him a child soon too. It’s probably like Chisoni, who thinks that somebody is bewitching her because she fails to get pregnant.

Cholera is coming this way, had first reached Lilongwe (from Zimbabwe?), Gertrude’s mother got it few days ago and 6 people from village around here have died from it. Gertrude is extra careful now with making sure that flies are kept away. I will make a bottle with added to water to regularly disinfect our hands.

During day sun, at end of afternoon bit of rain.

**Friday February 13 2009**

In night some rain (the loud noise on iron sheet roof wakes me up), morning starts with rain too.

When Lucia and Livia visited yesterday, the 3 of us sat outside peeling mseula while Gertrude cleaned our lunch pots and plates because afraid of cholera. She yelled to Livia that she should be chatting with me, first thing that Livia asked is whether we shall go to the VCT centre together.

Livia came to use my phone, as I had told Gertrude that Livia can use the many bonus minutes that I saved but hardly use. She have to use before 9am, Livia came before 6am on her way to borehole, but I was not out of bed yet. Came back on way back from borehole and [Livia] called her boyfriend in Balaka, saying that she won’t be able to come and sleep (sindibwera kudzagona, koma lamulungu) but will arrange to come on Sunday at 4pm. Doesn’t like going to the shop where he works, therefore
after knocking off, he then asked to talk to Livia’s friend = Gertrude to whom he said: ndakonzeka kumusamalira, sindimunamiza ayi - I am ready to take care of her, I will not deceive her, but he still doesn’t know that she has 2 children he would have to take care too!

Passing by Livia on our way back from grocery Gertrude told her to come see us so as to tell her that we failed to buy units but she can use my free bonus minutes. She [Livia] said she’d come later because first had to cook for father. Today we were to go to C. clinic for blood testing at about 8am, but now she first has to wash clothes for father.

People have received a bottle with chloride (app ½ ltr) to add to water to avoid cholera, but most don’t like to use it, says Gertrude. They find that it smells bad.

Mother of Gertrude when still at boarding school used to sell mandasi during holidays, but what about older people, mothers of Eveles, Alma, Chenawe? Is it a relatively recent development that are trying to find their own money, or has this always been part of (matrilineal) culture? Gertrude says husband cannot always provide everything that a woman wishes for, or some things may embarrass her to ask for, eg daughters cannot ask their fathers for underwear. Even though they have their own income, they still want a husband, Gertrude said convinced, to add to own income. It’s difficult to find enough income, but still, those that are at the edge of survival. Well, always have option to kuoda, may need be through once having a chibwenzi.

Sofia had asked Gertrude if she could take some nkhwani from our bush, which Gertrude allowed. Sofia went to take when we had gone to hospital. Chenawe saw her take from our field and reprimanded her, when we passed by Chenawe she greeted us, but didn’t say anything about Sofia. A had also wanted to take a pumpkin, she told us while cleaning a dengu-top full of nkhwani, but didn’t because of Chenawe. When we arrived home she sent her daughter (very skinny) to come and take pumpkin, because she wants to keep the little ufa she has for eating tonight.

On our way to C. clinic passed by Chenawe & husband too who had between them a dengu-top full of maize, harvested from their own field, grinded with some sort of grateer, later after some drying in the dengu-top will make nsima. Not ideal because like this it takes much more maize to make same nsima, says Gertrude. But at least to be eating something, when Gertrude told her that we were going to C. clinic to get our blood tested, Chenawe asked kachirombo [HIV]? Why? You are just staying! (without husband, added Gto explain her comment to me).

Walking to C. village with Livia I asked what made her decide to go for blood testing now. She anwered that Gertrude had told her that it is good to go for blood testing when she was ill recently. Discussed with boyfriend? No, not talked about this, he did not encourage her, she did not encourage him to go. She thought it better to first check herself, said she would tell him if she would be found positive, but was not very scared because she had had a test when pregnant. If she had not had test, ii, then she would have been afraid now, wouldn’t tell her mother though, if found positive. But well, she would just accept it and think “zimachitika”. Do they send you to Balaka then? She asked us, she was surprised to hear that in NL people also go for VCT, thought AIDS was only in Malawi. Following our conversation yesterday I added that in NL people also avoid pregnancy by using condoms, early
withdrawal, “safe days”, pills, injection. She prefers injection, she then brought up. But on our way back she said she has been to a traditional doctor to prevent ever becoming pregnant again. I asked whether she thinks that many people here know how to prevent HIV. Ah they know; refuse when somebody proposes or use a condom, but why does the disease still spread if people know? Most men don’t like to use condom, saying the oil gives them sores and coughing. They may discuss and agree with you first, to be using condoms, but then later refuse. Many women find it difficult to then walk away, because the boy will show her the money that she will get afterwards and then it is difficult to loose that money, better do this and win the money. Others because they don’t want to loose the love of this man. When I told about how I refused to have sex with Feye without condom before he got the guts to have himself surprised, eh, you really forced him! I suggested that is sometimes difficult for a woman to refuse sex without condom because she herself also wants to have sex, but this was not confirmed by Livia, rather mentioned again not waiting to loose the money or his love. Says she used condom once, soon after somebody proposed to her, but Gertrude doubts whether this is true. Went before to get tested with brother and sister, then her sister came out without saying anything but immediately took a bike taxi home. The same year she died, when I asked about the condom wraps that we have been seeing laying around she seemed surprised, asked where, probably doesn’t know what they look like. Apparentley some use them, she just said.

At the clinic we were helped by a woman, the man who helped us last time stay under the tree outside. There were no other people, later I saw in the book that the last ones had been tested on the 10th of Feb, since November in total 371 tests done (including repeat visits) of which 23 turned out positive. In Nov, 214 tests (14 positive), Dec, 47 tests (4 positive), Jan 55 tests (5 positive), Feb 26 tests so far (2 positive). Of all 23 positives 16 female, 5 male. The woman knew these numbers by heart, except for Feb she had to count in her book. Also Female & Male she had to count, the large number in Nov was because of the campaign through radio, posters at trading centres, a microphone car, chiefs and churches. She didn’t seem to keep track of the fact that Gertrude and I came for repeat check, as advised the first time after 3 months. She had the 3 of us come in and quite brutally (with force) took three drops of blood from our middle finger, then we left the room for Livia to be concluded. Livia later told Gertrude that she had told the woman that she has a boyfriend after which the woman advised her to also take this boyfriend for blood testing and come back to get condoms when they want to start sleeping together because if you sleep with him without condom you will contract EDZI (or at least that’s what Livia made of it). She wasn’t offered condoms now, after coming out I asked Livia whether she was happy, which she confirmed, but later she asked Gertrude that the woman asked her whether she suffered from malaria and diarrhoea often and whether this inquiry meant that she in fact was HIV positive. Seemed uncertain of her status, however I had seen the book and thus knew for sure that she is negative. Gertrude told her later, then Livia said that she had not been sure whether they may be hiding the truth from her. Phingi came to see the pictures of my family which I had yesterday shown to Sofia, Livia and Lucia. Enjoyed watching them, I am very much resemble my mother, and I should give her a picture to remember me. I told her I will when I leave, when about to go she asked me how the trip to clinic was?, whether we got our blood tested and whether mother of Joy also got her blood tested and whether she is fine? Bwinobwino? Alibe [she doesn’t have it]? She should keep her leg closed, she then commented. Not open all the time (spreading knees and feet outwards, but closed "kubisa" - *hide*(with hand between legs on vagina). She already has ana awiri popanda mwamuna [2 kids without husband], but I asked, how can she find another husband if she refuses to sleep with them? She should go work at [large commercial estate] to feed her children
herself, said Phingi. After she left Gertrude laughed; first she is saying that Livia should got married so that at least somebody is taking care of her when Phingi will die now she says she should not marry but work at [large commercial estate], when going to [clinic] Phingi had grabbed some money from under her chitenje and given to Livia to buy paraffin and a mandasi for Joy (10mk).

NB: I continued notes in laptop!

Feb 13, 2009 Friday [some rain in morning and late afternoon]

At the clinic Gertrude cheated the health officer that she was interested in buying the decoration that the woman was knitting, but actually just wanted to ‘steal’ the pattern. Asked pen and paper from me to quickly draw the design.

When Gertrude was called in for her results the woman just gave the result after which they went to discuss the price: how many do you want? Just 1 or 2. Smaller ones are 150, this one 200 MK. Then when I came for result the woman told me that the best behavior is to abstain. I should have said that I want children, and she what she would have answered then. To Gertrude the woman just said that she should come back if she chooses to do sex in the meantime.

When heading back from [clinic], i asked Livia whether her second child had been planned - since she said that she prefers taking injection as form of birth control and went when I was here last time. She said she wanted it indeed - but I wonder. She now said that she has been to a traditional doctor to take medication to never have children anymore. But what about this new boyfriend, Gertrude inquired. He surely will want a child of his own with you, especially since you have children with others - which she says she has informed him about, and he said it was no problem. She wanted to get married by next year so that she can still take breastfeed Hana before leaving her with Phingi. But the boy (22 yrs) insisted on marrying sooner, within 4 months. Which would mean that they marry, but Livia will remain in the house of mother until Hana is old enough to be left with grandmother. Then Livia will move to husband in Balaka. Cannot take child because men can be mean to children from other fathers. Will Phingi allow to take care of your children, I asked? She encourages me to get married, so that she has someone to take care of me when she dies... The husband-to-be says he does not want children. Jaha, that's what he says now, Gertrude laughed. Then, again, she apologized for us asking so many questions. Livia said it was fine, she had learned from us too. Father of first child was younger than Livia (1988 & 1987). Gertrude thinks Livia was lying about traditional medicine and already having told boyfriend about kids.

When we reached Mudzi A Livia turned off to go to Suset. It seems the potential relationship with one of Suset's customers is still worked on. Recently Suset had also come to secretly discuss something with Livia, said Gertrude.

Gertrude said that on radio it is said that many women feel ashamed to carry a condom in their handbag, because when boys can see they will say that she is a prostitute. Either planning to have sex with them or otherwise with someone else.

At Sundays Gertrude often went to youth days organized by church, where sport & bao games would be organized, speeches and drama plays. Especially these last ones were liked. Many did not listen to the words [message], but just liked to watch. Here it was said that it is good to use condoms. I was surprised, church encouraging condoms? Gertrude says the speakers/actors were youth and said that they knew that youth cannot manage to abstain.
Over lunch (rice, eggplant and the msewula we harvested yesterday - while to the clinic Gertrude had left them on fire to cook, and asked Sofia to add water) I said I felt sorry for Sofia. All her children from the same man, and then being left to fend for herself (and kids), being chased by g'mother, and every now and then being threatened to be chased by mother-in-law. Husband married another now who gave him a child and he recently said this was the last support I will give you. Sofia was very angry, telling Gertrude that she had received proposals, but always refused, not knowing that this husband could leave her like this. One of those proposers is now in South Africa, taking good care of his wife back home...

Passed by Chief Mudzi B to give her sugar and 2 bars of soap, as thanks for staying in her vil. Saw her sister Kondwani with a bottle and I asked whether it was the chloride that everybody had received, but no, mankhwala for cotton at 100 MK per bottle for those in cotton club. Those who are not in a club pay more. Clubs are organized by cotton buying company and gather whenever the company wants to spread info. She couldn't answer me why some people don't join club, for her it was her first year to join.

Yesterday, when talking about NL Lucia asked about school, I told her that we go to school from 4-16 yrs and some continue after. Is that secondary? There they go fast, explained Gertrude. Livia commented how her cousin is in standard 2 while already going to school for years.

Tinenenji, Ada and Dorica came to knit. When Elube passed by to borehole she yelled to Tinenenji: He daughter-in-law (agwekwe - ChiYao), why didn't you come to help me on the field today? Tinenenji yelled back that she will come tomorrow. Gertrude interpreted this as Elube being happy with relationship between son (ex-husband Fatima) and Tinenenji. Then to Dorica, Elube said: And you are just quite there... So it seems a publicly know fact that Dorica was also with her son, as Livia told Gertrude. Fatima came to see her ex-husband too today.

Gertrude expects people to be harvesting by beginning of March, bola. But, I then said, if they harvest early, they will run out of it sooner too. Gertrude thinks not, though, because people will be eating from their fields until harvest, either green maize or drying for ufa (and then using much more maize for same nsima). So the actually, the sooner the better. People will probably first be storing in house, remembering the recent thefts, but later in nkhotwe.

Chief F. said he can't catch Ntaba since he is his son-in-law (married to relative of him).

Gertrude asked Jasmine to teach her how to make clay pots, lot of work, says Jasmine, but will teach us tomorrow if she finds time.

Chenawe, chief Mudzi B & Amila were all drying maize from this season to make premature ufa. Drying for the kennels to become hard then to maize mill. But if this would be done with all maize it would quickly rot or at least taste better, also much more ufa is needed for same amount of nsima. So people wait for maize cobs to be really dry and hard before harvesting them. Amila said that the woman living in front of her (married in Zambia) was also drying like this already.

Chief Mudzi B recently passed by with a lot of maize for mother who had received money from a son in SA. Chief Mudzi B has some sores on face and chifuwa, Amila and baby infected eyes, Amila was ashamed that she hadn't kept some sugarcane for us, she sold for 150mk yesterday. Had gone to [nearest tradingcenter] to buy the cheap maize at ADMARC, but found it all sold, then bought 1kg at 80mk.
If Phingi will take care of Livia’s children while she herself goes to stay with new husband in Balaka, she will leave all her maize for her mother, she and her husband will buy maize in town.

Breakfast, popcorn, from different kind of maize!

Sofia has not done any ganyu, even hired herself after receiving MASAF money. Just depended on what her husband sent (1 time he sent mangos to be selling). It’s not because there is no one who can babysit her kids while she is working because they always just play around the compound when she works on her field.

Maize has to be boiled for app 1 hour, mseula 1.5 hours, maize cobs (now) 40-60 minutes.

Eveles sent granddaughter with many pumpkins for us, we sent most of them back so that they eat themselves. Gertrude concluded that others have now also started eating pumpkins.

February 14, 2009 Saturday [NB more notes in laptop]

Feb 14, Saturday

When Jasmine and (orphaned granddaughter) Trinity had gone to Balaka to buy maize at Admarc there, relative of Jasmine’s husband had complained about how Jasmine just leaves her husband alone for day and night (spending night at Admarc queue), to take care of himself, “image!”. They spend night at Jasmine's son in Balaka who sells second hand clothes - but complains there is little business these days. Prices at Admarc Balaka and [nearest tradingcenter] are same, why going all the way to Balaka, Gertrude wonders [more likely to succeed?]. Others also commented that one spends money for food when traveling far, better buying maize from vendors near by, for higher price.

Sofia passed by in early morning to GVH. Her husband had still not sent the last money that he had said he would give for maize, so she went to borrow at GVH. GVH had told her she better works hard to build her own house and divorce because there is no benefit in this marriage - she is just taking care of her children alone. Sofia hoped to borrow 1000MK. Came back with money indeed, but didn't say how much. Later when she came to have hair braided by Gertrude she said GVH has given her 500MK - gift, not loan!

We went to see Eveles at her rice dambo field, she was weeding for second time. Helped her while asking questions about past. When I managed to weed properly she said that my husband would by mine fully, because I could now manage to cultivate a rice field. She first was disappointed that Feye did not come along to help her in the field too, he would have been more of a help because stronger. When she harvests, she wants to cook him rice, she said again, and she will buy him eggs and oil all by herself. She also said that he must have married another by now, since I am away from him for so long. First objected to us helping her: growing rice is for old women, not for young girls. Didn't really answer my question WHY young women don't cultivate rice. Said that for example her g'daughters refuse to help her, complaining that she gives away most of the rice after harvest. Indeed, Eveles confirms that after harvest she will first cook for the family that she stays with, then give all her friends who have helped her with things, and keep the rest for food. Doesn't cultivate cotton - too much work (applying chemical every 2 weeks, weeding 4 or 5 times). Rice needs no other care than weeding twice until
I asked her whether in past women were also doing BS, or whether that is something new. In past also, eg her mother brewed beer (father traded fish and grew tobacco for cash, was able to hire ganyu for tobacco field - Eveles herself also sells tobacco). Mother spent her income herself, eg on clothes for children etc (but she did keep some beer for husband to drink with friends). Parents stayed together until father died, then mother stayed alone. They were cousins. Other women would trade ufa or groundnuts, going from Balaka to Chiradzulu - transport was difficult then. For very low prices compared to now. But less trading then, people would give each other, not sell. If somebody was hungry, they would just receive food from others. Less longing for wealth, pursuing of enrichment, money. Most people just had one pair of clothes, washing them at the lake and waiting for them to dry. Those who had 2 pieces of clothes were considered rich. But nowadays people are after money, “akufuna kulemera.” They want more clothes etc, at least 4 pieces. In past it was much easier to eat meat, everybody had their own goats and cows. [How come people could eat more meat even though they did less BS?] Maybe because people have stopped appreciating God, thanking him by offering thobwa after harvest. All villagers would gather at one place under big tree, brew beer and offer it to god by pouring it in a clay pot buried in the earth. But now they have stopped doing that and God is not happy because of that. People are just busy with money, and God is not happy with that either. Therefore there is less rain and less food now. And because people are after money there is this disease now. [Why don't women do BS if they want money - they know the risk of AIDS?] Lazy: they think they will spend long hours at market, mochedwa, to find little money, while it is quick and more if somebody just gives them the money. They want nice clothes. In past there were less divorces. Herself, she married very young and therefore she could not get pregnant yet. But people used to assume that when you marry, children come. So her husband divorced and married another, they had a child but child died. Then the man went to Nairobi to fight for 8 years. When he came back he wanted to marry Eveles again, who first refused but eventually agreed. Then he went to Nairobi again to fight for another 2 years after which they started to have children. Gave birth to 10, but 9 died. One of her daughters because of AIDS, she had a husband who moved around a lot, sleeping with other women and he infected her. Her children died before they reached 1 year when she realized that she had become infected and died. She refused first marriage proposals, but allowed this one because he had a big radio.

Two women came by, relatives, talking about a persistent dream that Eveles keeps having of a relative telling her that the daughter of one of the women must be initiated. Eveles said “We should all contribute 5MK to add to 100MK to pay for salt for ndiwo and my friend who will assist me to advise and sing the required songs.” “But where are we going to find 5MK in this hunger season,” the women complained. If we don't do it I will keep having the same dream over and over, said Eveles. Means people still believe in things of past, commented Gertrude on our way back from field.

Daughter-in-law (Tumbuka, Eveles comments) wants to move to [tiny crossroads market]. Her eldest daughter wants to marry but only paid money to arrange the wedding to her g'mother in [tiny crossroads market], not to Eveles, and Eveles is agry about that. Told son & wife that they should discuss these things as a family, then wife got angry and wants to move. Fine with Eveles, she will just take care of her own. The couple is still discussing whether man will also move or stay with mother.

Said that GVH came one morning very early, but Eveles was already in her field. Then GVH said she had come to buy some rice, but when Eveles asked she said she had only 20MK. “Just came to steal my rice!”

Talking about the past reminded her of a 1952 Southern Rhodesia coin that she carries around in
string of cloth around her waist. Some use these coins for traditional medicine, she said. Wants to be able to show her grandchildren. With that small coin you could buy meat, fish...

Many women gathered at our house in afternoon: Chief Mudzi B & sister Kondwani, Grace, Dorica, Sofia, Blessings, Chisoni, Lovely, Vanessa (woman who went to Blantyre to give birth, wife of g’son of GVH who did lot of ganyu round our house), 3 g’daughters of Eveles. To knit and to have hair braided by Gertrude. Blessings had brought the 2 zitenje that were left of the 9 sent by husband from SA to show and hopefully sell. Sold 7 already at 800MK, especially to women. She also wanted a picture from her young son, who cried though. The women complained about how their children follow them everywhere, bothering them (crying etc). They also discussed that husband of Amila was moving around begging ufa from all women. Lovely remembered how they used to play that they were knitting, using grass sprieten before Dorica was born. Chief Mudzi B was laughed at for not even being able to properly hold needle and thread. Gertrude encouraged them to all come again tomorrow before they forgot what they had learned, in stead of only coming sporadically, which some of them promised. I asked them how they compared this year’s njala to other years. This year was bad, they said. Because of the erratic rainfall last year people had less maize than usual. However, it was not as bad as 2001/2002, when they had money but there was no maize to be found anywhere. “M’mudzi muno mulibe njala chifukwa cha MASAF koma midzi ina...” At least here people got some money through MASAF to be buying maize. So besides green maize some are at least eating nsima or phala, while in other villages only green maize now.

The MASAF field is very small! Could easily have been done by 3-4 people in few mornings. So indeed, most days the women just gathered to chat... It seems only about 10-20 trees have been planted.

Grace had bought a jersey for daughter before she left for Mzuzu at 400 MK. With money (2000-3000MK) she received from a man at one of the election meetings. Innocent had commented that they are not related, so they must be in relationship, considering that he gives her money. Now she would like to buy the poncho that Gertrude closed, at 600MK. Where does money come from??

Livia came back from Balaka in dark, around 7 PM - Phingi angry for coming home so late. Livia told us she had indeed called her boyfriend at 4 and met with him and went to buy the thread that Gertrude and I ordered. Bcoz of rain they went to his house to chat until she started cycling back home. They agreed that he would pay for a bike taxi coming and going (total 400-500 MK) tomorrow - his free day, so she can some to visit him the whole day. She says she told him about her blood test, and that he said he would go on Monday or Tuesday. Gertrude asked whether they will be sleeping together, Livia laughed. Being together all day, of course you will, how could you otherwise have gotten this last baby?, said Gertrude. Ah, I will tell you all about it tomorrow, answered Livia...

Shop clerks like Livia’s new boy (friend) make 3000-3500mk/month, Gertrude read in paper that they want their salaries raised to 4000-5000mk, but dooesn’t know whether they succeeded.

Calling at telephone bureau costs 50mk per minute, always paying full minutes. Livia is again not taking Hana to Balaka as she used to.

Husband of GVH and grandsons came for shelter at our khonde when they were spraying their cotton and rain came. While here the boys discussed that Rosemary & daughters have been told to leave the village
because Ntaba can still come here saying that he wants to visit his mother-in-law. They will probably wait until after harvest though. The boys were wondering whether the family will move back to chilipa or just move to F. village.

1347  **February 15, Sunday** [NB more note in laptop] - no rains, blue sky

1348  Feb 15, Sunday: Blue sky since days

1349  At 9 AM Livia came to tell that she cheated mother that she will go to J. village vlg to see brother, but actually planning to go to Balaka to meet boyfriend. Then mother said that she wants Livia to go to Balaka later today to buy maize early in the morning tomorrow. Young cousin Talina will go with her - probably to check on Livia, after coming home so late yesterday. Livia happy, because this will also allow her to meet boyfriend. Will meet him in afternoon, but spend night at brother's house, because afraid they will find out. Boyfriend rents house within same fence as shop where he works, paying 1000MK, with electricity. On radio announced that shop clerks salaries should increase to at least 5000MK, so it seems they must have, otherwise can't pay such high rent. The shoes and skirt he bought her must have costed him 900-1000MK, Gertrude estimates. On Wednesday he will finish giving her clothes until they marry, Livia said (?), then she knows he is really serious. She is clearly happy, “to have found boyfriend who gives her so much” Gertrude made of it (clothes, transport costs). Yesterday evening mother had kept no nsima for her, because she was so late. Made some phala herself.

1350 Some days ago Sandala passed by to greet: has stopped making mandasi now: no mpamba. I wonder whether they have been doing ganyu on the end...

1351 Chloride has already been distributed twice, last month and this month. By health officers from [nearest tradingcenter], who come to weigh children twice a month under the big tree of Mudzi B. Everybody received, but nobody tried to get more, not interested.

1352 In morning Sofia passed on her way to her mbatata field to weed. Everybody is growing sweet potatoes now, although they didn’t mention this in interviews - probably just forgot, thinks Gertrude.

1353 Eveles said that the pumpkins that g’daughter came to bring us where received from someone else and to be taken to Alma, not us. This morning one of her g’daughters even came to beg some pumpkins from our garden. So they have not yet started eating from own garden.

1354 Gertrude tells about lobola in Dedza (which also happens among Tumbuka, but not yao) = Ngoni. Man has to pay either money or cattle to parents of his wife-to-be plus at the engagement ceremony 2 zitenje, shoes, plates, bowl, for washing hands, clothes and cup to fiancé. Usually she gives the ziiyiya to parents, but they are supposed to be for her HH. She is told how to use them to serve her husband, kneeling down when giving him his food. Also among Yao girls are taught to beave like that but most don’t do it. Also in Dedza some don’t do it, but more than here, definitely more. Then, in Dedza, men also have to build a house near the family of wife, friends and relatives of man help him. In Gertrude’s home village most are still in their first or maybe second marriage, so there seem to be less divorces than her, possibly because of the high investments made when marrying. Lobola does not need to be paid back when divorcing, because of the children that the wife (‘s family) still have to take care of. Usually marry around the age of 20, but Gertrude’s mother recently told her that now even from age 17, many have “unexpected pregnancies” before marriage which sometimes lead to marriage but more often not. When marrying another man eventually, the first born child(ren) usually stay with the wife’s mother, only sometimes with her and new husband.
Went to Jasmine to ask for some mbatata roots/stems to plant, very easy. People just find these growing in the field where last year potatoes were grown. The stems can just be planted like that, basi, she was kubandira and kupalira her cotton, big field. Then walked with us through her maize fields on the other side of the road to reach some potatoes growing amidst maize. One part of the maize field had small yellow plants overgrown with weeds and without cobs, she had not have enough fertilizer for this part and therefore also neglected to weed. Why didn’t you use Innocent’s fertilizer, Gertrude asked. Ah, can’t tell her to give me.

Sofia was drying thelere leaves and vegetables (cut into slides) and nkhwani leaves and flowers. You have to cook the leaves for about 10 minutes and then leave them to dry in the sun (today blue sky after days of rain). The boiling water that she threw away was brown, full of nutrients, I am afraid.

In afternoon we will go with Jasmine to collect clay so that mawa afternoon we start making clay pots. She was saying that her daughter who lives in Zomba (why?) used to exchange such home made clay pots for rice after people harvested their maize.

Is there a gender difference in food (in)security? What could such a difference be? Fields usually belong to the woman, although many men also have their own fields. Sometimes working each on own, sometimes both working on both. Chief Mudzi A and Hamra separately, Thokozani & Levison together, (but often Thokozani alone) husband of Jasmine often alone (but Jasmine planted, now kubandira and kupalira), Rosemary worked on cotton field of husband, Florence & husband together, Amila + husband together (after divorce discussed that they will share the harvest), GVH & husband usually on separate fields (he mostly on cotton field around our house, seems to have his own money separately from wife). Hilda alone, Elube only with kids, Sweetness often alone, Magda & husband together with ganyu. Gertrude says that if a husband and wife worked together on field and divorce, share harvest. But if husband not helped on field or by paying ganyu he will not receive part of the harvest, may be like new boyfriend of Venesi - quickly finding new partner where to eat. Fatima went to home village to work on her field, while husband worked on his field here.

Cut egg-plant.

Lunch: kusonkha moto, put in pot with water (½ tambula = pink cup) and some salt. After some boiling add tomatoes, another pot: bit of oil to grease, egg, stirring until dry & scrambled then add tomatoes on top, no stirring, put lit back on. Meanwhile keep fire going, then stir & finished. 1 ½ cup of water, bring to boil, add 1 ½ cup of rice, when water has been taken up by rice, add some onion and spoon of oil, stir. Take away all fire, spread oils, leave for another 10-15 minutes.

“Empowerment” of girls may have led to irresponsible behaviour, not obeying grandmothers) parents anymore, saying “tili ndi ufulu” - we are free.
Yesterday Eveles again said that people these days say “ndi nthawi yanga” - as answer to my question why people don’t change their behaviour now that they know about the risk of HIV and the ways to prevent.

Some planted tomatoes at non-dimba fields, just here in village, like all other crops, when they are ripe, they have low value because everybody has own, there is plenty of it.

Again many women came to knit, Tumanene had her hair braided, knitting: Dorica, Kondwani (sister of chief Mudzi B), Tumanene, Esmart, Chisoni, 2 granddaughters of Eveles, Livia, Innocent, Trinity (g’daughter Jasmine), Vanessa. Telling each other that “when you give birth I will knit you this or that”, It seems that the bigger the group, the less talking. Gertrude says = less free to talk.

Woman from K. village came to learn from Gertrude how to send text message. She is married to one of the sons of GVH in SA. Sofia and she discussed while here that a bar has now been opened near [large commercial estate] and the ex-wife of the owner of our house is working there. The woman said to Sofia: you used to come here sometimes for a month after quarrelling with your husband and then you went back, now you went there for only 4 months before you were sent here. Is he still coming here to visit you or not? Sodia said no, he came one day but I didn’t sleep with him, I don’t want another child from him, I’m just waiting for him to build a house for me. I will have enough maize after harvest and will try hard to find money to buy more, will ask my brother in SA to send me money. Wants to build house nearby ours, where cchief Mudzi A also wants to build (where Fatima cut cassava leaves from tree)

Woman said that her younger sons go to get condoms at [clinic] to make balls. “The wraps you see lying around come from them”. Says she went there herself for blood testing and will also take her husband when he comes back from SA. Sofia also wants to go and take her children too (3 eldest, not youngest). They also discussed that it was the owner of this house who told his mother that he doesn’t want to see the Rosemary family in Mudzi B anymore when he comes back after he heard about the theft. After which his mother chased them.

Livia came to get her clothes, is going to tell mother about boyfriend. Yesterday he also gave her a chitenje and 1000mk to buy a cellphone from a boy in village behind Mudzi B, the remaining 1000mk for the phone he will give tomorrow. Livia already went to give the deposit of 1000mk to that boy. Says she didn’t sleep with him yet, when Gertrude asked whether she used condom. Gertrude thinks he must be stealing, to be able to afford all this, many boys and girls working in shops in Lilongwe does.

Livia sold 100mk of green tomatoes from her field today to an unfamiliar passer by. He will just keep them in his house until they are ripe.

Jasmine took us to get cly for making pot tomorrow, somewhere through Innocent’s maize field where Gertrude noticed that the maize is now already drying, and that Innocent did not finish weeding, but the plants do have cobs. When we reached black earth with grasses she started digging, not deep. Said that they leave a small miniature pot (doth of clay, thumbed to get pot-shape) to keep the real pots from breaking. Also told us how in the past they used to make a skirt from their chitenje by tying it
around their waist with a grass. The same chitenje would in the night used as a blanket for wife and husband, when home she spread the dothi on an empty bag to dry, get harder. Then tomorrow she will sprinkle some water on it and leave it in the sun for some more time. Then in afternoon we can make pots. Gertrude asked whether it is true that in past people used to cook nsima in a clay pot which Jasmine confirmed, until the azungu came and told the people that it is better to use metal pots.

Monday February 16, 2009

When Gertrude went to borehole together with Phingi and Livia. Livia asked Phingi why she always sends Talina to go with her, what is wrong? Nothing, nothing, answered Phingi. Still Phingi wants that in stead of going to school Talina goes with Livia to Balaka today, wait for Livia’s tailoring course to end and then go to buy maize together. Livia apparently did not tell mother about boyfriend yet. What is she afraid of, I asked Gertrude. May be that her mother will not be happy, fearing that Livia will just get pregnant again without husband if she allows her to meet with this boyfriend, why doesn’t boyfriend come to see Livia’s parents? If he is really serious...... Phingi was fine with the possible marriage with a man brought forward by one of her friends.

All women from Mudzi A, Mudzi B and other villages have been told to go to J. village to collect sand for a car to take it to [nearest tradingcenter] hospital for maintainance. All seemed to be going, also chief Mudzi A, but Livia still going to Balaka.

Feb 16, Monday - again blue sky, the potatoes that we planted yesterday morning already look death...

Livia was lucky, all women from Mudzi B, Mudzi A and other villages were called to come to J. vlg to help collect sand for uitbouw of [nearest tradingcenter] hospital. Phingi also went, which meant that Talina had to stay at home to babysit. So Livia went to Balaka alone. But was back early, was coming our way when we just headed for Jasmine’s to start making clay pots, at about 3PM. Said she skipped tailoring class (has already followed the whole course, and received a sowing machine before, but it was taken by her uncle), just bought maize - and will tell the rest tomorrow. Had bought some schuimende chemicals in boterhamzak, for 20MK at market, to treat her hair to become big. But bites into scalp. Is homemade by vendors, as cheap alternative to real chemicals/shampoo at 250MK or above. Gertrude treated her hair when we were waiting for the pots to dry a bit, and later braided is. She is making herself attractive. Meanwhile, Hana made her first steps without help, and without anyone noticing or caring except for older sister Joy who was very excited: “you walk alone!” Molly joined us (also wanted her hair braided) and Dorica and Evelin - all at Jasmine’s today as we were learning to make clay pots there: Grind/mix the dothi by beating on it with stick on a big flat stone. Then kneden. Then clear some soil from sand with hoe by digging a bit. Put clay hump done and simply start making put in midden en langzaamaan verfijnen. Quite difficult obviously, although Jasmine was clearly very practiced in it. This is good time to start making the, she said, so as to have a series when cotton season comes and people can buy. At app 50-100MK, Gertrude estimates. Others were laughing that we are now learning to make clay pots (for making nsima or ndiwo or mandasi) while they - who are from the village - don’t know. But don’t seem interested either. When Gertrude said they can learn too, they just laughed. The pot are partly finished now, have their shape but not afgewerkt. Will do tomorrow, then leave to dry until Thursday, then burn them and then they are ready for use.

Innocent was preparing matemba, with tomatoes and water.
Afterwards we all went to our home where all started knitting, Molly and Livia had hair braided until dawn. Molly said that she likes to cook, but not to go to borehole or chigayo. Too far, can't manage, does it only because of umphawi. Would like to cook the whole day for someone if that person would then go to borehole and chigayo for her. Livia said that she likes going to chigayo, because it gives an opportunity to chat with friends. Molly has cellphone now, she was flashed twice, she said it was her husband at the Grocery who just wants to chat, she didn't call back.

Chief Mudzi A also went to J. vlg, chief Mudzi B didn't feel well though, she said, and therefore didn't go. By 9 AM the women came back. In case more sand will be needed, they will be called again. A car took it from J. vlg to [nearest tradingcenter].

Mother of Dorica went to [nearest tradingcenter] with a bucket of tomatoes from her own field, would join others afterwards. She too came back early, we met her on our way to M. school: Sindinachedwe - she didn't take long to sell all. This was her second time this year to go sell her own tomatoes.

Before going to school for drawing exchange project, we went to Kima who I yesterday found brewing kachasu (I was quite able to converse without Gertrude!). She had finished already though. Explained that it takes the madea, sugar and water about 3-4 days to yeast, depending on weather/temperature [see drawing Book III, page 44]. Stirring 3 times a day. Then put on fire as I saw yesterday. Bring to boil and wait for app 30 minutes for first drops of kachasu (local Malawi gin, both Kima and Magda called it, saying that the factory Malawi gin is based on kachasu). She didn't have much madea, only a small bowl at 5 MK. Usually makes more. Added 2 kgs of sugar (260MK) and 5 ltr water. Her yield was 1.5 liters of kachasu. Per 1 ltr bottle charges 200MK, or if somebody buys in small quantities a 40MK the bottle goes for 300MK. But she prefers selling it at once so that she has enough money to buy new sugar. While if she gets 40MK it is easily spent on some passerby selling matemba... Ver small profit margin, I find - why not charge more? Ah, people would not accept. Can you add water to the kachasu once people are very drunk? No, they will notice and not come again, they have ways to test. Can also notice from hangover next day: if one cannot work on the field the next day, water was added. I said I would like to buy the bottle for my husband as present - thinking that she'd be happy with the money. But she rather wants to sell me another time, then she will make good one: “advertisement,” she said. Suset was outside her house on her knees, throwing up/spitting saliva: has not been feeling well for a month now, malungo, they say. Kima takes care of kids.

On our way to Kima saw Doris playing around, Gertrude asked her why she stopped school: Palibe chifukwa [there is no reason]. We did see Dorica at M. school.

From Mudzi B to M. [nearest primary school] app 1 km. Went there to give standard 5 pupils the drawings that Tjeerd's class had made, and have them draw Malawi life. Gertrude did good job guiding the whole exercise - has experience in teaching, also in teaching arts.

Esnart charges 30MK for charging phone, and gave Gertrude a plate of therere because she was taking some from her field when Gertrude went to pick up phone.

Sofia had earlier said to Gertrude: Anthu amanena kuti Evelin is on ARVs.

Yesterday Frauke & Saqib came to visit. I told them I would meet them on road from [small crossroads market], but end up chatting with Teleza, Suset, Kima and Magda at Kima’s kitchen. She was making kachasu and showed me, big clay pot on fire, with lit with hole through which later on a pipe will be
leads through a bucket with cold water.

Didn’t see and asked all (eg what remains in clay pot after all kachasu fulnes have been boiled out?).

On way to [tiny crossroads market] school met Sofia coming back to Mudzi B with basin with ufa on head. Later she told Gertrude that she had visited grandfather (husband of GVH) who is ill but refusing to go to the hospital, saying that he is tired of going to the hospital just waiting for the day to die. Relatives are visiting him and encouraging him to go to hospital, have the bike ready for him, but still he refuses. Gertrude asked her where g’father is from: M. village, he got his land (around our house) from wife (GVH).

Venesi came back with daughter from hospital now though.

Kima added to her beer brewing talk (in laptop) that people like to drink at her place because they can drink alone, without meeting friends for whom they have to buy drinks like at [small crossroads market]. Here is more hidden, concealed, off the beaten track.

**Tuesday February 17, 2009**

Feb 17, Tuesday - rain in night, but some of the potato plants seem to have died indeed from 2 days sun... Sun during day.

Thokozani doing ganyu in cotton field of husband of GVH around our house (Levison has not been seen or heard since I arrived back in vlg). The man himself had not slept in night and this morning was taken to hospital at [nearest tradingcenter] : on a chair on bike, accompanied by GVH, three (grand)sons, Jasmine, Sofia & kids. Quite, however, they stopped their journey and turned back, because he says he will have to be transported by car or otherwise brancard. Some days ago GVH came to greet with hoe in hand on way to fetch some traditional medicine to give to ill husband, because she too was tired of going to the hospital.

Maize mill: 30MK to grind (ngaiwa), 30MK to make ufa.

Lovely, who came to ask for picture of her in cotton field and one of kids to send to husband in SA - and knitted while waiting for me to finish writing, [Lovely] told Gertrude that Fatima is indeed really divorced. The husband is just waiting to find money to give her to make it official. There is no set amount, can be anywhere from 100-2000MK. She [Lovely] also told Gertrude that Blessings received 44 blankets and 12 zitenje from husband in SA to sell. She sends boys around to [large commercial estate], [small crossroads market], Balaka to spread the word that here people can buy blankets.

Modesta was called away when knitting to receive a letter from boyfriend Davie via another boy. Kondwani commented that writing letters is what they (her generation) used to do to communicate with boyfriends and husbands, but these days people have cellphones, so they should be communicating through those, not letters which are something of the past. If she (Modesta and friends) gets pregnant, we can knit them shoes as we learn here, the women laughed. Vanessa complained that girls these days see no benefit in going to school, they only think of their boyfriends and how they can meet them. The women said that girls are ashamed to talk freely with their (girl)friends, but are very talkative and open to their boyfriends. When Gertrude and I went to take pictures at Lovely’ cotton field, we passed by a group of boy and girl adolescents (Ellesi
Chisoni complained that she was tired of eating (fresh) maize now, having been eating since 6th of Feb. The cobs are now getting dry and thus difficult to eat. Lovely agreed, saying that she ate so many cobs already that today she didn’t want any. She thinks they will be able to harvest by half March, as it already takes almost 2 hours to boil the maize cobs (compared to only a few minutes beginning of Feb).

Someone from C. village came back from SA and sent a message to all wives of men in SA that they can come and see pictures of their husbands. The women said they are not going to go all the way over there just to see some faces on pictures without even receiving any money. They have their cellphones, are in contact with husbands often enough.

husband of GVH is now indeed in hospital, where he was taken on a brancard, with help of many boys. Chiwenzi [boyfriend] of Venesi came by on his bike towards Venesi’s house around 4PM.

Livia found no maize at Admarc in Balaka, so bought at vendors for 80MK/kg. In afternoon she [Livia] was dressed in a long jeans skirt and (half worn out) shoes with dikke zool, saying that she looked as if she works in an office.

There were about 1 or 2 weeks between time that mango’s got finished and first thelere and later nkhwani could be eaten. Many came to get some nkhwani from Gertrude’s garden, in which the pumpkin plants had boomed because of rains. At this time the nandolo was distributed.

Innocent came to say we could come to finish our pots and said they will miss me when I will go, have gotten used to passing by and checking whether I am at house, greeting. At Jasmine’s house (she had kept the pots under empty maize or fert bag and at khonde so hard rain in night hadn’t destroyed them), we gave the pots more shape and decorated them. Now they have to dry for some days, Kingsley came too, just to hang around, in fancy jeans and slippers in which he had just gone to [small crossroads market] to arrange car for grandfather (but the car had already been borrowed to someone else, so they should wait). He [Kingsley] found some maize at Jasmine’s and roasted it for all of us, meanwhile they discussed when they could be harvesting. April Jasmine kept saying, in March the cobs will dry, Gertrude said that they had not expected to be eating fresh maize so soon, already by 5th of Feb people started eating, so harvest may be sooner too. Hm, was not taken in, planted 19-21 of Nov, so harvest in April. We will see. And discussed the use of fertilizer, Jasmine grew hybrid next to house with only manure, people don’t apply more manure because ‘ulesi’ but will do so coming yr, she promised. Applied fertilizer mixed to be enough for whole field, Innocent was planting mbatata; you’re late, yelled Gertrude to Innocent in her field. No, this is the time for it.

Jasmine says she will make a whole serie of pots and then put them near the street for sale. An average size will give her app 30mk, but if she would go to Balaka to sell 50mk, but that would cost her transport.

Kingsley said that people don’t apply fertilizer at the right time, when it is too big already.

A friend of Jasmine from another village came and told us, seeing us learning to make pots, about a current project in her village from concern where they learn to make charcoalburners and toilet stones. Her name is Chifundo and she likes doing BS, she said. Wanted Gertrude to teach her to make bread,
which Gertrude did with Jasmine’s ingredients. Complaining that she lacks capital then I said a small BS should bit by bit lead to bigger ones. Ah, but the family that she has to take care of is too big, is taking care of 7 orphans, grandchildren whose mother died. And her husband died in 1996, then why don’t you find another husband? Can’t do he may mistreat all the children at her house, or he may be a witch and eat them all when she is off to the lake to buy fish for her BS. He may find food and eat it all by himself in stead of sharing (point for Daniel’s PhD: women taking care of many children less attractive to men/new husbands). I asked Jasmine whether she expects that people will be buying bread at this time of year, she anwered that she doesn’t know which BS to do now to find some money, just trying bread now (may be knowing that I will at least buy). “If we just stay (without BS) how can we get soap?

Sofia asked Innocent yesterday to beg Innocent’s brother/Sofia’s husband for money, telling him that she has none, that she already went to beg 500mk from her grandmother. He told Innocent that Sofia should just got grandmother again because he has nothing.

Jasmine says that as child her name was Elena, then at initiation she was given the name Jasmine, says that Janneke is the English spelling of my name/foreigners spelling while Yanaka is Chichewa spelling.

Few days ago at Jasmine’s: husband had radio on, also HBof Amila had radio on. He just now came to beg 10mk for fodya again, Gertrude told him we don’t have, he should first come with some nkhuni.

I see now in my interview notes with GVH that she said she owns 2 acres of land which she inherited from parents and husband has 1,5 acres. They used to cultivate both fields together, but now separately because he uses the money from his field for other wives, so she decided it is better to each farm their own field.

Phingi said to Gertrude today: thanks for giving shoes and skirt to Livia, also her father was very happy, don’t stop this behaviour! Gertrude did not know what to answer, will ask Livia about it later.

Old notes: Sept 10 2008, Mr Ntawanga and chief Mudzi A’s wife both came to make clear that they are scared because GVH is complaining that we have not yet interviewed her, were very relieved when I finally said that I will interview her. Now GVH had already been saying that Hamra, whom we did interview is not even from Mudzi A.

Have not seen Thandizo at all, not even at her own khonde, is very ill, says Gertrude, went to hospital, but back.

Jasmine had sent Chifundo a message yesterday saying that she’d be making bread today. Chifundo came because she was interested to learn. Chifundo from her side had been helping Jasmine by giving her part of 10.000mk CUMO loan - 3000mk, Jasmine paid H 310 (?)MK/2 weeks, no profit for Chifundo. At time when Jasmine did not get own loan from CUMO, some weeks ago. “I’m lucky that my friend helps me now that I can’t get money from CUMO.

The skin on top of Sofia’s baby has healed: the witch has stopped bewitching, she is still drying
Jasmine & Chifundo (1948, 2 yrs older than Jasmine) have known each other for long time, both families originally came from Zomba, looking for land (malo). Chifundo’s family first, Jasmine’s family later, Chifundo living at K. village land given to them by chief C. before chief Mudzi B was established. Says that K. village is like a town, while Mudzi B is village, with proper streets and houses. People there (Nyanja tribe) are educated, have habit of sending children to school. They work hard on their fields, thonje [cotton], fodya [tobacco], a lot of maize, they work so hard on their fields that many can afford iron sheets, which Gertrude and Jasmine presumed was because many migrated to SA, but according to Chifundo nobody from there works in SA. GVH of villages group B. is also educated, while here, Jasmine adds, people are uneducated, don’t know how to read and write, they just wait for a project, a hand-out, a registration for anything and then they all line up. Preferably registering themselves multiple times, after people have died, they are still registered, just to receive whatever can be received. And here people steal, Jasmine also says.

The two met through a cousin of Jasmine, who used to chat with Chifundo. After the cousin died, Chifundo continued to chat with Jasmine. They were very close, clinging the pointing fingers of left and right hand Chifundo showed how close. When I die, Chifundo said, Jasmine will wash and dress my dead body, when one is ill, the other will take her to hospital.

I sat on mat with Innocent and played with her son. Chifundo asked who was older, Innocent or I, since I don’t have children yet and Innocent 2. Then Jasmine asked when I want to get married (even though she must know that Feye visited, clearly putting marrying and having children on one line now, indeed in Chichewa “banja” refers to both). Gertrude answered for me: first wants to finish education. Jasmine said bit earlier in conversation that she is happy that she can read and write; people won’t be able to cheat her.

Although Tinenenji said in interview that she had 1 acre of land, later she has said several times that she has none, that she was working on the field of her husband. Innocent has also said that Tinenenji has no own field, so what will happen with the harvest now that husband has divorced her after finding her own mat with ex-husband of Fatima? Gertrude thinks he will not share his harvest with her.

Kingsley already came to check at Jasmine’s whether breads were ready, so there is at least some clientele. Gertrude has seen him in the fancy jeans ever since we got here. But the blouse and slippers are new. She thinks he may have bought them with the 1000mk I gave him as thanks for sleeping at our house to protect. He went to Balaka the very next day.

Empowerment: some women say they want their husbands to leave, but that the husbands simply refuse, saying they have no where to go. Amila, who decided to divorce + why? Examples of women who decided to divorce? Venesi, indeed husband first refused, but later agreed to leave. Women with “lazy men”, Hamra not to follow husband when he wanted to move to home village to take care of parents who decided to divorce (because man lazy)? Eveles, Balakasi (although later says he got married in Mangochi, then came back but still didn’t work field so she sent him away, he is now working as gateman in Balaka, Teleza, Saibi, Chikondi (violence, “she decided he agreed”), Magda (lazy quarrelling), Belita (many zibwenzi), Dora (several wives), Pamela
Zara left first husband after he mistreated her, moved back to mother, Tumanene same, Molly (beer), Nola (several wives), Auleria (not providing, not simply home).

Just to be sure that this is in notes: Nelia and Aunt Rashida about accepting proposals & income: Nelia quickly accepted proposal of a 4 yr older boy (she 17, he 21) when she was selling at Balaka market - changu = hurry, before he changes his mind and proposes to someone else. If this one would have old or ugly, would you also have accepted? No, and also also not if he was a beer drunker or loud talker because they cannot manage to take care of family. Then I asked why some women do stay with husbands that drink beer, are talkative: “If one is from a poor family, it is difficult to divorce a man who is lazy, drinks beer, beats you”. They also said: “If you are proposed as a woman you are considered luckily, some are never proposed. Most are proposed but some are afraid, to get married to someone who drinks beer, better do my own BS to find what I want, they have their own BS and don’t want to be?! (p 17 in Note book 2). They still may have children, but from zibwenzi.

Jeneti seems pregnant!

Tinenenji passed by and stopped for knitting but was actually on her way to husband of Jasmine to buy paraffin, she called it ‘grocery’.

Lovely came for pictures of her 2 daughters and son in best dress, and herself without child in cotton field. Both to send to her husband in SA. Then Chisoni wanted a picture with a book (dictionary) in her hands and another with me. Lovely also with me, to show husband that there really was a mzungu [white person] in village.

When sitting on Chisoni’s khonde for picture, I could look inside and saw many pages of a magazine taped on walls, a small table, 2 chairs and a reet bench. Her husband had hung the pages (incl azungu women in lingerie). On wall also a picture of her with husband (young men with cap), a curtain in door hole kept me from looking in bedroom, but saw bucket with ziwiya, and a suitcase old with clothes on. Then Fissa, a group of children and Jeneti also wanted their picture taken. And Lovely one knitting with Gertrude next to her.

Breads of Jasmine: 2 kg flour at 160 MK = 320mk.

20mk sugar

20mk yeast

Bit of salt.
Selling bread rolls at 5mk and some bigger ones at 15mk. How many did she make and sell?

Chifundo wants to sell at M. [nearby school], sold for 500mk (said Innocent approvingly/impressed) and was left with 12 breads (60mk) which she took with her. Gertrude thinks that she probably bought the ingredients too.

February 18 2009, Wednesday

Feb 18, Wednesday - Rain in last hours of night, clouded morning.

Livia passed by on way to borehole, Gertrude asked her about skirt and shoes. Livia apologized for having told her parents that she received these from Gertrude, but is still afraid to tell mother about boyfriend. Afraid that although he is giving her clothes now, he will not really marry her. She waits until he says he wants to meet her parents, then she will tell them...

Innocent came to knit in morning (decoration), didn't have any job to do for now. Later has to be cooking, fetching water again etc. I asked whether she got married through ceremony: no, because was already pregnant. But both fathers of kids paid 700MK to GVH (who is supposed to share with chief and parents, but eats it all by herself). The second one left a week after paying the money though, she said surprised/strange thing to do, but doesn't know why. Can't think of anyone who had a proper ceremony with ankhoswe in Mudzi B nor Mudzi A, only the one from K. village who came to learn to send sms. And her own sister in Zomba: ankhoswe say that bride and groom have to respect each other, first discuss problems themselves before coming to ankhoswe, not come at first argument. Put hand on Quran (Innocent said bible) to promise to stay married.

Innocent (1988) passed by, Innocent commented that she didn't look like someone who is in a new marriage. If it would be her, if she marriages and stays somewhere else she would do her best to look nice when coming to see mother, so that people can see changes. Later Jane came to chat, saying that she had run away from husband. Hadn't realized that marriage is different from relationship. Then you see each other sometimes, and then not for some days. But now, boy wants sex all the time! Can't manage... Wants to grow cotton next season and run off to South Africa, to boyfriend there who loves her more than this husband (worked together in field to buy him a passport etc). She met with him yesterday, just before he departed back to SA - so probably discussed about this. Will also continue her relationship with boyfriend from Form 3, who gave her 500MK per week to buy clothes and soap, all the clothes she is wearing these days were bought with his money. She decided to marry because grandmother refused to buy soap for her when she begged, saying that she had her own means of finding money. Jane then complained that she was tired of doing ganyu, “then use your body to get money!” GVH said. That's when Jane started going to Balaka, moving around with boyfriends, coming back late. Then GVH said Jane was not allowed to talk to friend Alisa anymore, and Jane decided to marry this one. Used to laugh at girld marrying young, but now understands that one marries out of problems, like herself, not able to find soap. A girl passed by, a year younger than Jane, married for 1 yr now, Jane said she wondered how that one manages to keep up (especially having sex so often, whenever he wants, and he wants often...). [CAN SHE NOT REFUSE TO HAVE SEX??] Wants to divorce
now, will run away to aunt in Salima, and then next year to SA. She has lost weight (I didn't see, she felt so herself), he hasn't bought her any new clothes since they got married, he even refused to pay bike taxi for her to visit sick grandfather, she came walking from Balaka (he said: maybe you go back to your old boyfriend). They are buying there, have to buy everything, didn't get properly prepared for marriage... Said “Alisa sananame kuti banja ndi lovuta” - Alisa had also run away from husband because he wanted sex all the time, as she once said at borehole. She is happy that she is not pregnant, that she can indeed run away. Alisa (with whom she chatted before passing by us) has been told by mother (Malita) to cook her own food now, but she has no field, so decided to be marrying her current boyfriend. Had boyfriend whom she wanted to marry, but hasn't been coming since last months. Now has other boyfriend who buys her food

Kingsley came to tell that yesterday evening his grandfather has been sent to Balaka hospital.

Good that I can see 2 villages, and the differences among them, but in Mudzi B many men in SA, while in Mudzi A only one went recently. 1 with GVH, one adjacent, one at some more distance (Mudzi A 2), apparently K. village is very different too - should visit Chifundo once!

Gray said he didn’t belief that women can accept proposals/be proposed at first sight (“we first need to know her a bit more, invite her for a drink oid), but Gertrude thinks it can happen to some women.

Rosemary renting field for 1000mk/season.

A quick counting shows that of all married women (total 46) 23 have husbands without own land, (of whom 2 don’t have own either, see blue flowered note book for list of names), 17 buy own land (separately or together) and 6 don’t own land, but husband does.

Went to Dora to buy a full big plate/small basin of half red tomatoes for 50mk. On way found old woman on Thandizo’s veranda eating phala, Gertrude saw Thandizo inside on mat. Tinenenji came out of house with bucket of water, Auleria was eating nsima at khonde of Tinenenji’s house with adolescent girl (daughter Modesta, in std 6, repeating class because failed last yr in relationship with brother of Lovely = son of Fissa). Dora said people are buying her tomatoes these days, but only small amounts = 10mk and add to there (very low buying power in village, eg small profit on kachasu, low prices for cooking pots - that cost lot of work).

Gertrude asked Livia about Phingi’s suggestion that she should look for work at [large commercial estate]. Livia says that she already found something, will be cleaning offices after March 2, when she expects to receive a sawing machine from her tailoring course. Expects to get about 5000mk for her cotton, wasn’t able to clear all the field because “too busy on maize field” to plant more cotton.

Amila passed by to greet and agreed with Gertrude to go fetch nkhwani at her field. This afternoon, Gertrude suggested, better tomorrow morning because in afternoon there may be women knitting here who may get jealous (using English word ‘jealousy’) if I come to take you to fetch firewood.
In afternoon we went to give pictures at grocery, Zione was there, now selling matemba in stead of mandasi for her sister at [small crossroads market]. Sister shares some of the profit with her (amandigaila). First looked for her at home, just nearby grocery crossroad. Another younger, girl was selling tomatoes, both sitting at some distance in shade of a khonde.

Then we moved on to find Paula and a girl that wasn’t selling at the time when I made pictures, but asked to make her picture. Also living nearby crossroad, on way back to Mudzi B through fields, found her, pregnant, had a girl roast chimanga for us. Her name is Getty, born 1991, married since 6 months (app - ?), with a volunteer teacher at M. [nearest primary school]. Staying in his house, because she had none and he did. Met on street when he was coming back from secondary school in Balaka together with a friend of him who is her in-law. She came from school at [small crossroads market] (her home village is M. village), std 7. at that very same day he proposed chibwenzi with her, she accepted because Christmas was coming and she wanted some money for these holidays (5 Dec). soon she found herself pregnant but she miscarried, now she got pregnant again, just before writing examilations (which is Oct), then they married and she stopped school, didn’t write examilations. Did BS: samoosas and matemba, samoosas at 5mk (kakang’ono) filled with irish potato, salt and carry. But stopped now because of hunger season: ndinasiya chifukwa panopa kuli njala, anthu alibe ndalama. When she made samoosas and didn’t sell any for 2 days she stopped, will start again when her husband gets money, before getting married she also did BS: selling kanyenya when still at school, during break. Both have their fields but she works on his field now, “so is mine”, she joked, she asked where we are from and whether we work or just stay in Mudzi B, he is orphan, was staying alone in house with younger brother.

She brought out a picture book to add the one I gave her. Was clearly his picture book, with mainly portraits of him in cool posses. And quite number of zibwenzi, also 2 pictures from an African bride and groom in full western outfits from a magazine. And from a magazine or folder a text saying something like “I used to have many girlfriends, but now I have chosen to focus on school, choosing for a future etc, with a picture of 3 girls signalling to a boy to come, also some cat out texts if he “I love my girlfriend”, “girls and boys are equal”, “I will choose my own path oid”.

Passed by [Bicycle maker] to check on my bike, not finished but he is at least working on it, and bought new parts for the old frame which he is painting blue. Hasn’t seen able to finish [bicycle] because ill, sores in mouth so problems eating, and malaria/fever, said he thinks that because of njala many people get ill these days, Gertrude asid it may also be the many mosquitoes, but he repeated: “Nah njala”. His wife, magret Tambala, also has her own field kwanu, at M. [nearest primary school], which she cultivates, was cutting mbatata branches for planting. husband said it’s late for planting already, Gertrude answered him that others are also still planting.

Went to finish our miphika at Jasmine’s, make surface smoother with wet stone. Now they will have to dry for almost a week, but not in direct sunlight but inside. Innocent excused herself for not having a bed, at least she has a mosquitonet hanging. Received 3 from hospital (when pregnant, when giving birth, when leaving hospital (another time?). Jasmine also excused herself for keeping goats in the house and not having swept, said we reminded her of the time when she was still at Domasi, when nurses would pass by the houses at times of cholera checking and advising people about hygiene.
Sofia was still drying the there and leaves, the same ones but also extra. Was washing her clothes in a basin, but [Sofia] went to beg some salt from grandmother in evening: “ndinakapempha mchere, chifukwa ndilibe ndalama” [I am going to beg salt, because I don’t have money].

Kondwani was also there, at Sofia’s khonde (after having been knitting at our house until we left). They discussed about a new upcoming project to make charcoal burners, the tree project wants each chief to select a man and a woman as delegation to a seminar in Balaka.

Amila told Gertrude at borehole that some people, incl her husband, are after the relative of Sweetness who earlier stole her coupon and is now stealing maize at various fields.

But earlier after lunch, Kondwani, Vanessa and Livia came to knit, discussing that husband of mother of Vanessa has come back from Liwonde where he worked, about going to see husband of GVH at Balaka hospital, the upcoming tree seminar, chasing their kids to play somewhere else, this year’s harvest in March not April because already it takes very long to boil maize.

No rain since early morning, but thurder clouds in evening.

Gertrude’s mother is out of hospital now, discharged because of high cholera infection rate, but since today also feeling better. Asked Gertrude to send some money because she borrowed for transport to and from hospital for herself and carrying daughter. We asked ICRISAT to transfer us a salary advance to bank account of Gertrude’s cousin in Lilongwe who regularly goes to Dedza, 3000mk.

I asked Gertrude about what she has heard about what happens just after a girl accepts a boy’s chibwenzi proposal. She says they may make an appointment to meet in the next days to chat. Eg her friend Desi told boy to come see her at her khonde the next day, and there they asked each other how things were going: “zikuyenda?”. And the girl may soon ask whether the boy is going to marry her or not, sometime they go to the market to buy ndiwo, which sometimes the girl then prepares for him. But Desi cooked at her khonde, put it in container and brought it to one of her 3 boyfriends, one of them impregnated her, but later started to menstruate again, Gertrude doesn’t know what happened. Little later she was pregnant again but she didn’t have money for an abortion at Banja la Mtsogolo (2400-2800mk) so told boyfriend that even though he was not working she was going to move with him.

Jasmine plans to be making many pots in March and then sell for exchange them for maize in April. At cotton selling season she will be making zigumu again, when maize is affordable again.

February 19, 2009 Thursday

Rains came in early night, not hard or long, as soon as they start, a short sudden smell of plants, especially when they started in early morning hours after 2 dry days, wow.
Gertrude asked Sofia about Levison: he is working (building) in Balaka, comes home every night but very late, about 9-10pm, leaving again at about 4am.

At 4am Kingsley came to tell that his grandfather has passed away. Gertrude just said sorry, in the next house (Jasmine’s) women started crying loudly and a bit later passed by, also the small children were now hysterically crying, probably scared by their mothers. Kingsley came at 6am to borrow Gertrude’s bike to go to the hospital in Balaka and ask whether the funeral will be today or not, so that they can empty a room.

Couldn’t sleep, which happens each time when I am taking malarone, but last night also because stomach was upset, I think because I ate too much maize: breakfast pocorn, lunch nsima with nkhwani and nandolo, chimanga chootcha at 5pm, more popcorn at 7pm.

husband of GVH has said that he wants to be buried here in stead of at his home village M. village. But we’ll see, Gertrude says, sometimes people quarrel about where someone should be buried, near which relatives. The fact that he had several wives also complicates things, although his belongings are usually divided amongst one’s children. But the harvest from his cotton field will probably be taken by GVH because it was originally her field, and she sometimes helped him on it.

Sofia came to beg 50mk for chigayo, for maize from GVH’s house, and sent 2 boys to borrow a bicycle to quickly go to get the maize grinded.

Jasmine passed by on way to GVHs house, saying “matenda awo ndi ovuta” [his disease is difficult/problematic], that he has been ill for 3 or 4 years already and that one of his girlfriends died already before he got ill and said before she died that many would be following her, insinuating AIDS. Now went to fetch some water and put it at GVH’s bafa so that she can bath when she comes home, men will be washing the dead body. GVH had in our interview been explicit about her assumption that husband may be suffering from AIDS, but later said that somebody is bewitching him because he isn’t getting better.

I had expected transition from hunger to plenty would be sudden, but that was very naïve.

Jasmine learned to make pots from a woman she used to buy from to exchange for maize.

Chifundo lives in one of the few iron sheeted houses of K. village, says Esnart, referring to her as “the one selling zigumu”. To me Chifundo immediately started saying how poor she is, struggling to take care of 7 orphans, while it was clear from her appearance that she is relatively well off, also fact that she trades in fish shows this.

Do men and women use their harvests differently may be? Or are they at least expected to use them differently? Like Hamra and husband: he sold his (used money by himself) and then ate from hers.

[Bicycle maker] sent letter begging for 500mk for rice because of sores in his mouth.
Feb 19, Thursday - No rains all day

Relative of husband of Jasmine from J. vlg came to chat after she came for funeral of husband of GVH and see Jasmine but found her at M. vlg, where funeral will take place tomorrow. Said maize is usually dry in March, but people always harvest in April. Those with small fields are done within 2-3 days, but those with bigger fields take about a week and often hire ganyu. So around that time there will be ganyu, but only for few days. She [relative husband Jasmine] was married for 16 years, left school in St4 to marry because pregnant, got 5 children and stayed with husband in Dedza, where he works for water supply. Last year he sent her to her home vlg J. vlg to start build a house and work the field, he would join them later. He never came, however, she heard he has now married another, but he never sent her a message that they are now officially divorced. But she does consider her marriage to have ended. Had not harvested last season, so now eating with mother (and her 5 kids...). But also has a chibwenzi, Gertrude found out when she asked about the money for a chipewa that the woman had ordered earlier. The woman then said that the people at [large commercial estate] had not received their money yet, so she couldn't pay. Ah, so you have a chibwenzi there?? She confirmed, adding that she did not want a farmer ("Ine khasu, iyenso khasu, ayi"), but somebody with a paid job for whom she could cook lunch at 12: “Mulimi ayi bola wapantchito.” She bragged about the many proposals she receives from men, who don't realize that she has 5 children already because she still looks thin (ndine woonda, osati wonenepe). her mother had even asked her whether she used traditional medicine to attract men. you will see, she said to Gertrude, if we go to Balaka together, I will get many proposals and you will get none. Gertrude asked her whether she is not afraid of HIV (matenda), she just said: Kaya, matenda awa a kachirombo ndi woopsya. But difficult to find money for soap with 5 children, her mother cannot manage to give this, therefore in relationship with man at [large commercial estate]. She also trades sugar cane at the moment. She wanted a piece of the golden thread with which I was knitting because she could make it look like a necklace, to show off - “somebody from Lilongwe gave this to me!” Won't your chibwenzi get angry, wondering who gave this to you, I asked. “Ah, he cannot complain about what I have, it's not like marriage.” Was joking (ndikuseka), saying that she had come to town, meaning Mudzi B. Joking because here there is no (tarmac) road, no cars. While at J. village! Big grocery shops, cars, bicycles, fresh fish for sale. And any development projects, I asked. No, she first said. Then I inquired: Everybody had enough money? Ah no! Then added that soon a project will start teaching women to make “wine”, she doesn't know of what, will go and check it out, but will not participate because she wasn't told about it. [Relative husband Jasmine] She was able to buy fertilizer this year because she had stolen something from her husband (a water pipe or something) which she sold to find money. We served her some watermelon that Frauke and Saqib had left for us, of which she took the seeds for planting.

Earlier in the afternoon Esnart came by to give money to Gertrude for trousers that she is knitting for E's son. 100MK because Venesi supplied thread herself from something knitted that she had taken apart. [Esnart] Said she doesn't like moving around chatting with people because there is so much gossiping (Sindimapita kucheza mabodza). Prefers to stay at home just with kids. When she puts on nice clothes, people will be saying: Showing off that her husband is in SA! When she doesn't put on nice clothes people will complain: Her husband is in SA, but you can't even see it, she looks just like us, no difference! [Esnart] Commented on our maize left of kitchen, which looks better then those on the field right of kitchen. Asked whether we used manure there. I asked whether she used manure too? No, doesn't have enough goats, only one goat. But leaving stems of maize after harvest to rot in field? most people like to burn their fields in Aug to clear the field, is least work... I said that in Gertrude's home village people make their own manure. Hm, yes, she knows how to do that too, she laughed. Were taught some years ago, but people soon gave up, feeling they better spend their time making ridges. Even Mr Ntawanga didn't make any anymore last year. Before, people had been laughing at him, saying that he will be planting late because so busy with making manure. His harvest was bigger though. The only one in vlg who still makes manure is Nola, but even she didn't make much this season.
because she bought 2 bags of fertilizer (with the coupon that she was to share with g'daughter Grace).

I drew a line to HIV prevention: People know how to make manure, and that it leads to bigger yields, but don’t do it - is it same like people knowing how to prevent HIV yet don’t do it? Yes, Venesi confirmed, we have meetings and discussions where everything is explained, we know. But people say: “yabwerera anthu, osati nyama” (it came for human beings, not animals) - fatalistic, almost like a welcome, making clear that they differ from animals, is our faith, it has come to us, nothing we can do about it. “Anthu sakuopa chifukwa cha mankhwala a ARV”, when taking ARV they will not die that same day or even year, they will stay alive long. “One can start suffering from AIDS this year, but then after taking medication may live up to 2015!” Did many people die from AIDS, I asked. Some died of AIDS, other malaria. And other causes? Also cholera, especially in Feb, but this year bola. Last year medication was distributed but some even died on the way to get there. In 2001 many died of cholera.

I asked about K. vlg, whether people there use manure, considering that there are so many iron sheeted housed there, maybe harvesting more because of manure? But Venesi said there are not so many iron sheeted houses there, maybe 4 or 5, indeed exactly there where we usually pass to Mudzi A 2. One of them is from Chifundo, to whom Venesi referred as “the one making zigumu” and another of her sister, the owners are all old. Venesi doesn’t know how they managed to buy iron sheets, were built in past. But none of them have gone to SA.

Told us that Jasmine went to bring food to GVH at M. village because GVH’s mother in law had earlier put poison in her food, so since then she never eats anything there. None of her husband’s other 3 wives had joined her in the hospital. When he had started getting ill, they had wanted to divorce him, not wanting to take care of him. But he did still go to some of them. He has no kids with any of the, only GVH. He was chief at M. vlg, but has been replaced when he moved here when he started getting ill. He was also a Muslim priest. Against his wish it has been decided that he will be buried at his home vlg M. village, people are gathering at his mother’s house. Funeral will be tomorrow, his body was brought there by ambulance from hospital in afternoon.

I asked Gertrude to what extent chibwenzi equals sleeping together, is this immediately implied when a man proposes chibwenzi. She said she has only seen her friend Desi from nearby, who usually would sleep with her boyfriends after about 2-3 weeks. When she was still in school (Form 2) she lived with younger sister of mother who paid for her school fees. A boyfriend would in night call her at her window. When ‘mother’ found out, she told D she would stop pay school fees. Dorine was encouraged by boyfriend to move out, he would marry her and take care of her. He left to SA, but never sent her money. That’s when she started moving around with other boys, sometimes having 3 at the time. One of her boyfriends impregnated someone else when also in relationship with D. The boyfriend that she married to now often asked her for food, which she would cook and bring him (food that Gertrude contributed too), he didn’t supply much for her. But these boyfriends wanted always to know exactly where D was going, so she had to inform them of all her plans. Call them when she wanted to go to market etc. Sometimes they would say she could go, at other times they would tell her to wait so that they can go together. Gertrude laughed at her: so busy asking permission for all her movements, while Gertrude herself could just go to the market whenever she pleased herself.

Gertrude often excuses ourselves for asking so many questions, when I have asked a number of questions. At the interviews some indeed said somewhat shocked/irritated: “Ah, you even want to know that!?” (BV Magda about number of blankets), Sofia also made a comment during the interview about Gertrude being too curious.

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Feb 20, 2009 Friday

Feb 20, Friday - No rains in night
Gertrude met Saibi at borehole and asked whether she was still doing her masamba/tomato BS, since she hadn't seen her moving around. No, been ill for weeks, not getting better, thinks it is malaria.

9.30 AM, boyfriend of Venesi passing by to her house.

Kingsley came to borrow torch yesterday evening for relative who had come for deceased, Innocent was going to take him to M. village. When he brought it back this morning Gertrude asked [Kingsley] what they would use all the money for (were told by one of GVH's sons in SA to borrow 5000MK from Esnart who had just received it from husband, he will pay back her husband in SA and husband will then send her new money): bought white cloth to wrap body in (which only costs about 125MK per meter though...).

Funeral husband of GVH: We went after lunch with Evelin and Molly, joined up on way with Tumanene and Amila (both with umbrella and in best clothes, Tumanene with white scarf on head and sports shoes, Amila bare foot (Evelin and Grace with simple shoes). Walked behind each other, lot of chatting, through maize and cotton fields, with here and there mbatata ridges. Luckily it had not rained for 1,5 day, otherwise it would have been very muddy, but now very dry, only had to cross 2 waters (1 could be jumped, other one taking of shoes/slippers and walk through). Many men in Muslim dresses and with Muslim caps, a bit further, behind the house of the deceased's mother all the women in the shade of 2 trees, difficult to find some place in shade too. Just sitting, some silent greeting of women nearby. Only later - we left at 12.30, back at 5PM - did many start to chat quietly, even laugh. Later also some singing, only those who are Muslim knew the songs. At one point GVH came out of the house, spectacle, made a performance of grief, couldn’t keep herself up, stumbled out of the door until people came to hold her up. Sat with the singing group for a bit, I think, couldn't see properly as we were sitting in a maize field, in between the pumpkins. Twice a man speeched, but not loud enough for us to hear too. At one point finally the body was carried out of the house, immediately a group, incl Sofia started crying hysterically, repeating: “agogo anga” and “amayi a agogo anga...” As soon as the body had passed, surrounded by men, and followed by women (hos other wives, mother, maybe other relatives) held up by two other women each, we left to head back for Mudzi B, about ½ an hour walk. Molly pointed at some black marks on maize cobs, explaining those are traditional medicines against people stealing the maize, scaring thieves that they may get lost in the maize field, never able to get out, or someone will die in their family. Then someone would have to find and pay for other medicines to get rid of spell, maybe as far as Zambia. Why don’t all people apply such medicine, I asked (asked once before, in Thukwi?, then I was told that not all people know about it). Gertrude thinks maybe because the medicine has to be paid for, maybe gotten from far.

Jasmine won’t be going to funeral today (but was gone yesterday to help) because she is not feeling well, pain in joints, coughing. Innocent and Lovely left for funeral at 10:30. Innocent said she has eaten maize morning so as not to go hungry, now eating maize cob. Esnart had planned to go but one of her children is ill, so will stay at home. Dora has gone already to help and so has Pamela, Venesi will not go, just said “Pamela is already going, so…. “we didn’t see her boyfriend, may be he just went to say that he would come later, which may then be the reason for her not to go to funeral, Gertrude speculates. Grace will go around 1pm, so we can go with her, she invited us in when we went to ask her, because no shade outside, freshly mudded floor. Her child was eating a breadroll, I asked where she had found that, at J. village where she had gone to buy groundnuts, she answered. Then explained to Gertrude how we can get there too, I didn’t see a bednet, but the room we sat in (on mphasa) is not her sleeping room, there she does have a net (and money apparently, but how? Doesn’t do BS). Venesi daughter seemed completely covered again, it had been malaria, her mother
House that Mr Ntawanga was building at Rashida’s has been washed away.

Last night Gertrude heard Doris talk with a boy. He asked her where she is going, to funeral (house) in M. village, she answered. Ah, laughed boy, you just cheated your mother that you are going to the funeral, but you just saw a chance to move around with boys! She laughed too.

Evelin to get us after lunch to go to the funeral of husband of GVH. Said M. village is very far, you can’t manage. Gertrude said we also walked to [clinic] and managed. Why, malaria? No blood testing, did you go? “No, ndimaopa,” said Evelin [I am afraid]. Gertrude told Evelin she will go with her, Ah, but then you will tell everybody that I am HIV positive! Said Evelin, Gertrude answered her she wouldn’t, and Evelin wouldn’t have to tell her the results at all. So people don’t want others to know, are ashamed to tell their status? I asked, Evelin confirmed, and gave the example of Jeneti who told people she got tested positive (Told relatives, Elube heard and told others) and since then wasn’t spoken to at borehole, only since recently is she looking a bit happy again, people were ignoring her. So people are afraid that nobody will socialize with them anymore after knowing that somebody is HIV positive. After people started to gossip about Jeneti, she became very unhappy, while it is asid that one needs to be happy, live happy, when HIV positive “people are afraid to go test, they just like gossip about those who went for testing”, Evelin said. She asked earlier, when still talking about her going for a test, whether it is true what she has heard on the radio, that one can go for a test and be found positive, but when going again later can be found negative. This has actually happened to somebody from Monja’s office, so I said it almost never happens, but is possible.

When Molly joined us, passed her tomato field with both almost ripe tomatoes as well as a bed with recently planted sprouts. For selling now and to be selling in June (so she will need money to buy maize, she said). Already now she has many (green) one’s, (selling to people looking for tomatoes to be selling, Dora also sells to someone in [nearest tradingcenter] who then sells the tomatoes per smaller units). She had earlier stopped selling (end Nov) because tomatoes were then being sold at 600mk for a 5 ltr bucket, so couldn’t make profit.

Amila said that she wanted to go to the maize mill after the funeral, with maize which she prematurely took from her field (would rot or get bitter if all was taken off now, before properly drying). Others said that it would be too late to be going then (maizemill is at J. village), she would have to get back in dark so she tell her husband to go with her. Ah, he wouldn’t, too far, Molly said she prefers not to eat for one day then go to the maizemill after 4 pm, one doesn’t die from not eating 1 day.

The women (Evelin, Jasmine, Molly, Tumanene and Amila) were mainly happy with all the maize and cotton in the fields, saying that at least everybody is eating now, so also few thieves because everybody has their own. Looking forward to cotton season, having a lot of money, commented that GVH will have a lot of money from the cotton of her husband’s field. He does have children with his other wives, they said.

Gertrude’daughter of Eveles came to bring us a pigeon, sent it back, saying we don’t know how to kill it.
husband of GVH has been buried on a graveyard especially for chiefs, with a little mosque on it. Only few graves, with big tombstones, women are not allowed on muslim graveyard, so only men went. In the speech at the funeral GVH was praised as example for other women because she took care of her ill husband while other women might run away from such a task.

Feb 21 2009, Saturday

On our way to Mudzi A2 to greet people there we saw Livia writing a letter at her khonde. Did not go to tailoring today apparently, we passed by chief Mudzi A who is still ill, stomach and chest aches. From what it looked like he slept outside last night = mat, blanket and mosquitonet at khonde. He even had not been able to walk to M. village yesterday to attend the funeral, we asked him about the progression on the catching Ndaba issue, he said that the chiefs were supposed to meet, but then the husband of GVH fell ill to hospital, funeral etc. but it has been decided that the whole family will be chased, including Emra, because Ndaba will otherwise still have excuses to come here again. Chief Mudzi A said he also discussed with chief of F. village that the family should not be staying there either, they should just go back to where they came from. If the wife (Ainessi) wants to follow that is fine, but they should not stay nearby here. There has already been some stealing of maize, they will wait till after harvest, then chase them.

Then we continued to [Bicycle maker] to threaten that he should give back the 4500mk deposit we gave for the bike if he doesn’t finish it soon (he was working on another one now). Says he have it finished by tomorrow.

In Mudzi A 2 indeed just greeted all women that were at home, and chatted a bit on their verandas or on mat in shade. Many were drying maize and/or masamba, and many had a big pot boiling on the fire - filled with maize cobs and maungu, said Gertrude. Each family it’s own full big pot every day, and most will also be eating nsima with it, from their current yield. Jospheine anatolona together with husband, with next to them the big boiling pot and some maize cobs in the fire too. A dengu top full of thelere, and leaves drying. Nosalt had pumpkin flowers drying and mseula, her husband came back from prison on Jan 22, they llokede fine, also child. Only Belita looked a bit thinner, her mother complained they had all gotten skin, showing her underarms because of all the working on the field and the hunger. They had wondered when I would be coming with my help, but I didn’t come, also Victoria said the same, at the time for buying fertilizer they had wanted for me to come help them, but I didn’t. then at njala they had wanted for me to bring them maize, but I didn’t. I reminded her that from the beginning I have explained that I have only come to understand about their lives, not with any handouts. Still people hoped, she said, not understanding what other purpose there could be in all my visits and questions. The house he stayed in with her mother has been destroyed on 4th of January by heavy storms and rains which also destroyed the catholic church in Mudzi A and several big trees. Fortunately she had just finished the new house, so her mother could move in with her now. Victoria does make and apply manure, she says, and others in Mudzi A 2 do too. Just easy, they dig a pit, put in whatever organic material they can find (goat dung, leafs etc), add a bit of water and wait for 2 weeks, then apply. Then make more, other who don’t do it are simply lazy, said Victoria. She is already drying (some of) her tobacco leafs.
Grandmother of Ganizani was drying a full mphasa of maize, from the cobs of the stems that had fallen because of termites. A little boy was keeping goats away with a long stick, she was telling about Victoria who is worried about floods destroying her crops, termites and thieves. She had paid people to weed on half her field with meat. Why not protect field from thieves with traditional medicine, I asked, many people pretend to apply trad med, making it look as if they applied to scare of thieves. But thieves just close their eyes to not see it and then enter the field, with real medicine the thief may die on the field, or not be able to get out of the field unless he pays 5000 mk, or a snake may come to kill him. It happens recently to a man at [nearest trading center], who died after eating maize and pumpkin which he had stolen. The rest of his family had also eaten, but not died. People seem a bit scared to apply the trad medicine, this old woman said something like: then you have this dead body on your field and you are blamed for his death, or someone (a dangerous thief) stuck on your field who surely will not be able to come up with this 5000 mk needed to release him. She herself had one day wanted to get trad med to protect her house after a thief had stolen some items from her, but then the traditional doctor died, so she failed. Sandala who had optimistically expected she and husband would not have to ganyu because of her mandasi BS, had indeed not done any ganyu. But only because her husband found a job at a motel near the mangochi turnoff at Liwonde, since December. In December she also stopped her mandasi BS because she used all the money to buy maize, also her husband’s salary was just used to buy maize. But she registered with concern to apply for a loan to start her mandasi BS again in March.

Belita said about her first husband whom she sent away that was easy. He had married someone else and just agreed when she told him she wanted to divorce. They were both still young, not like she is now. Women who say they want divorce but husband refuses to go, are just not serious, if he misbehaves then he should understand that he has to go, even if he is old and has nowhere to go. If he did nothing wrong, then he can right fully refuse to leave, but otherwise, no.

Grandmother of Ganizani and Victoria gave us some maize cobs, even though we protested that we have our own. Many of the women said that I been missing for a long time, the last time I had visited them it was mango season, now people are eating fresh maize. All keep saying that they will be harvesting in April, Victoria said that those who planted hybrid will harvest in March already, others in April.

On our way to [Bicycle maker] we saw Doris chatting with a boy on a bike, they had passed each other then stopped to talk, their backs facing each other. In the shade of the only tree.

A man sat that outside Victoria’s house, married again? Father of children?

A girl came to say that Kima is about to brew kachasu, so we went to see. With mud she make sure that no fumes could exit between the lit and the pot, but only through the pipe. The pipe got very hot, thus also the water in the bucket through which the pipe leads warmed up. So had to stir every now and then to make cool water from bottom of bucket move up. Soon drops came out of the pipe, within the hour the first 1 litre bottle was full, this is the strongest liquor.
The 3 bottles will be mixed to get an even percentage of alcohol. This time she added more madeya together with 2 kgsof sugar, mixed on Thursday already. Last Sunday was the first time for her to be brewing again after hunger season, when it is difficult to find madeya, because people use it to make ufa (tastes bitter, so some add cassava flour or maize). During times of abundance many people just leave their madea at the maizemill, only taking home their ufa. After grinding at the maizemill the maize changed into ufa (woyera or gramill), and madea- mgaiwa is a mix of the 2.

Difference between ufa woyera and gramill is whether the grounded maize is put to soften in water before further grinding or not. If people would just always take their madea all throughout the year from the maizemill and keep it till hunger season they could at least have something to eat.

In last months madea was sold at 150mk per 5ltr bucket, nowit lowered to 80mk because people are eating their own maize (also Kima and Suset were drying maize cernels in the sun). Kima even received a full bucket now from someone for free, and told a friend who was visiting and who also brews beer that she can have some of it too. Kima also discussed for some time the different sugar prices (130/kg at [small crossroads market], but 120 or 125 at Balaka). She suggested that her friend and her should both contribute to buy a bale large quantity (25 or 35 kgs) at a lower price per kg and share it. Teleza joked that Kima should not forget that she also drinks tea to which she adds sugar. Ah yes, I like my tea, confiemed Kima, I am just waiting to die soon.I can permit myself to enjoy something, I have sugar at hand for the beer, so I can easily just use some of it for my tea. Now that hunger season is over shewill be brewing kachasu app 3 times per month, each time app 3 bottles at 200/300mk.

An older woman passed by with a small bucket of tomatoes which she bought at M. village. Prices have now dropped from 1500mk for a dengu to 500mk. She was selling 4 tomatoes at 10mk, adding 2 tomatoes so actually 6 for 10mk.

Kima gave us and her visiting friend (relatively well-to-do, it seemed, a bit fat) a cooked maize cob. Suset is getting better, bala.

In evening the girl came to bring me a bottle of the mixed kachasu, paid her 300mk instead of the usual 200mk that Kima charges for a full bottle, if she would have sold it per coca-cola bottle (33 cl at 100mk), she would have made 300mk, I didn’t want her to loose profit because of me.

Feb 21, Saturday - no rains whole of yesterday nor in night

Hypothesis: Gossip about third person to bond with gesprekspartner.

Some days ago Teleza and Kima discussed at borehole that the issue with people of Mudzi B disapproving of their chief’s behavior (at tree planting activity) could not happen in Mudzi A: they always discuss immediately with their chief when they feel he should be behaving differently, we would have dealt with it straight away, and otherwise they’d go to sub-TA [small crossroads market]. Not wait for days, not show up for work, delay in going to GVH, and leave it only to GVH to be solved.

When some days ago Lovely, Modesta and Sofia came to knit they were telling how children will be looking through all the maize fields after harvest, looking for left behind cobs and sell these cheaply.
Some will also be stealing from their parents' harvest to sell and find some money.

When husband of Esnart offered to lend people 1000MK for 50 kg maize (or 500 for 25 kg) most said that they couldn't do that. Same like at J. village vlg, where people could get 1 bag of maize, paying back 3 after harvest. Still, Gertrude noticed some people going there: Phingi, Amila, Jasmine, chief Mudzi B. She can't know what they went to do there, but presumably get the loan, meanwhile ashamed about taking such a bad deal.

Sunday, Feb 22: No rains yesterday or in night.

Feb 22, Sunday

Went to Amila who had earlier promised us to take us to her field to fetch firewood. She just came back from madzi, with relatively small tin bucket (yesterday Victoria had 5 big ones standing below her iron sheet roof to catch rain water). She had been kuzira earlier today. We found her husband and kids on their khonde. When hearing that we came for nkhuni husband said he has some somewhere, we should buy from him so that he can buy batteries for his radio. Then went to A’s maize field, walked through it to find bush. There she was happy to find a bird's nest with 3 baby birds, ndiwo! When Gertrude took it to look one escaped, A tried to find it amidst all the bush, but failed. Then broke the legs of the others, wrapped them in a big leaf, tied is with grass and gave it to young daughter Sakina to hold. Later she will chop of the head, tear out the feathers and intestines and boil them in water with some salt, then eat with bones and all. Chopped and pushed our way through the grasses - is also her field, but she [Amila] hadn't managed to clear it because her husband refused to work on the field often. Also now, they are making ridges for potatoes, he did only 5, she does all the others. That is why she decided to divorce now. He doesn't help her on the field, she is the one buying salt and soap, if there is no ufa she is the one who has to find some. They even eat separately because he does not want to eat together with the children, even though they are his (except the first one). And because they don't have enough plates, they have to wait for him to finish and then use the same plates for her and kids. All he wants are his batteries, batteries - she kept saying at different moments. He borrowed money (almost 1200MK) to buy fodya and batteries, and she was the one paying back that money with her MASAF income (used 600MK of it for ufa, and some for soap, salt, chigayo etc). She went to his uncle to explain the issue, he accepted to come and help her and he told her husband that he should leave the family. The husband came back to beg some ufa and didn’t go back, but agreed to leave after harvest, sharing both maize and cotton. To which she agreed, even though she did most work on the field, because afraid that she will otherwise be bewitched by him. We passed 2 places where a tree had been cut down and chopped into a beautiful bundle of firewood. husband did this, to be selling to find money for batteries. Is his firewood, because he did the work (even though field is hers - husband also has a field at his home village, but the maize doesn't grow well there, low soil fertility, so they decided to cultivate only her fields here). husband told her to go to [nearest tradingcenter] and sell the firewood so that he can find money for fodya and batteries. She cannot take it to use it to cook for him, afraid that he will “touch her neck” (kill her). But she did give us some of it, hoping he won't see. Take some for yourself too! said Gertrude. No no, I have. After divorcing this man she [Amila] will not marry another, she said. Bcoz she has seen how this one treats the one child that she had before marrying him, beating him etc. Now she has many children that may be mistreated by a new man. Then take a chibwenzi, who won't live with you so won't mistreat your children, but can help you with money for soap etc, I suggested. Ah no, there are these diseases these days... But also condoms, I said. People don't really use those, she said, she had never since the day she was born. Why? Chibwana: childish... She failed to explain further. [So, zibwenzi are connected with AIDS...]
Amila has indeed borrowed money from Esnart (1000MK for 50kg maize: many did from her part of Mudzi B, she said, incl Tumanene, Emra - whose relationship with Ntaba has not ended, but he doesn't support her enough apparently, she even went to Amila to beg ufa), which she used to buy soap, salt, paraffin (500), ufa (800) and 80 for sugar cane to sell (making 150MK). Went again, in total made 400MK = 320MK profit which she now used for maize, now stopped the BS: no mpamba. It's very far, at Luwawadzi, had 100 first time, but couldn't manage to carry, so bought 80MK.

They have 0.5 acre cotton field. She [Amila] made ridges alone, but now at least he is helping her to weed, seeing that money is coming from it soon.

We now agreed that we will buy the nkhuini that her husband chopped, and she will give some of the money from it to him to buy his treasured batteries but keep the rest herself. Gave her 500MK while the nkhuini has the value of 80-100MK, excluding what we got from her field today. She said she was going straight to buy some salt now at Jasmine's husband. We asked not to tell people I gave her so much for the nkhuini. Ah no, she wouldn't be able to tell, knows how people talk.

Visited Jasmine who is ill - malungo, indeed I see the signs. Also son of Innocent and daughter of Sofia (very skinny, especially compared to son of Innocent, looks almost cruel). Especially Sofia's daughter was really suffering [from malaria]. Was taken care of, but almost absent. Putting her to lie on mat, take her on lap, but lift her off it later even though she was sleeping. No worries at all about sick children. Gertrude asked why Jasmine's daughter stays with husband in Zomba, and not husband here. Doesn't really know, “she probably likes growing rice,” Jasmine kept saying. Does come sometimes to plant here, but then not to weed, came once to burn bricks to build a house here, but never did. Another daughter stays with husband in Blantyre, who never wants to join her coming to Mudzi B. She is afraid to come alone because he is a good husband, provides for her, hence afraid that he may find another wife while she is gone to work her field at Mudzi B. Now only come sometimes to chat for a day.

Gertrude asked whether Innocent will be cooking her own food after harvest. Jasmine says yes, and she'll be staying in the house where Sofia is staying now (who may move to GVH's compound now that husband died, so she will have someone to chat to, Gertrude speculated). But have you forgotten that you like staying with Innocent and son in one house, Gertrude asked (when we arrived in Mudzi B Innocent stayed in house where Sofia stays now, but Jasmine moved from big house to that one to keep eye on her). Indeed, she may be receiving men at night if she stays alone there, so should stay with Jasmine, but cook own food. Ah, but it will be difficult to find my own ndiwo, Innocent complained, can find masamba, but what if I want to eat matemba (app 30MK for 1 meal). Gertrude suggested she should buy thread after selling cotton, and then sell what she knit at [small crossroads market] and [nearest tradingcenter]. Innocent laughed. Father has given quarter of his cotton field to her recently (so he cleared, made ridges, planted, but she weeded). She also planted her own cotton (which she guesses will bring her 5000-6000MK). Jasmine told a story of a relative of Ada, who married a new husband, when she bought for them all to eat, the man would put in pieces of bike tyre for the kids to eat. Morale of story was that Innocent should leave her son with Jasmine when she would marry another man, because he will mistreat the child of another man. When I suggested the selling of manure, all laughed hard, including daughter of [Bicycle maker] who came to bring thread to Gertrude to knit her a jersey to fit her secondary school uniform (green, 400MK for the work, 4 balls of thread 80MK, she said that after that her friends will surely come to Gertrude to have one too). People wouldn't buy, they would just laugh at you. But confirmed that maize grows better with manure and that most are too lazy to make it themselves. Still the idea was merely funny to them. In Mudzi A most do make manure, they have had all the chitukuko: manure project, trees, soy, mushrooms, goats. But now this also started in Mudzi B at least, with the trees. People in Mudzi B just don't know the benefit of manure. Jasmine didn't make this year, but will do again next, she promised, learned when participating in Mudzi A projects (before being kicked out because of me...).

Gertrude asked how she compared January to February. Jasmine and Innocent said that usually hunger is worst in Feb, but now, because of unexpected early maturing of maize they already started
eating green maize on 5th compared to 25 last year. So this year hunger was worst in January.

Jasmine says she has 2 acres, but didn't apply fert to all of it - but referred only to the field next to the graveyard while she also has others: the one behind her house with cotton, and another at some distance with maize. Says each year exchanges maize and cotton on the fields.

Livia joined us shortly after we went home. Gertrude immediately asked her why we didn't hear anything about her lover in Balaka anymore: Chatha? (Has the relationship - chibwenzi- ended? Livia laughed and denied that it had finished, saying that she hadn't gone to Balaka for tailoring because she is tired of going there. Will go again on Wednesday. Will also go tomorrow, but to hospital with mother, so won't be able to see boyfriend. I asked her [Livia] whether it is not possible for e.g. Jane to just refuse to sleep with her husband sometimes when she feels it is too much ipv running away for good. Hm, difficult with most men, some men just want often (ena amafuna pafupipafupi), difficult to refuse to them (e.g. during wedding ceremony ankhoswe tell wife that they should not refuse sex when husband wants). I suggested that in our country when can just say we have a head ache or are menstruating. Hm, saying you're ill could work, but for 'period' they will just say: ndione - show me.

Kondwani, Chisoni, Blessings, Emra (first time ever), Modesta, Libana and Lainess (Modesta and Lainess daughters of Auleria; Libana daughter of Fissa) came to knit. Kondwani: son had said during njala in Jan that he wanted his nsima served separately from siblings, there was a lot of quarreling about the food. They all were surprised about daughter of [Bicycle maker], Rosa, being able to buy all this thread in hunger season and inquired with Gertrude where Nola found money to buy the 4 balls of thread. Gertrude said that Rosa had told her that her sister will send money from Ntcheu to pay for the jersey, but not where she found money to buy the thread. Women said she has been seen coming from Balaka with a boy, maybe he gave her the money.

Two boys passed by, one of them, Fulanki, wanted to marry Jane and came now to inquire about B: he had heard that she had gotten married, but found no one at GVH's compound. They met with Modesta on her way to here, who said she doesn't know anything. Father of B had also complained about her behavior moving around with boys, then B had replied whether he would be supplying her with all she wanted, than father has stopped talking to her. Blessings said: Kuli matenda, maARV akusowa kuchipatal, kulibe okwanira [There is this disease, ARVs are lacking in the hospital, there is not enough]. Those married have to stay at home while husband is out finding money, possibly coming home with the disease (nothing a wife can do about it) - but girls they can at least still choose the right partner.

Alisa, friend of Jane, is in relationship with someone from [small crossroads market], but also with Levison, according to the women. They meet in his field...When these girls fall ill they will be stealing chicken, because when with that disease people want more food. Phingi had said a similar thing earlier, when she came to inquire/probe about Livia's HIV status: when ill with that disease you will even want the birds that you see flying in the air - laughing.

the thief that is related to Sweetness, name is Chikondi, had been caught at [large commercial estate], but on way to police he cheated them (husband of Amila, husband of Sweetness and another man) that he had to go to toilet but ran away. Caused a lot of laughter among women here. Other thieves have tied one of the guards at [large commercial estate] to a tree to steal. Many thieves now, stealing maize. The women said that those who give 1 bag of maize to be paid back 3 later are stealing that maize.

At funeral people had asked about me, women told them I am staying in Mudzi B, and that they all go to learn how to knit here. Others said they will come to greet and also learn to knit. Were encouraged by Mudzi B women: we are enjoying there.

Some maize stems and cobs are really getting dry now, some cobs evening bending side ways already.
Grace and Ada at borehole, Grace said to Ada that she saw the father of Ada’s child visiting her. Lucy confirmed, first time since he left her just after baby was born, she said: maybe because he sees that the child is now growing up (?). At borehole no insinuation about him giving her money or sleeping together, they (Ada & man) only chatted pakhonde.

Yesterday at Kima’s: she was complaining to friend that the chairman of their soya club has run off with the 3500mk received for the soya that the club cultivated and was supposed to share. She was peeling mseula from this harvest to plant again, saying that there will still be enough rain.

Chisoni passed by on way back home after checking the maize on her field. Ate 2 maize cobs at her field and bought 3 more to eat today. Complained about the “American” chemicals that she is now using for her hair, is it not growing enough, so she will change to the “soft & free” chemical. Dorica shaved her head because in primary (and some secondary) schools girls are told to keep their hair short. Such things as letting their hair grow they should do later, when they find their ways through other means than from their parents.

Grace: saw father of your child yesterday came to you.

Ada: yes, he came to see the child, may be he wants to give me another child because this one is now 6 months.

Grace just repeated, laughing: yes he will give you another child now this one is 6 months.

Kingsley passed by with younger boy and soon after they returned with 2 maize cobs. GVH and Sofia are still at M. village to perform some more ceremonies for 3 days (getting up at 4am to cry for some minutes eg).

Livia came in morning to roast some maize, there is no fire there, she said, knowing that Gertrude makes fire every morning. Livia said no nkhu in home, but we saw a lot some days ago, may be just ulesi, Gertrude thinks. Gertrude reminded her of one day when Gertrude went to fetch firewood and Livia laughed at her because there was too much sun, but at least I have firewood now while you have not!

Livia is not yet eating maungu from her field, in March she says, haevesting maize not until April, 6-8 weeks from now. Gertrude laughs, can’t believe, if we harvest in March, A said, we have more weevils.

About Ada being visited by father of her child, may be he came back because now he has something to offer again? During njala season no means to share with her?

Bit of rain at dusk.
Rosa - daughter of [Bicycle maker] - has own cotton field at [tiny crossroads market] where she worked a lot during her December holiday break.

Lainess - daughter of Auleria (both her and Rosa at [large commercial estate] secondary school, form 3), is in relationship with son of Venesi who built house for Pamela and is now in SA.

Monday Feb 23 - no rains in night, clouded morning. Rain start at 9:30 am.

Amila came at 7 am to go get all the firewood that her husband chopped together, but Gertrude was still preparing breakfast, mashed potatoes and maize cobs (roasted for me, boiled for her). Gertrude asked how much of the money (500mk) she [Amila] had given to her husband, first she answered 100, then 200mk. He had said that is was a lot of money, more than just for batteries, now he would also buy cigarettes. I am surprised she has given him so much, she didn’t need to. Afraid of him (that he may found that she kept money from him), hoping to please him, feeling the pressure to hand over all money to husband?

She also went to hospital to buy medicine for 50mk for the infected eyes of her baby. Plans to buy 2 plates with this money too, so that she and kids don’t have to wait for husband to finish eating. Bought 30mk matemba and husband begged another 20mk.

Ada passed by with bucket of water to Chikondi in Mudzi A, wants to bring her some medicine and since she would be going all that distance she better not got empty handed but bring her also some water.

Innocent left at 4am with Fatima and kids to [nearest tradingcenter] hospital. Jasmine’s husband escorted them to F. village because of darkness. They wanted to be the first to receive treatment, Jasmine told us this on her way to borehole, but she is still suffering from malaria.

In Gertrude’s home village nobody has gone to SA (they are just growing tomatoes and potatoes). At Mangochi many did go, but just to buy items there to sell in Malawi (cellphones, tv screens, blankets, clothes, big grocery shops would place orders).

Yesterday about manure, Jasmine also said that the good thing about manure over fertilizer is that when there is a lot of sun/not enough rain manure keeps the soil moist, while fertilizer does not. Amila does not make manure, but does leave the maize stems between the ridges after harvest.

Went with Amila to her field after breakfast to bring the first pile of firewood to our kitchen, all 3 of carrying mitolo, tied with grasses. She had told her husband she received 500mk and gave him 100 for batteries. Then he begged for more, to also buy fodya, so she gave him 20mk extra. Plans to buy a bottle of sobo squash (1 ltr for 200mk) because the hospital told her so, to add blood for the children, her child was coughing, then Amila joked: kachirombo! And said that of everybody who is ill, people are gossiping that, that one has kachirombo = HIV positive. Told of how Emra had said to Jeneti when they were fighten: Don’t you provoke people, don’t forget that you have the
“Kachirombo [the virus = HIV]!” everybody was surprised to see Emra coming to knit yesterday, after the Ntaba theft episode. The morning when Emra passed, she also greeted us friendly. Last month Amila sold a chicken at 200 mk to buy maize. On our way back with the nhkuni one of A’s young sons walked infront of me and suddenly dived into a maize field when he saw a little bird fly in. A son of Sofiawas stung by some insect when trying to catch birds in the fields too, next day eyes all swollen. After piling the nhkuni in our kitchen A went to Lovely (now staying at Fatima’s ex-house) who had told her to come get some mseula which she had harvested from her field, free of charge.

Jasmine came by to chat because Innocent & g’children are to [nearest tradingcenter], her husband and Sofia at M. village for the last funeral ceremony. She felt very alone and asked Gertrude how she keeps up with it when I am not here, “ndazolowera” [I got used to it], Gertrude answered. Jasmine told her son (husband of Sofia) who had come to attend the funeral that he should be taking care of Sofia and their 5 children, compared him to the husband of GVH who started moving around, marrying other women, catch the disease and eventually moving back to his first wife who was the only one willing to take care of him at the end of his life. If this son will be moving around he may also catch the disease, while Sofia is a good one, she likes/satisfied with married life. Son just stayed quiet and took 2 of his sons to take care of them while Sofia stays at M. village for the funeral ceremonies. Just before dying husband of GVH had earned a lot of money by selling his cows, one of his wives now ran off with 30000 mk. The rest is still with GVH, and will also get all the money from his cotton field, Jasmine was telling.

Chisoni passed by with nkhwani [pumpkin leaves] incl flowers to be drying. Lunch: rice, nkhwani, eggs with pumpkin flowers and tomato.

Hilda also drying maize, complaining about the lack of sun today. Wants to go to the chigayo, but is not yet dry enough. Josepshine said about drying maize from her current yield: “no money to buy, therefore already taking from field prematurely and speed up drying by putting it in sun.

Asked Dora how she had succeeded in sending away her first husband. He never helped her in the field, just went drinking and dancing all the time, didn’t provide salt or clothes. She was happy they didn’t have a child together [Had 1 son, “husband even failed to buy clothes for his own child”, son with wife & 2 kids lives next to Dora now]. She went to complain to the ankhoswe and later paid 20 mk to the chief to show that she was really serious (Ankhoswe and later chief kept encouraging her to stay married, may be he will change. Then she decided to go to chief, who said the same, at second visit gave him a letter again explaining the issue to show she was serious. Eventually went to pay the 20 mk.). The husband then said that he would change. He had already married someone else and she didn’t want to be with 2 wives, & didn’t think he would change. She persisted and eventually he agreed and moved to his other wife. After about a month from the time she went to the ankhoswe. Then she managed by working hard in field which had more fertility then. Had lot of maize and sold other crops. He has now grown up, seen the behaviour of others and behaves better = helps on the field and provides for his family. D said that it was fine that I asked her questions, good that I will see/ understand how Malawian women are proposed and then left behind etc/Malawian marriages.

Sofia came back from M. village in morning, the sons that her ex-husband had taken are back again too.
GVH will return in late afternoon today.

My bike is still not finished, [Bicycle maker] and wife even left to Balaka together this morning, not back in afternoon.

Jeneti also drying masamba, some put the maize to dry on mphasa, others just on the sand. Lovely and Fissa were peeling mseula, both to replant and to eat as ndiwo.

Fissa also drying masamba.

Went with Amila for the second pile of firewood, said that although some are saying that Ndaba went back to Mangochi, he and Ainessi came back to visit Emra today, together.

Pamela came to hair braided (we found her earlier playing bawo in front of Hilda’s house, with Ada & baby on mat to it, baby ill: “coughing”). Ada, Kondwani, Modesta, Lovely (young one), Vanessa, Emra, Ellesi, Chisoni came to knit. Discussed about the maize thief that was caught recently, the announcement that Joyce Banda (runner with Mutharika for next elections) will visit [small crossroads market] on Wednesday (some will go, others not “as she will be eating all the gift money herself in the end anyway”), the 40th day funeral ceremony for husband of GVH (the family will count the days with stones or maize, by day 20 start to collect enough food & prepare: ndiwo, thobwa, tea etc for all attendants). Vanessa said she had to go home to prepare nsima for her husband coming home from work, was approved of by others because he is the one who brings money. Today already 23 (of month), he will soon get his salary (last day of month).

Earlier met with Hamra on her way to borehole. She had been ill, but somebody had gone to the hospital in Balaka for her, pretending to have her symptoms and receive medicines.

Mrs Ntawanga ordered a knitted/closhed bag for school books in blue (everybody wants blue, some black, some green). Joked to her young daughter Livia by addressing her as ‘a mayi a Joy’.

Kingsley came to greet after playing football, said he went to play because no more work on the field (kulima), would otherwise just be eating maize all day.

Women knitting also discussed that people used to say that children that grow up in house without father will not be able to walk (about Ada and baby). But comforted each other that many children in this village have grown up without father and are able to walk. They suspected this fable was just a way of parents to encourage couples to stay together.

Dora and Belita both said that if a woman is serious about divorcing her husband she can manage to send him away. But some continue chatting with him, etc, and then he will think you are not serious and refuse to go.
When Chenawe was (among) the first to dry maize from her current yield, she used a rasp to kukonola, - the cobs were not dry enough to do it by hand yet.

Ada went to ganyu with mother in past months. Charity has already married again. Everywhere one can see people eating chimanga, even women with water buckets on head etc.

Drizzly all throughout day, no hard rains.

Gertrude apologizing when asking me few questions about my sisters, laughing ashamed = lii, now I am the one asking you many questions!

Feb 24, Tuesday - short but hard rainfall in night, morning blue sky.

Amila said she is a member of cotton club, everybody could register. Means she can get seeds and mankhwala without paying for it, just receiving less money when selling the cotton. Both for members and no-members both pay 250 for a bottle of mankhwala. Hamra is not a member of cotton club and indeed paid 250 for a bottle of pesticide. Amila thinks that some prefer not to be a member so that when selling they get the full price for their cotton.

When people speak about kachirombo they really only mean AIDS, at not any other virus eg the causing chifuwa, they don’t know chifuwa is caused by virus too, says Gertrude.

Husband of Sweetness came at 6:30am, to ask whether anything had been decided on the Ndaba catching issue or whether we had just decided to leave it. Gertrude was surprised he hadn’t been confirmed by either GVH or chief Mudzi A. Ah, he said, GVH often says she will do certain things and then won’t. he will now find some friends at [nearest trading center] where he sells his fish and try to catch him. We shouldn’t let anyone know about this, just pretend that we are still waiting for the decision to be made by the chiefs.

husband of Sofia had only taken their sons from Mudzi B to M. village, to be with mother, not home with him to Balaka. He has given her 500mk.

Daughter of [Bicycle maker] came to bring her bicycle for me to borrow, saying that her parents had gone to Balaka (or Ntcheu, where daughter is not getting better and couldn’t pay for transport) on that and my bike! The wife came home on their bike but he is still gone on mine. Sent massage that he will bring it today afternoon, and whether I could please give his daughter 1000mk, which I did but feel I shouldn’t have. First he promises to finally have it finished and delivered by Sunday, then he disappears on it on Monday morning!

Passing Mphatso (daughter of Rosemary) at her house who said that she was getting ill all the time, getting better, then ill again. Gertrude joked while continue walking: kachirombo! Mwina laughed P, run to the hospital to get tested!
Jane at borehole said she is now staying in Mudzi B 24/7 - I have grown up now….. will stay with GVH.

Went to GVH to give our condolences and 500mk (pepani tili ndi chisoni, zimachitika). Ah, husband had bee so ill, for over 3 years. Had been her first and only husband, all her children are his, but he was the one who went off to marry others. At least he worked hard till the end and left her a big field of cotton. Used some of the money she received via Esnart to contribute a bag of maize and 3 packets of sugar to the last ceremony yesterday that was attended by many who had to be fed. He had said that he wanted to be buried here near his children, but because he was a chief there it was decided that he be buried at M. village.

Greeted Sweetness (wanted to ask how she had succeeded in sending away her previous husband, but her current husband was fizing his bike on the khonde where we were sitting, so didn’t ask). She is pregnant again, had 4 small piles of tomatoes laid out on empty bag next to road. Offered us 2 chimanga chootcha which we declined, had just had breakfast with that. When we passed by later she seemed to have a small plastic bag with matemba, drying maize destroyed by termites, doesn’t know whether mankhwala roist, said: kulibe, then Gertrude said she has seen some black poison used to protect wood in houses.

Walked for a while behind a BS woman carrying a basin with tomatoes and an empty bag folded on top (to be displaying her tomatoes later). Walks around through villages to buy, for 300-250mk per big basin and sell at J. village. Doesn’t know how much profit is because people just buy bit by bit. Is not growing her own tomatoes, currently many women selling their own tomatoes at [small crossroads market], therefore she decided to go to J. village to sell. But few are buying, because most have their own tomatoes. Before, she went to Balaka to buy, now just in villages, easy to find.

Then walked into Lizzie and other young woman staying near her while on our way to Christina to also ask her now she succeeded in sending away her husband, but found her gone to [nearest tradingcenter] , having left behind her small child who was looked after by an older son (8-12 yrs). He didn’t know what mother had gone to do, Lizzie was carrying a big dengu full of chimanga of which the stems had been destroyed by termites. We started kutonola, will be dried in the sun for about 2 days, then made into mgaiwa. Hybrid is more often destroyed by termites, but this was local variety, the other woman (widowed, young, doesn’t see reason to marry again, forgot her name) said that the same amount of ufa will be used to make nsima, not different. For hybrid, always more ufa is needed for same amount of nsima, only disadvantage of drying maize in sun in stead of on stem is that, risk of weevils is higher. When weevils attack maize they simply eat it, then only some ufa and small parts of maize will be found (and will still be eaten by people). In general, risk of weevils is higher in hybrid maize too, mankhwala doesexist and most do apply = actellic super dust. Two bottles needed for 50kg, last year a bottle costed 140-150mk, to be bought at ADMARC, Monsanto etc. Not all people apply as they are supposed to, eg 1 bottle for 50kg, weevils may still come, even though mankhwala is
applied. Hybrid is kept in bags so as to easier apply this chemical, most people will also keep local maize in bags in house, afraid of thieves. And many people will be selling bit by bit for very low prices, “Having forgotten how expensive it was during njala”. Was 85mk/kg, then will sell for 20mk/kg, each time that a woman needs some money, eg for chigayo or soap, matemba, nyemba, she will say to one of her children: kagulitse. Next day again: kagulitse, will sell to vendors who store the maize until njala and sell for high prices then. This will stop when people start selling their cotton, for those who grew cotton, that is. She did, is a member of club, thinks she will find over 10.000mk. has no plans yet on how to use the money, I ask whether she intends to buy maize with it, if prices are still as low then she will, she answered (but I can’t know whether she had thought of this herself too). Lizzie served us about 6 chimanga chootcha of which I ate only one to their surprise: I hadn’t become fully Malawian yet, being full after 1 maize cob (plus 1 at breakfast), they easily eat 5 these days besides nsima. Iii, like that you will be eating the whole field before harvest, said Gertrude laughing. The woman asked whether we in NL grow maize too and commented that she would go really hungry if she would go to my country, because lacking nsima.

I heard several pigs, at Christina’s house and from somewhere else behind the maize. This maize had not been given fertilizer, some manure but mochedwa because she hadn’t planned to grow maize there, may be mbatata later. But because she became afraid of snakes in the bushes that overgrew the plot she decided to clear and plant maize after all. Her maize harvest is partly destroyed by floods and termites.

Lizzie’s husband has gone to Ntcheu, he is looking for ways to find money here in stead of going back to SA. He was not happy here? I asked, she just laughed, “To see the difference”. The full dengu of maize cobs will be about half a dengu of chimanga chotonola will be enough for app 1 week nsima (twice a day: masana & madzulo, her and kids).

Eveles is still working on her rice field, staying with Alma (except for Friday’s, then she goes home to attend mosque from there). Alma said that Eveles complains that she is not getting better (chifuwa) but still gets up every morning go to her field, working on while the sun climbs high.

Livia came by shortly, was told by mother to go get maize from her (Livia’s) field to make ufa. They have already emptied and eaten a small plot with Livia’s maize behind their house. Why not take from mother’s field now? Gertrude asked, Livia said that mother had just decided that they should first be eating the maize from Livia’s fields. But where will you find food when you start staying on your own then? Ah, don’t know, my mother will see what to do then. Son of Elube passed by and told Livia that her husband from [nearest tradingcenter] had called to say that Livia should go to see him. So you are still talking? Asked Gertrude, Livia confirmed, will go there when she finds time, but also still seeing the boyfriend at Balaka, he gave her 2 pots now, which she hided at her aunt at Nd. village, young mother of Phingi. Will wait for
boy from [nearest trading center] to call again, see what he has to say and then if she finds time to go.

Sofia came to greet, going to [clinic] with youngest son Harry, who turns 1 on 4th March, but can’t walk yet like Hana who turns 1 in March. He doesn’t even seem able to crawl, because he has been ill so often, Sofia says. Now he has a horrible cough, she goes together with Thokozani whose mother is ill. Will pretend her child is ill to get medication to give to Rosemary. Sofia is wearing a fancy jeans skirt (with bare feet) which still looks like new but she got when she was still staying with her husband in Zomba, who traded sugar. Gertrude has seen a picture of that time, says they lived in a big, nice house, and Sofia was fatter then, and so was Harry. Ah, Sofia looked at her arms somewhat scared, I haven’t really lost weight, have I?

Chisoni, Kondwani & Vanessa came to knit end of afternoon and discussed the marriage proposal that Dorica received from a boy who came from Blantyre and was moving around with a friend, looking for a future wife. Alole, said Chisoni: she should accept, the others agreed, he is still young (mwana) but he has a job and does BS. I asked why they said she should accept: she won’t be able to find school fees, said Chisoni, and even if, added Vanessa, she won’t be able to find work if she would finish her school. “Alibe” was the first answer that Chisoni gave, this boy will give her a future, more so than continuing school would. Dorica did not accept yet, he is over there again now, discussing. I asked: so he is giving her soap now, and a skirt? No, she haven’t accepted yet, I was corrected, ndi mnyamata wabwino? Oh yes, oh yes, know him because he is originally from nearby. And repeated that he has ntchito ndi geni.

Pamela seemed to wear a new (second hand) skirt yesterday. Today both Joy and Livia seem dressed in new clothes. Joy is wearing a second hand white princess dress with red strawberries and TEVA shoes, Livia is wearing the skirt and shoes she received from her lover in Balaka, a new blanket as chitenje around coughing Hana on back and a new top. Later: Livia wanted a picture of her and kids but found a lot of women knitting here (today also Haliday). When all had gone and she told me, it was already too dark: mawa [tomorrow].

The one who came to look for a wife and proposed to Dorica is a son of Mrs Ntawanga. Has a job in Blantyre ans also his own grocery shop, and is looking for a wife who can run the shop for him. Has been in Blantyre for almost 5 years now, and has never been married yet. Bola than the first one Dorica was with, the woman said, he was married somewhere else she found after she accepted to marry him, so didn’t marry him. May be this was the one who had impregnated her while she was still in school and then aborted. Goes to school irregularly anyway, so better accepts this after, all women felt. Palibe phindu lake, there is no benefit for going to school. Gertrude says: mother grows tomatoes and cotton, must be able to come up with the 3 monthly 1700mk for secondary school.
everywhere she may have been told to do so by Venesi’s husband, because she is related to him. Chisoni said she could just chat with which ever boy she would want and just fell the girl that he is merely a friend, the girl wouldn’t know the difference.

Feb 25, Wednesday: Balaka --> Lilongwe

Livia was dressed up so much yesterday because she wanted me to take a picture of her and kids, but found many women knitting so didn’t ask for it. I asked Gertrude about her clothes, who said that the blanket she had tied around her was given by father of Hana when Livia had just given birth and was still in the hospital. He also gave 2 pieces of zitenje and a set of clothes. The dress that Joy was wearing Gertrude had seen before, but Hana seemed to have new shoes.

Sofia has given us a plate of eggplants again. They grow in her field although she didn’t plant them, but she doesn’t like them. Her hunger/need for food is not that big, apparently... But then again, ndiwo in abundance at the moment (nkhwani especially, and therere). Also in our maize field pumpkins are getting big now - these we planted after rains started, like others, so others should be having eatable pumpkins by now too. GVH said she will make sure nobody takes our maungu now that we have left the village to get Gertrude’s school certificate replaced. We gave our key to Kingsley, he will sleep in our house to protect.

Cycled for only 1.5 hour to Balaka - even though we had some problems with by bag falling off (so I ended up carrying it on my back like a baby), Gertrude’s shoes bothering her (so took them off and on back carrier of bike), my tire going flat (but just there are quite a number of road side shelters with bike repair services so with some effort the tire was pumped again for 10MK). I can easily cycle to Liwonde one day - to see Emily there and eventueel get the typy of Susan Watkins to type my notes into computer. Then spend over 3 hours at police station just to get a typed report - report was already there, Gertrude had gone the very same day after finding out about the theft. Had to be looked for in an unordered pile of papers of course, man went through the whole pile 3 times to find it. Paid 500MK to get the typed report (“To whom it may concern...”). The men assured us that they will come to catch Ndaba whenever we find him, “he deserves 10 years imprisonmen!” But how to find proof after such a long time, I wondered. Ah, we have our ways to make him confess/tell what he did with the stolen items...” I was assured.

A girl was giving her report while we were waiting, just in the same room. She had already been at the police station for three days, said the people were nice there, but she was tired of it now and wanted to go home. Sixteen years old, married a 31 yr old man 2 months ago, because she was at a Mission that paid her school fees but she had to fetch water, cook etc etc, preferred to get married to this man that she said she liked. To then find out that he already had 6 other wives and has a disease of liking sex - she was now told by his brother. She seemed fine with this though. Taking care of the kids of all these women now. Until accused of stealing items from the house by the other women and taken to police by the husband. The men laughed, joked with her: Why did you marry this man?? Just liked him, and tired of all the chores she had to do at Mission, he works. So what else beside cooking and fetching water did you have to do then? - finding it normal she had to do these. Ah, that’s the problem of women here in Balaka, the men (my age and younger) said, both to her and involving Gertrude in conversation. They like men with money too much. They wanted to let her go too, decided just to make the report and let her go after paying some money. Earlier we had seen her walking up and down with buckets of water, with a police woman following her everywhere.

Left our bikes at DADO’s office. Ms Mattiya was disappointed I had not come to see her, had not let them know that I am back in vlg. Had come to see me twice, but found me in Lilongwe (=Netherlands). “We are in agriculture too, we are colleagues!” Will come to see me next week.
Then minibus to Lilongwe (1000MK/person, 3 hours), hopped on next minibus to Area 25 (100MK, 1 hour). Where Gertrude was going to take bike taxi to school (50/70MK, 20 minutes), and I headed back to Monja at Kapani.

When at Kima when she was brewing kachasu and woman passed by to sell tomatoes, friend of Kima said “1 Kwacha”. I thought she was aan het onderhandelen, starting ridiculously low. But Gertrude said she meant 10 MK - so no onderhandelen, everybody just knows and excepts (current) price.

Thinking in minibus, seeing all the men (and only few women) besides road desperately trying to sell their merchandise (cabbage, potatoes, madasi, roasted maize at Dedza for 20MK etc) about people just struggling for day-to-day survival. For which condom use is not helpful...

Jones is still with his wife: she had threatened to leave all their 3 children with him if he would send her away, but he can’t afford to pay anyone to take care of the smaller ones while he goes to work every day/night, so decided to keep her...

Feb 26, Thursday: Lilongwe --> Zomba

I walked from Monja’s house in Area 47 to Crossroads for a frustrating internet session until Gertrude passed by in minibus and I jumped in. At market we first bought a new phone face for Tumanene, 400MK, in a shop that according to Dorine’s husband was the cheapest in town. I’ll just tell Tumanene that it costed 300... Kim Dionne emailed that Susan Watkins pays 50MK per page typed into computer, but that by now the typer may ask for 100MK per page - that is going to be very costly, so better do as much typing myself... Maybe - I daydreamed in the minibus to Zomba (app 5,5 hours) - I will go to Zomba next week, the mid one of the 3 that I still have in Malawi. Don’t want to put my flight on earlier date, in case harvest may start, would really want to be there... And then in Zomba go to library and maybe spend some hours typing handwritten fieldnotes into computer. Best the notes of Gertrude maybe, to have them better into my head!

A woman dropped of some bags of sugar for the bus driver to give to her mother in Liwonde. She took his telephone number, but also the number of Gertrude, as a witness, to check if he really gave the sugar. Gertrude was called several times by them before we reached Liwonde. When at Liwonde the bus driver did remember to hand over a pack with calenders oid, but kind of seemed to deliberately forget the sugar while Gertrude reminded him. Only a bit later did he go into it, when we had already passed the place. Ah, will give it tomorrow... Arguing that he is often given things, that he needs people to trust him so that he will really give, don’t worry. He asked his conductor (collecting the money, organizing who needs to get in and out where) where he will be sleeping in Zomba tonight. Ah, don’t know... You should take another wife here (where you can always stay), the driver advised. I have stopped with that, the conductor said, I was just losing my money to all these women while my wife (in Lilongwe) was just staying alone.

While in the bus there was an elaborate program on radio with what seemed to me as 3 people talking, 2 men and a woman. They said that initiation rituals which encouraged girls to try sex spread HIV, and the encouragement of girls to test/strengthen their fertility by having sex after starting menstruating too. Parents should be advising their young children to abstain ipv encourage sexual experimenting. They complained about the many areas where there are no condoms available in the local shops. And about the fact that women are ashamed to have condoms, afraid to be accused of prostitution.
Kaliati closed a radio station that “in stead of empowering the community by talking about things as HIV/AIDS, importance of education, food security etc, they criticize the leadership of this country while the youth should learn to keep up our tradition of respecting elders.” Wow, her discourse is complete donor-pleasing, just a long string of the current buzz-words matched together.

At dinner in Annie’s Lodge (Gertrude said, laughing exusingly, that she had never been in a lodge before. Paying 7000MK/room, taught Gertrude how to use tv, she asked how knife and fork are supposed to be held and wants me to make picture of her eating breakfast with knife and fork in luxurious restaurant) we talked about Mudzi B: Sofia wants to have her eldest daughter (to be 8 this year) to be initiated this year. Phingi then said that she wants to prepare for Joy’s initiation too, stocking maize for thobwa, buying new clothes. But others told her that Joy is still very young, should wait a few years. Also Fissa and chief Mudzi B will have their daughters initiated this year, said Sofia, many will. Also boys will be initiated (on the field next to Amila’s, who said that that’s the reason why her field will be cleared through fire, because the by then dry grasses will be lit there to build a temporary house for the boys to be initiated in). The boys will be in that house the whole month of Aug, girls will only be informed in a house from half till end of Aug - so all will come out together. Earlier women had already commented that: Jane and friends will not be drinking beer and dancing like at last year's end celebration, they are now married or pregnant, will be ashamed to behave like that. On the day that Gertrude and I came to check on the house, the end celebration took place, and supposedly we had then seen Jane & friends at Kima’s drinking beer - I can’t remember.

Livia left first husband because he wanted to sell Joy, and they were generally fighting often. Came back from Balaka to Mudzi B, got into relationship with father of Hana, even married, but only for a week then he disappeared. Two months pregnant Livia joined first husband again and they went to stay with his family. But he did not treat her well: did not provide enough food, sometimes beating her. He tried to persuade Livia to kill the baby and cheat her mother that she had miscarried. At 8 months pregnant she moved back to mother, who says Livia had gotten very thin by then.

Gertrude is surprised that none of the women with husbands is SA does a BS: “they just wait for their husbands to send money and then they just eat it!” Are indeed in opportunity to start BS with money that they are sent regularly... So when there is no need, rather not. Except for woman with restaurant in [nearest tradingcenter] - but she was told to start this by husband. And Blessings selling blankets & Esnart borrowing out money for high return rates - both told so by husbands.

Gertrude told Amila to tell her husband to come and chop the boomstronk that she brought to our kitchen for firewood. But A kept saying she will come and do it herself. But you gave your husband his money for batteries, and even more, while what it is the use for your family to buy batteries at this time, you need food! Ah no, can’t tell him, he wouldn't do it... The money I gave him belonged to him, because he was the one who chopped the wood, she further said.

Gertrude sees Evelin washing her clothes at borehole, and when we went to funeral she had (relatively nice) shoes on - she has some income coming from somewhere, but where??

Sofia will stay at Jasmine’s instead of moving to GVH (which would seem like the logical thing to do now that husband of GVH died, so GVH is alone, and Sofia is alone, and there is a spare house there, and Sofia has no house) because that would take off the pressure of her ex-husband to build her a own house. While when staying in the house that Innocent wants to move back into, Jasmine&fam may pressure their son to build the promised house for Sofia. When Sofia and husband moved to Balaka he started to date the daughter of their landlady. Gertrude puts it as: “He took her to the market/they went to the market together.” Until at one point he sent off Sofia and kids and the 23 yr old daughter of landlady now
moved in with him. Within one month both she and Sofia gave birth to his baby.

husband of Malita earning 1500-2000/month guarding shop at [small crossroads market].

In Lilongwe it is expected that people will be eating fresh maize by next week. I am surprised to see few people selling fresh maize from Balaka (and other places maybe) in places where maize cannot be harvested yet. In newspaper a chidziwitso that the selling of fresh maize is prohibited within city limits - to prevent theft.

Feb 27, 2009 Friday - Zomba

Gertrude asked whether knife should be held left or right and was happy when she kind of managed to eat with fork and knife. Wanted a picture of herself having breakfast in the hotel's restaurant, "to remember..." She put butter, jam and peanutbutter all on one slice of toast. I was surprised she knew peanut butter: when she stayed with 'aunt' who promised to pay school fees for her but just had Gertrude babysit her children there was jam and peanut butter - but only for the children, Gertrude was not allowed to take. Also when the kids would eat meat, Gertrude was told to eat eggs. She accepted it all.

First went to check out Peter's Lodge: quite a walk from Annie's, MENOB (national exAmilation board) and University of Malawi Center for Social Research. Quite cheaper too, at 4200 for fine self-contained room with tv, but no internet. So decided to stay in Annie's Lodge - but no electricity all day so far! Then back to MENOB where people had just knocked of when we finally arrived yesterday. Ging voorspoedig. Besides police report and letter from Gertrude's school they also needed a letter from boss or church clarifying that she is speaking thruth - which I wrote right then and there. “Do you have a stamp?” No, but BS card. Will do. Pai 800MK and within 3 weeks they will send the certificate to ICRISAT.

Then on to Center for Social Research library - not very impressive. As was to be expected quite a mess. Journal for social research in Malawi, only 5 copies of Volume 16. After inquiring about other volumes I got a number of copies from 1972-1986. The clerk went through some large piles and came up with 3 documents which I all held found over internet already. The others I found myself were not impressive - had hoped on some in-depth localized details, but nothing new.


meetings; Promote coordination.


From the research sample, it was mostly the poorest people from Salima district and in Mzuzu district along the Lower Shire whose coping mechanisms involved eating wild plants. [which district studied? methods? institution?]

chitsinkho = meal of only ndiwo, esp masamba (geen proteine --> ruilen liever kip om voor bord ufa dan alleen de kip te eten).

The high demand for ganyu made those who could offer food & money take advantage of those in dire need of food to the extent that respondents reported having worked the whole day in maize or tobacco field simply to get a plate of full of maize. Many respondents said that when one went to look for ganyu, if it's a maize field, the owner simply showed them a big piece of land to work on and when they asked how much they will be paid, the common response was that “if you want to do the work, just do it, we will see when you finish.” Thus the one providing ganyu could not negotiate and often ended up getting too little the work done. Similar to the findings in the study, Ellis et al (2003) also noted exceptionally poor bargaining with casual labor.

Divorce & early marriage as coping mechanism:

Food shortage affected social relationships. Discussions during FGDs indicated that a few men resorted to separation or divorce as a means of reducing their responsibilities over feeding their children and wife(s). This practice was reported in Chikwawa, Mzuzu, Salima & Kasungu districts. According to their responses, the husbands would find an excuse that would be the basis for divorce and in most cases, the husband just abandoned his family. “When you have more than 3 children, some husbands leave their wives to marry another woman who has no children so that they reduce the burden of having to feed the children.” FGD with female maize seller, Mzuzu boma market. It was also reported that some girls and even boys resorted to marrying earlier thinking that if it is just the two of them, they will manage to feed themselves unlike being saddled with the responsibility to help feed their siblings as well as their parents.

The men further said that they got ridiculed as not being man enough for failing to provide food and as a result wives withheld sex, food and other favors from their husbands.

After reading paper about courses, projects, politicians I realize how the enormous focus on HIV/AIDS is top-down opgelegd, geen main local community concern.

Gertrude happy that she now manages to eat with knife (although still struggling a bit). Yesterday she ordered chicken and rice, but today she choose spaghetti bolognaise - which she had seen me eating yesterday, I saw her trying to copy het ronddraaien met vork. She seemed to like it. Laughed about me ordering gin-tonic and took a very small sip when I forced her too, said she was afraid she’d be laughing all evening now (would get drunk).

About cotton harvest: People told Gertrude they’ll be picking in morning, then each afternoon sell what they have picked that day. And so on for 1 or 2 weeks. So they don’t get the full amount of money at once, but day by day bits.

Feb 28, 2009 Saturday - Zomba --> Mudzi B

At breakfast (Gertrude hot chocolate & fried eggs with chips) Gertrude told me some of the stories of the Nigerian
movies she watched on tv. And then about the woman with whom she stayed after coming from Dedza looking for school fees. She lived in Area 12, in a 20.000MK house. Now moved to Area 25, where she built her own house and a bigger house (renting out for 30.000MK) on a plot which she surrounded with a brick wall. She had many boyfriends, who all gave her money, that's why she was able to build those houses quickly. She would go spend a night with one and come back with cement, spend night with another and come back with iron sheets, others would give her 20.000 or 30.000. Works as secretary at MEJN, earning 65.000MK then, 70.000MK now (!!). Would often go to the lake, or to Crossroads just to have lunch. Was able to keep boyfriends unknowing of the others, some found out, got angry and left her. But she is not enjoying the acquired wealth: when her houses were finished she started getting ill. Had a friend who died of the disease, after which she got into relationship with the husband of this friend - maybe thinking she was dead herself already anyway, Gertrude says. She used to put on mini skirts when going to work when she was still fat and attractive. But now only wearing long skirts and blouses and a scarf around her neck hiding all the sores on her body. People are laughing at her now. She stays with a new partner now who wants to marry her, even tough she is clearly unhealthy. He just stays, drives around in her car all day while she is at work. People say he is just with her for her money. What is the benefit for her then, I asked. Nothing! Gertrude said puzzled. All children are at boarding school now.

Other women were saying that they had working husbands, but are not able to build such houses at this one did - insinuating the many boyfriends she must be having. Gertrude said: She could build those houses so quickly because she had so many boyfriends and that is why she is ill now.

Climbed in minibus in Zomba with sign Balaka-Ntcheu and paid 700MKpp for the whole trip to Balaka. But at city borders we were transferred to another minibus, and at Mangochi turnoff again. There we were put in an empty bus so had to wait very long until the driver was willing to go (3 others had gotten in). The conductor didn't want to give us the money he was given for taking us to Balaka so that we could at least enter one of the fuller buses passing by, “tukupita” he assured us. At on point the driver started the engine and pretended to be driving off for quite some time - a tactic that indeed gave him 1 extra costumer...

Entering Balaka bus depot I saw a small simple structure with painted on it's wall that it offered internet and typing services. No internet though - problems with line. Just today? No... Ofwel, geen line. But 2 computer, scanner, printer and a boy and young woman who said they charge 70MK per typed page. I said I have a lot of handwritten notes to be typed, and asked for better price - 50MK. Is same as Susan has been paying for getting her field journals typed, so I'm fine with that. Now fingers crossed that they do a good job. I left the photocopies of my second notebook with them and will go and check next Saturday.

Had the flat tire of my bike repaired beside road at 60MK (double price because says he found 2 problems). When we reached Fatima's home vlg big gray cloud, perfect opportunity to chat with her while sheltering. Maar vraas dat ik wat te hard van stapel liep, en dat Gertrude me niet voldoende beschermdie. Immediately about divorce: He was the one who sent her [Fatima] back to mother. But she was also fed up with his behavior of coming home late (10PM) often. This is how she put it, only later saying that she knew about some of his relationships with other women, among whom Thokozani. “Boys/men in Mudzi B have the habit/tendency to have relationships with women nearby them.” At least he had already built her a house, by himself, unburnt bricks, leaking roof (were sitting inside sheltering for heavy rain). Small first room and smaller chipinda with mosquito net and blanket. Today she is going to Mudzi B to have the ankhoswe (Ayama & husband of Malita on husband's side, so also women!) decide on the division of their property. He said she would be taking the plates and chitini (tin bucket) “because she has the child.” Blanket etc he would be keeping. He has sent her 4 bars of soap during the last months in which they lived separate, “so he is not taking well care of me and
child.” But she was happy to be back home (group of houses with mother, sisters and mother of mother). Not worried about having no husband to take care of her, father recently came back from Lilongwe where he works and assured her he will be helping her. Parents are still together, but mother stayed behind because plan is to build a big house here with his salary, so mother will coordinate that. While still sitting inside after rain had finished a girl came to give half a loaf of white bread, a pack of sugar (0.5 kg?) and 4 cola powder packages - brought by husband of Elube for his grandchild (today last day of month, so pay day?). But didn’t come to see Fatima - Gala was elsewhere sheltering for rain, so he may have seen her. Says now she had been in Mgira with husband for 5 years - which would mean since 12! I don’t belief, but Gertrude does, says it happens often in south, after starting to menstruate. But Gala is about 2 years old. I asked Fatima if she started sleeping with husband at 12 too: no, at 19 is better age. Couldn’t answer why.

Difficult to cycle through mud.

Found everything in order at home. Picked up key at GV H - Kingsley had gone to football match at [tiny crossroads market] (many people had, heard loud yelling). GVH still acting very sad. Also got sores in her face now, she pointed out, and head aches...

Sofia and Innocent came to greet immediately. I came out with my hair down, about to put into fresh ponytail - they looked at it very surprised. Later asked whether I use chemicals too to get it like that. Said all was fine here, only coughing (kukosomola). But later, when also Molly and Kondwani joined them, they discussed animatedly that Dora’s husband has come back from Mangochi with fish, maybe for food or sale, and a big chikwawa. Dora was happy, even though both she and adult children (Dorica and brother) had always said they will chase him if he comes back, having had to cultivate the land all by themselves, son did ganyu for mother to be able to buy fertilizer. Maybe his new wife just had their baby, is about to - so he can’t sleep with her for 2 months, the women speculated. Kondwani said: Timanama kuti akabwera tiwathamangitsa koma ayi = we say that we will chase him if he comes back, but puntje-bij-paaltje we don’t. Dora probably happy with the fish he brought. Molly said she wouldn’t accept: Ine sindingalole, mwina akufuna adye nawo chimanga. - maybe he just comes back to eat your nsima. As seems the case with this husband of Dora. Men here behave like that, the women said, leaving when the work on the field needs to be done, and then appear again when harvest is about to. Kondwani said: Chimangichi - it’s this maize that makes men to come back or propose now (also referring to Venesi’s new boyfriend). Kondwani continued: say you would had been left with only 1 chitenje and then he comes back to you with another chitenje, plates, having lots of money, then you will accept...

Venesi passed with her boyfriend (he on bike, she walking, escorting him). The women discussed how this man has been heard to cough very loudly, people say he has cancer or TB or matenda (AIDS), so now Venesi will also be infected. Women also commented that she has a cellphone now, which she says her brother in SA sent her. Sofia then said that if she would have brothers in SA (sending money, blankets etc) she would not marry again/would not need a husband. Livia agreed, also mentioning how they could send her a cellphone (which is apparently her latest wish, said this also earlier that she really wants one, then I asked about the money that boyfriend had given her to buy one, she said he only gave 1500 while a phone costs 2000) and said, laughing, that she is only with her chibwenzi because he gives her money for soap and lotion. [BUT WHAT ABOUT LOVE, SEX, OTHER POSSIBLE BENEFITS OF HAVING PARTNER AVAILABLE??] They encouraged Gertrude to make sure I understood why they were laughing. I said to Livia: but you have your own maize, cotton, soon a sewing machine! Then Livia said that she will break up with him when she gets her own money through selling her cotton. Laughing again. Gertrude later says she thinks that’s unlikely, because at that time men have a lot of money too, so good to keep relationship = money flow going. Unfortunately Venesi then joined
us and the conversation on this topic stopped...

Livia was not ashamed to tell the other women (at that moment Sofia, Kondwani and Gertrude) that last year she stole cotton from her father’s field to find money. She would smuggle it to younger mother in J. village and later go to collect the money. And even though she has her own maize and cotton this year, she may still steal from parents’ fields too, she added. Will also be selling her own maize secretly without mother knowing, and steal mother’s when she is not around.

Women commented on Tinenenji passing by on way to Fatima’s ex-husband: She doesn’t know that his wife came by today to share the property.” Fatima said today that she doesn’t know whether he is married and with whom he is.

Discussed that all GVHs were to go and receive a mobile phone today, but Group Mudzi B didn’t go, because still mourning over husband. She should have send someone to collect it for her, someone said. Sofia defended her saying that she probably didn’t think about it because of her grief.

When Molly joined us, Sofia grabbed the string around her neck to fish up the cellphone hanging in Molly’s blouse. How did you get that? she asked. Livia answered for her: received from husband of course - but Gertrude was bathing so don’t know if I understood well. Gertrude says it’s the current cheap Zain & Telekom phone, at 2999MK. Nice flat one.

Molly asked Sofia about her ex-husband: Akabwera simumagonana? = When your husband comes, don’t you sleep with him? Sofia answered she stopped with that now because she is already failing to take care of the 4 kids that she has now.

Molly said her husband will be getting a lot of customers for tailoring BS at cotton selling season. Livia asked her about the current tomatoes prices. Said she gets 1500MK per den gu when selling to traders.

Rosemary is still crying over divorce with man that these women called Computer.

Women also discussed how in earlier years at funeral a play would be staged (chiwiro) at which people would act like the deceased. By a teacher, others would play students, actor playing teacher would imitate the things the deceased used to say etc. husband of GVH stopped this tradition because people were also slaughtering goats etc if this was something the deceased used to do.

Husband of Elube passed by smoking a cigarette. I commented that he must have received his salary today. Was confirmed. They worked till Feb 20, but had to wait week to get salary.

The women complained that they had been bored the last days, nothing to do now they couldn’t come here to knit and chat...

Tulipesi (husband of Viola) slaughtered his 2 goats to sell the meat to people in village, later paying back 150 smallest plates of maize (which they call 150MK of maize, with 1MK being small plate) per kg of meat. Within no time his meat had been sold. So, Gertrude concluded, even though at hunger season people say they will not be so stupid this year to spend their maize too easily, already now they are spending it on luxury items like meat.

Amila passed by after dark, relatively well dressed, with baby on back and daughter Esime (light skinned, app 8 yrs). Had been in hospital since Wednesday for Esime. Nobody had come to see or help her. Eventually the doctor himself had given his blood for the girl. She was lucky, others had died because of lack of blood. Many ill children, 5 sharing one bed, others on floor. Came back on bike taxi, had only 60MK, but uncle helped her by giving her 150MK to pay for the bike. [battery for husband’s radio costs 40MK, by the way]

Last days only sun until today afternoon rain (1 bui).

March 1, 2009 Sunday Mudzi B

In morning Sofia passed by with hands and head full of maize and pumpkin. Tumanene was
eating pumpkin too. Sofia said that GVH received 12,000mk from her son in SA.

1750 husband of Amila passed by and Gertrude asked him when he was coming to chop the wood we bought from him. Ah, just give me another 500mk and I will do it. No, you must finish this job we already paid you for. I will come, will come.....

1751 Tumanene gave us g/nuts fresh from her field. She just picked a few, rest she leaves to dry in the field. These are suitable only for boiling and can only be kept for about a week. Emra wants to buy, with money Tumanene wants to buy sobo for her child who is not eating nsima (had malaria).

1752 Daughter of Rashida indeed back back to school. Mother takes care of baby, buying milk to feed it, girl is in standard 8 repeating because last year pregnant during exams. After this to secondary school, grow a lot of cotton, can probably pay school fees with that, Gertrude thinks.

1753 Sofia came to ask company to go together to her field to pick the there, is afraid to go alone: “tchire”, may be some men may be hiding in the grasses and kill her. On our way she told that the husband of Jasmine advised his family to remember the days, when they did not have enough maize, when they were eating madea. Should not start eating a lot now that maize will be harvested. One of their grandsons that used to stay with them but during njala went back to J. village came to harvest all his maize and borrows husband of Jasmine’s bike to go to Mangochi to sell all that maize in stead of waiting for it to dry properly. Grandfather is now afraid that the boy went off to sell his bicycle. Is complaining that he thought that the boy was good…. Boy will sell to those people selling chimanga chootchta.

1754 Sofia also commented about Livia, for whom somebody has bought shoes and a skirt: soon she will be pregnant again by somebody who has cheated her. Or, I suggested, somebody is serious about marrying her, nah. Sofia laughed, she has too many boyfriends. Men know that and just take advantage of her, she is girlfriend material, not good for marriage. Furthermore, she doesn’t wash the clothes of her children often enough, just leaves them in a corner of the sleeping room. When a boyfriend comes there it will smell bad and he will not want to marry her. But will a boyfriend see her sleeping room before he marries her? When a woman has her own house he will come to visit and then it is easy to also check out the sleeping room. “Ndikumudziwa” = I know her, those clothes came from somebody who is cheating her.

1755 The maize in Sofia’s field does not look good, a lot of weeds, small plants, yellowish. She says she applied fertilizer and did we, doesn’t know why it is not growing well. The other part of the field looks better, Gertrude says that indeed she didn’t hear Sofia say earlier that she sold her fertilizer, so much have applied it. But on some parts she didn’t apply because not enough. There are however some insects that are destroying the parts, other than termites. So she plans to rent out this field next year, without telling about the insects. Next year there will be hunger in
her family, she said. Is there no law that forces your husband to help you take care of your children? There is, must go to court to have it enforced, but need a strong person to visit you in court, who can stand up and speak loud etc. Her brother in SA has indeed encouraged her to go if his behaviour continues. They will go together when he comes back from SA. Also, her ex-husband promised to build her a house and if she starts to make problems now he may not do that. So first wait and see, repeats several times that she cultivated her field all alone. That is also why she hasn’t planted cotton but only maize.

1756 On one field all the leaves of the maize plants had been taken off because the owner now also planted tomatoes between the maize plants.

1757 Sofia has started making nsima from her field now, even though it is not dry yet. Bcoz she went without food for lunch, therefore decided. She advised Innocent to start eating by herself now too, “ukukula” - you are growing up. Ukukula uyambe kuphika zakudya zako. Livia just said “may be”.

1758 When I pointed out to Gertrude that Sofia yesterday said “if I had brothers in SA” and today that her brother from SA will help her in court. Gertrude thinks that Sofia has not been able to beg anything from brothers because she was married, but now things have changed.

1759 Chisoni was first to come knitting today. Has been told by mother-in-law to start eating her own now even though it’s not harvest time yet, “koma ndile ndalama” [but I don’t have money], may be husband will send some when someone comes again, but for now has no money. So will be picking and drying maize from her field like some others are doing to find food.

1760 Eventually many women came to knit: Kondwani, Grace, Vanessa, Ada, Chisoni, Esnart + Livia, Lovely, and Innocent. Esnart and Grace had hair braided, Vanessa was laughed at for having combed her hair, looking like a rasta. Said she left it like this because she wants Gertrude to braid her hair tomorrow. I undid Sofia’s hair after Molly left after undoing only half. Then Sofia had it redone by Gertrude…

1761 Blessings came back from selling a chitenje from SA to someone who had sent massage that she wanted to buy.

1762 Esnart just bought a big chitini for 950mk with money from SA.

1763 Ada and Lovely failed to knit, Ada was laughed because she was the first to start learning here. Little later she left, Lovely kept trying till the end, laughing about herself for already trying a certain pattern for 3 days without succeeding. When she [Lovely] quickly went home to get money, to buy fish from passing by man vendor (also Kondwani 30mk and Esnart
Livia both bought 50mk), Blessings said Lovely is just lazy, thinking that knitting comes easy, not really trying to remember.

Grace said she had treated her hair with chemicals which she bought at 200mk, in 2 weeks she will treat it again (to make hair grow faster). So she finds money somewhere... Talking about Tulipesi selling goat meat for maize she said she cannot do that: better to stay without eating meat than exchange so much maize for it.

The women said that this year there are less pumpkins than last year. Last year were eating pumpkins earlier too.

The husband of Vanessa brought her thread from Balaka after getting his salary yesterday. One ball to start making a jersey for their baby daughter. Will bring the second ball later, encourages her to come knit here everyday. Bola, the others said, you have a husband who buys you thread, she [Vanessa] complained about the goats of Tulipesi eating her cotton, with which she wants to buy a cellphone.

The women joked that they want an examination to test their knitting skills. The winner should then be taken to Europe with me, or at least with Gertrude to Dedza to be eating potatoes there.

They were worried that I stayed in the house today because of the son of Esnart who always starts crying when he sees me.

Ada was also told by others to sit properly, legs together, not up and wide with skirt opened, have you not been initiated?

Laughed about funeral today at which people were crying and mourning while the woman who died was very old, not even getting out of the house anymore. They should be thankful that now she can finally rest!

Also joking about Vanessa’s home village, to which a bike taxi from Balaka costs 500mk, while to Mudzi B 200/250mk, “is like a town compared to your village!”

Women and fish vendor discussed that in Mudzi B more people buy fish than in Mudzi A. Laughing about adult school, how difficult it had been for some to even learn how to hold a pencil. Only one woman was really serious, couldn’t write at all but when schooling stopped because of rain could write her name, others were just chatting.
In cotton field of husband GVH a grandson and friend (son Rosemary) weeding. Must be ganyu, says Gertrude, otherwise other grandsons like Kingsley would also have been there.

Wives of men in SA often live near mother-in-law, to be kept an eye on. Also Nelia now that husband is working in Kasungu.

Women don't seem real victims in money-relationship situation: demand! Like girl in letter to Davie.

Difference between now and when maize cobs will have sufficiently dried is that even though people are already eating nsima from current harvest, they cannot sell their maize yet...

Passing Ada and visiting Dora to buy tomatoes after 11AM, both asked whether we would not stay for lunch. Tumanene was eating pumpkin with kids (with hands) and had plate of cooked maize cobs waiting for them. Offered us the maize cobs. Always when eating & meeting people, even if they just pass by: “karibu!” but always declined by everyone. Only very rarely, eg Innocent accepted some pumpkin (when we were first to eat, and we really had too much).

Dora said by herself that she is busy finding money these days through her tomato yield (this harvest will last till end March, then next will take her from April to May, also at dimba). Sell to people in village in small bits, but also goes to [nearest trading center] to sell to vendors who sell in Balaka. Does not go to [small crossroads market] to sell, because there most people buy at their own friends and relatives, not from strangers like her. At [nearest trading center] people are vendors, don’t care about that, just look at quality of tomatoes. Now sells at 5ltr 300 (before 280), 18 ltr was 400 now 600. Prices increased because Ntcheu was first to have tomatoes but are now getting finished. Smaller vendors also come by to buy and sell at e.g. J. village.

At her khonde 2 men, one younger other older. Older one trying to fix a radio. That one is the father of Dorica, said Dora. And later to younger daughter (eating brown sugar from a small blue plastic bag): Have you told these visitors that your father is back? [heb je al verteld...]. Apparently man also came with radio. There was also a bike taxi, probably from the younger man. Young son of D gazing at it, touching etc. D said that husband had said that he wanted to greet us, she had bragged about us coming over ever since Sept last year, buying tomatoes, asking about how things are done in Malawi. Bcoz of these visitors we are now seeing cars in this village! Seemed proud that we came, that she could show off to husband.

Molly not at home (went to buy tomatoes there first) --> to church. Grace not to church because child ill, just at home reading bible.

Livia told Gertrude this morning that she had gone to see boyfriend on Wednesday and asked him whether he would go to visit her parents. Ah not yet, will tell you when I’m ready... And Livia will indeed wait for him to tell her he is ready, continue to see him and not tell parents anything yet.

At borehole women spoke about a very young girl from here, born 1997, who is just moving around with men trying to find money, up to Thyolo. These days she is going to the newly opened bottle store together with Doris. “Afa atisiya.” = this young girl will die while we are still alive.

Chief Mudzi B and Tumanene drying leaves and therere. We gave Tumanene the new phone face she had requested, but she is not able to pay now. Is not even using her phone because can’t pay for charging. Next month husband will send money again, very sorry, but many thanks. Looking inside house Gertrude saw decorations on chairs and tables and asked to see. Both 1 knitted decoration at 30MK at [nearest trading center] recently, she said. Table and 2 chairs, plastic golden look big watch as clock, another clock, some posters/calendars.
Monday March 2, 2009

Livia came by in early morning to have the decoration that she is closhing checked and say that she is going to her tailoring course today. She is not sure whether they will be receiving their sewing machine today.

Gertrude went to fetch water with Innocent, who told her that Livia and Phingi went to K. village to meet the man who proposed Innocent for the third time now. Innocent went to make to discuss with Innocent in evening that she also has a boyfriend in Balaka, who she likes better (but he was not prepared to meet her parents yet, maybe therefore opts for the safer option now?). this man, a relative of Phingi’s friend in K. village, was declined by Livia’s brother because he already has a wife somewhere else. Maybe Phingi wants to please her friend by stimulating the marriage anyway, she really seems to want Livia to get married, worrying about who will take care of her when Phingi would die. Livia’s father just kept quite about the whole issue, Livia doesn’t find this man attractive.

Chikondi came by with one of the twins on her back and a chitini of water on her head. One of her sons with the other baby on his back and a bundle of firewood on head and the other boy with a chitini of water on head too.

Magda and Kima came to greet when coming back from maize field of the church, where they cleared the field from weeds to make harvestin easier. Magda said she will come one day to teach me how to pound maize in a mtondo. She is still eating from their own harvest from last year. Always works hard in the field, so that now she doesn’t have to pick maize prematurely and dry it in the sun, sleeping without food if there is no sun for a day.

Julia and husband were kutonola a large dengu of hybrid maize that was not dry yet, to at least have something to eat. Ndinatonola 1 bag maize cob = full plate of kernels, but will only be enough for some phala for a child. husband of Dora was visiting them, I asked why not men from Mudzi A have gone to SA, while in Mudzi B many, answered that for him, he wants to go just hasn’t found means to pay for passport (8000mk) and transport (13000mk). When they sell cotton, they just use that money to buy clothes, ziiyiya. For those with relatives there it is easier, the relative can send money to undertake the trip. In Mangochi people just say: here is money to go, once you are there send me back the money. If he would go, he would just be staying with one of the men from Mudzi B. Tell in advance that he is coming so that they can be looking for a job for him. They said they were happy we visited them, in stead of only just greeting when passing by.
Went to Venesi to ask her to keep track of the things she finds/receives and spends. On the way Vanessa came running to have her knitwork looked by Gertrude. Venesi is willing to keep track, Gertrude checked out the cellphone that Venesi had hanging around her neck: a new 1110 (same as Tumanene has), which made Gertrude conclude that is probably indeed sent from SA. If it would have been an old phone it may have come from boyfriend, but the Nokia 1110 is the type that husbands often send to their wives from SA.

Sofia was peeling fresh g/nuts to cook like beans for ndiwo. GVH gave her the g/nuts, all children sitting around her, helping to peel and eat.

Also Chikondi and Suset were willing to keep track of incomings and expenditure. Venesi has 50mk at the moment, Chikondi 30 and Suset nothing. I also want to ask Evelin, but she was not at home, choose these women because they have relatively far in school, and have an interesting financial situation = no steady income provided by a husband like eg women with husbands in SA.

Asked Magda how she managed to send her first husband away. Indeed he refused several times, then he got sent to prison and while he was gone she married her current husband and was pregnant when the first one came back, he took her to court where she cheated that she had gotten pregnant by somebody who had just been moving around without getting married. She said in court that she was willing to go back to her first husband, knowing that he would not accept her anyway. Meanwhile her parents hid her second husband. Eventually the court decided that she had to pay 20.000mk as penalty for causing the marriage to end by becoming pregnant from another man. Her second = current husband paid the fine, which the first husband just used to drink beer, “nothing to remember” = tangible. That man married 5 times but is alone now, while she is still with the second husband. She did wrong, she says, but is happy now. Wanted to make us chimanga chootch, which we declined, in morning had joked that she wanted tea when she sat down to greet us. When passing by Balakasi, Naima and husband clearing their cotton field, Naima joked that we should hurry home and start prepare lunch for her. Gertrude joked back that she will be using a chitini to cook in instead of a pot.

Magda thinks people can harvest by end of March, and that cotton harvest will also start earlier this year, by early May. The maize near Suset’s house is ready bending down, it’s hybrid, and she will be harvesting them one of these days because they are dry enough. So the first harvesting of properly dried maize will at least start soon! Looked into her [Suset] sleeping room and saw quite a lot of items, including an upside down plastic box as table with laid out on it some items for in hair. When we arrived she was sitting with Kima and another woman in front of Kima’s kitchen, who is brewing beer again today.

Aisha asked for another picture because the one I gave her has been damaged by heavy
rains. She was feeding her goats that are tied.

Venesi also been weeding at the field of the catholic church at [tiny crossroads market]. All catholics have been helping to cultivate the small plot. Harvest is used to feed visitors or buy items needed at the church.

Men - or at least those in SA - have the power to prescribe their wives where to live (near the husbands relatives).

Saiba passed by coming back from [tiny crossroads market] where she has been selling guaves. Had bought a full dengu, now only a layer on bottom left. Selling at 2mk for the smaller ones and 3mk for bigger ones. Baby on back and other child with bowl of fresh fish for ndiwo now.

At borehole Rosa daughter of [Bicycle maker] told Gertrude to stop knitting her jersey because she doesn’t have the money for it now.

Jasmine came to chat with dengu lit full of msewula to peel for her ndiwo today while chatting. Complained about CUMO: already working with them for 5 yrs, and now this. Even not getting back their savings money. Why don’t you go to office in Balaka to complain, I asked? Will wait a bit more, mlangizi says he will arrange, otherwise will go indeed.

Daughter of Rashida came to pay for the chipewa she ordered for her baby, the third chipewa already. Wants to go to secondary school after writing primary examinations, and then to college to become a lawyer. She hears (about) them on radio and decided she wants that too.

Many women knitting again: Ada came again, and messed up again. Grace with daughter ill with malaria, crying loud when having attacks (will go to Banja la Mtsogolo mawa, at [nearest tradingcenter] and [clinic] don’t give enough medication, will have to pay at BLM, but at least gets proper dosis). Blessings, leaving twice to collect money for zitenje that she sold. Had kept some behind for women who had told her so, wanting to buy after selling cotton. But now others asked for them (had spread word through in-laws at [large commercial estate] etc), so she wasn’t going to keep them, not being sure the others will indeed buy. Kondwani was quiet today, Haliday came again too, quiet too, learning to closh a small bag for her mobile phone, will pay Gertrude for the thread she used for it. Vanessa was laughed at for having been seen knitting in morning at house alone, “making mistakes” (because without teacher). Answered she enjoyed it when nothing else to do. Chisoni said she wants to buy a basketkastje (120-130, passing by vendors at J. village/chigayo) and thread. Haliday said: to prepare for your husband’s home coming, haha. Maybe this time she will get pregnant, so it’s good to learn to knit. Ah, don’t worry, your husband will bring everything for you from SA, Blessings said. But will be knitting anyway, to make different patterns, the way I like it. Then Grace said: Mwina sizidzatheka, adzalephera : But maybe you will fail to give birth and then he will have brought all those things for nothing/she will have to sell all the baby things she knitted. Laughing. All were now joking about importance of making a “budget” (using English word) with money from SA so as to have a nicely changed house when husband comes back.

Grace said she harvested 3 bags of maize last year and is about to finish eating them, will then start buying, but at least maize will be cheap again. Jasmine joked to Grace that she must have been sleeping with another man, because her child is ill.

Women told Ada that they had seen her with the father of her baby going into Pamela's
house several times: Beware, he will give you another baby! His other marriage has ended now, they said. Why do you still keep his name [as last name] for your child, should change it into name of your own father to show that you are angry with him!:

1819
1820 Blessings: Jones akumabwera... [Jones (father of Ada’s child) came again...]
1821 Kondwani: Akumafikira kwa amayi a Victor (= Pamela)...
1822 Chisoni: Banja lake lavuta, chifukwa chake akumabwera kwa iyeyo.
1823 Kondwani: Banja lake latha?
1824 Ada: iyeyo?
1825 Blessings: Mnyamatayo ali ndi matenda.[That boy has diseases/AIDS]
1826 Kondwani: Lucy, ukatengeka upita... [if you will be attracted to him, you will die]
1827 Blessings: Amachokera kuti?
1828 Ada: Kwa M.
1829 Kondwani: Akufuna kusamala mwana wake. [He wants to take care of his child]
1830 Ada: Ali ndi mwana? Alibe! Mwana ndi wanga. Panopa akukhala ndi ndani mwanayo? [Does he have a child? He does not! That child is mine. With whom does the child live?] Others: We are just saying this because the child still has his name...
1832
1833 Today also Tinenenji joined again - yesterday playing net ball. Dorica only came by to get the 50MK for the tomatoes we bought earlier from her mother. She had a cellphone around neck too! Says she got it from father. So he is planning to stay, Gertrude concluded later.

1836 When I asked the women why is was that from Mudzi A no one had gone to SA, while from Mudzi B so many. Difficult question, didn’t really know the answer they said. Could only think of “Chidwi alibe” - there is no interest there of going.

1837 When daughter of Esnart came, women asked her where her mother was. The child answered that her mother was cooking pumpkin which she got from the field. Was laughed at for being so detailed. liii, this one keeps a close eye on her mother! We didn’t ask you what she was doing, only where she is! Conditioned to be unspecific thus...

1838 Lovely passed by, saying she was too busy today to come knitting. Women joked that she would be punished tomorrow for failing to come, because she will be asking questions because forgotten.

1839 Tinenenji said she had to be going, because she didn’t have ndiwo, so had to go and find. Kondwani asked her why she didn’t just cook some pumpkin for dinner. Tinenenji answered: Nthawi inonso kudya maungu zinali kale, pano tikuuya nsima, sitingagone ndi njala! [the time of eating pumpkin is over, now we eat nsima, we don’t sleep with hunger!] She is eating alone these days (husband left, and apparently not with g’mother/aunt).

1840 When daughter of Esnart came, women asked her where her mother was. The child answered that her mother was cooking pumpkin which she got from the field. Was laughed at for being so detailed. liii, this one keeps a close eye on her mother! We didn’t ask you what she was doing, only where she is! Conditioned to be unspecific thus...

1841 Lovely passed by, saying she was too busy today to come knitting. Women joked that she would be punished tomorrow for failing to come, because she will be asking questions because forgotten.

1842 Gertrude asked Sofia about Jane, says Jane left saying that she was going to her aunt at [clinic], but family here does not know what she wants to be doing next. I inquired about food, when just dropping yourself at a relatives house. In beginning can be eating what you have brought, after that they will not be so happy, complaining to others about the big responsibility they have of taking care of you too.

1843 Admarc will also be buying maize from farmers. Will announce on radio where, at fair prices (but
because of corrupted Admarc sellers, much maize will not get back to people at fair price...).

March 3, 2009 Tuesday - clouds, no rain

Women weeding at tree-plantation. Many women washing today (Pamela, Ada, Esnart). Sofia told Gertrude that Livia has now come home with a cellphone, which she says she only borrowed for 2 days. Sewing machines will be given in April., The first machine she got on her own name, but this one on the name of her deceased sister, mother of Davie. The money she will earn through that machine she will give part to her mother, and buying soap for Davie. If she will move to Balaka to marry boyfriend she will either leave machine here, or take it and send money back home.

Paid 2000MK rent to GVH (who we afterwards found clearing around our house, path to bafa etc). Complained about sores and coughing. Gertrude asked her why not to hospital, GVH just answered she is busy preparing for the 40-day ceremony. Already bought a goat with th emoney that her son sent, and plans to also buy a chicken, because doesn't know whether people at M. village will buy food for that ceremony.

Went to Venesi to instruct that she also has to keep records of non-monetary items that she receives and gives. Again Evelin not at home. husband of Hilda on kho nde, as always. Grace's daughter better again today.

Continued to Sweetness: she stayed with her previous husband at his home village. He said he would change when she complained about his beer drinking behavior. Until at one point she was really fed up and left him in January. Had been working on his field there, but didn't demand part of the harvest, didn't want to make problems. Ate with her parents until new husband, who had a lot of maize. Women who say they want to divorce but husband refuses to leave are just not serious. I asked whether her husband (who was now out doing his fish BS, but came back already around 9 - 9.30, when we passed by again) even thought about going to SA. He does, but they don't have the means for him to go. When finishing my questions, Sweetness (pregnant) asked Gertrude how much a full baby outfit costs (chipewa, trousers, jersey and boots), 700MK, wants a set in blue and white, like Haliday got. Drying khobwe leafs.

Christina's husband agreed to end the marriage without any problems, he didn't want her either. So he just left after she said she wanted to stop, didn't take anything. It had been in November, they had already finished their previous harvest, she worked on the field alone after he left. Her current husband has not contacted her ever since he left in Oct (leaving her pregnant). As far as she is concerned they are still married though, because there is now a new rule that divorces have to be made official at GVH by paying the women 20MK and signing - with ankhoswe from both sides present - the book. Verified with GVH, indeed keeps track of birth, death of children and adults, marriages and divorces, since last year, told to do so by government, which supplies the books. When she needs a new book, goes to sub-TA who will write letter to DC. Bcoz husband of Christina has not come back to sign that book, not officially divorced, difficult to marry another because of that, she thinks. Some of her maize cobs are already bending done, still she thinks harvest will be in April. Still 4 weeks from now? Yes...

Walking back I wondered out loud whether Lizzie would prefer her husband to stay or to go back to SA (women knitting said that he has decided to stay and do BS here in Malawi). She will probably just agree with what he decided, Gertrude said. But must have preference in her head, both options must have advantages and disadvantages. Going means she would have more money probably... Gertrude then added: And then she can decided herself on how to spend the money, while if he stays here, will keep the money himself...
Alma with big pumpkins, saying they started eating while ago already. “Njala [hunger] was bad this year, but at least eating pumpkins now.”

Livia came to be instructed on use of phone, which she received yesterday from boyfriend who came to her tailoring course. Use it for time being, he said, I will buy new one later. He says he is now preparing to meet her parents. But Livia is still uncertain about telling her parents. Mother is presssing her to marry the one from K. village, where they went on Saturday. He offered 2000MK: Just accept, I am serious about marrying you. But she refused, doesn't want him, wants the one from Balaka... Boy from Mudzi B came with phone, boy had been calling from Balaka to speak to Livia, but found her out, then came to Gertrude to talk to him. Boyfriend asked Gertrude to tell Livia to come to his shop tomorrow before tailoring because he bought her the cloth she begged for.

Wants to cheat mother about cellphone, saying that she exchanged it for 1.5 bag of maize (75kg). Parents will be happy, maybe even helping with the maize, because the cellphone will help them too. So then I can sell that maize and buy what I want.

Went to Jasmine to use mtondo to make nsinjiro [grinded groundnut], found her eating maungu (12am) and cooked maize cobs with Innocent’s son. Husband was also there, but not eating them. Sofia’s children were also eating maungu, but much smaller plate. Sofia again drying leafs, Jasmine drying leafs, thelere and pumpkin.

Jasmine wanted on picture with 2 tied goats, proudly went to show picture to husband. Younger son of Sofia put his hand in the plate with nsinjiro that Gertrude was carrying, and then said, ndaba [I stole!]

Livia already clothed a little bag for her phone yesterday. Mother Phingi asked Gertrude about the phone, Gertrude told her she didn’t know where Livia got it (first had said to Phingi: I will answer you later, then discussed with me, I advised her just say not to know). When Livia and Innocent had gone to wash their clothes Livia had said to Innocent that she planned to tell mother that Gertrude had given her the phone. Innocent told Gertrude and then Gertrude told Livia that that was not possible because Gertrude already told Phingi she didn’t know anything about the phone. And advised her again to be open with mother about boyfriend in Balaka. She, however, seems not to want to against her mother’s wish to marry the man from K. village, will go for tailoring again tomorrow, and Phingi told her to bring baby Hana with her because Phingi will be too busy at the pig khola to take care of baby.

I saw Sofia’s pictures, when still happy with husband in Zomba; nice clothes, many plants in front of house in pots (couldn’t see roof), even cellphone. Which they sold later when they had some problems in their family.

Evelin came by to chat in early afternoon. Asked her whether she would be willing to keep records of what she receives and spends/gives per day. Laughing shyly again, but agreed, took a long time thinking about what to write down as last thing received, then wrote that she had borrowed 100mk from grandmother on March 1, Gertrude noticed that the date coincided nicely with someone having received a salary at the end of Feb..
After a while she [Evelin] said she was going because she wanted her hair braided by Grace, because going to Balaka tomorrow “to buy paraffin”. While, according to Gertrude, prices of paraffin vendors are the same in Balaka as [small crossroads market], may be ARVs at hospital? Says she is coughing not getting better.

Venesi will also go to Balaka, for a 2 day workshop on making charcoal burners, to be teaching this skill at adult school in Mudzi B. Materials will again be supplied by concern, who decided on the specific skill. For charcoal burners less firewood is needed, women can sell the burners for income generation. I inquired about which organisation paid the tree planters. Is a concern project, but it was a MASAF that came to pay, and the same amount as people received for the other MASAF activities (road maintenance).

Gertrude went to [tiny crossroads market] on bike to get charged phones. Saw only Zione, selling sugarcane this time. Mr Dauda said they will be ordering some decorations from Gertrude soon, already bought chairs earlier, will find a lot of money selling their cotton, he said.

In afternoon we went to Jasmine to burn our clay pots. She had already dug a whole in the soil and covered the bottom with a metal plate. Nkuni on metal plate, then the pots amidst the nkhu and a lot of dry grass on top. Put fire in it, for about 1,5 hours, while waiting we went with Sofia to find the bark of specific tree which then had to be soaked in water; “mankhwa” after taking the pots out of the fire, the hot pots were slammed with the wet barks, which made the pots to sizzle. Gertrude laughed hard, first when putting the pots in the hole (“just as if I am making sacrifice”) and when slashing the pots with the wet barks (“as if I am a sing’anga!”). Jasmine said she was happy that the pots turned out fine. She used to go very far to find clay, even Evelin had told her that she goes all the way to somewhere near J. village to find clay. But now Jasmine tried a place just behind Livia’s field and found the dothi there to be suitable.

When we arrived at Jasmine’s we found Chikondi with a small paper fold with salt. Julia had bought pannadol and a small blue plastic bag with something dark brown. She said she wants to learn to make clay pots, told Jasmine to take her next time she goes to get dothi, so was serious about it.

March 4, Wednesday

Livia is indeed taking Hana with her to Balaka today. In early morning, 5am, she had gone with Sofia to ask Levison for the 200mk that she gave him for doing ganyu on her field which he never did. He had kept telling her to come back on another day. Now Rosemary [MIL Levison] got angry with Livia, saying she just came to accuse them of stealing, to be fighting. I asked Gertrude whether she knew how Livia had found those 200mk to start with, Gertrude just knew that at that time Livia did some ganyu on Mr Chikombo’s field for 55mk, but he had given her
Yesterday Livia asked a boy to make ridges and plant potatoes for her, because she had 150mk. He agreed but today did not show up.

Rosa passed by on her way to borehole, said she didn’t go to school today because there was an outstanding balance. If she would go, she would be chased. Staying at home will pressure her father to quickly come up with the money, she hopes.

Yesterday Sofia commented on how Livia always has to take ufa, 5 cobs of maize and 10mk for ndiwo to contribute to the lunch at her tailoring course. “And then when she comes home, she wants to eat again, that one!” Livia laughed.

Livia had given Gertrude’s phone number and the number of a son of Elube to her boyfriend in Balaka “because he is single, so won’t give problems with his wife if she talks with him/if he comes to see her because there had been a call”.

Gertrude found ex-husband of Fatima at borehole asking Tinenenji to help him wash his clothes, but she refused, saying she wanted to get home quickly to do something there. Jeneti laughed and asked then: “chibwenzi?” - they just kept quiet.

On March 1, the knitting women also discussed various instructive traditional ceremonies, someone told Ada she should attend the “ndakula” ceremony to become more polite, and also to learn about how to take care of baby. Some of these instructive ceremonies are attended before giving birth (to be advised about what happens at birth - the women laughed thinking of how Ada hard cried loudly how much it hurted when she left for hospital to deliver), others after, about how to take care of baby and family. For example that a woman should not put salt in relish when menstruating, because it will cause the husband to get ill. Kondwani, Blessings and Lovely had attended either ndakula, chiputu or litiwo. Costs 100mk, takes a week. Girls stay there the whole week, but those with children just come during the days. Ada was interested and said she would go.

GVH gave plate full of thelere.

When I was not here, both Teleza and Thokozani asked Gertrude whether it is true that I have 3 children. So gossips without truth indeed develop by their own, maybe following from people having seen my pictures, 3 children at home of my parents.

Gertrude tells about Lilongwe, kanengo where she operated a telephone bureau. Many men would come to sell tobacco and propose women, cheating them that they are not married. The women decide to take advantage, “eat the money together”. So many customers for phoning (sometimes 400 or 700mk profit per day), to meet with boyfriends. Some women calling the
Most women went to funeral of one of Chisoni’s relative to [large commercial estate]. Only Grace and Esnart [came to knit?]. They commented on Jeneti who walked by that at least she is getting fat again now because of the ARVs. Some men will even propose to her, looking so good, not knowing that she is infected. It was her brother who had come back from SA some months ago who had advised her to go get tested and take ARVs. Others are afraid to get tested, but it is good to go. Some days ago Jeneti called her brother, saying that she is looking good & fat now.

Grace said that in past people failed to buy ARVs because they were so expensive, but now they are at least free of charge.

GVH also came to chat for a bit, on her way to give Sofia some pumpkins. Yesterday evening she had been to a funeral ceremony of the very old woman that had died at C. village, aged 80 or 90, according to Jasmine.

Gertrude says much more women are coming to knit these days compared to January, when they were busy looking for money for food through ganyu or working on their own fields.

I asked Esnart whether she not missed an available partner at home. Ah, am used to it, but any disadvantages to husband away? That she is living amidst unrelated people, not in her home village but his, which sometimes leads to quarrels and then he is not there to protect her. Gertrude says it is unclear whether she is divorced now or not. He recently sent her 10,000mk (of which GVH was told by son to borrow 4000mk for funeral, which she already paid back to Esnart after her son sent her 12,000mk). Jane said to Gertrude earlier that Esnart had received a cellphone from her husband but soon said that somebody from around her had taken it, while actually she had given it to her mother. Many women with husbands in SA seem to live with their family in-law, why? Are told so by husband.

Livia started her second tailoring course just after her sister had died. Actually the sister had started the classes and after her dead Livia took her place. About 10 women on the course, bit by bit the sewing machines come in, but they don’t want to give until all have arrived, therefore keep postponing.

Woke up in night feeling nausea, in morning had open bowels. Maybe eating too much chimanga chokazinga yesterday, Gertrude says it can give digestion problems...

Thinking of myself and the prospect of being in NL again makes me realize I do the same as many here: splurge - while you know it is not beneficial for future. In their case food & money wise, in my case waist line and facial skin problems... Just the fact of having had to do without for period of time, and then suddenly there is overdaad, and the possibility of getting all you have not able to get

March 5, Thursday

Phingi came in early morning: Livia had not come home yesterday from Balaka. There were rains and grey clouds in afternoon, she could have called to Gertrude using her new cellphone that she opted to stay with her brother in Balaka, eg saying that she had a problem with her bike, anything. Is first time for her to do this since she started the tailoring course, Phingi said. If she is not back by 12, Phingi is going to find her at Balaka.

Evelin was not at home those 2 mornings that we tried to find her, because planting rice at her dimba field.

Two men came on bike with a scale they hung on a branch of a tree in Mudzi B. Women with small children (till age of 5) gathered to have child weighted, results are kept track of in books, most of them covered with a (news)paper to protect. Jasmine said purpose was to keep an eye on whether their children are eating, may be ill. Gertrude and Sofia also went to the “scale” when young. Jasmine not, it started when her children were young. The men informed the women that next Monday they should come to receive more cholera medication. Also told women that they should be washing their children every day. Sofia and daughter-in-law of Dora told the man their child is not getting better. Man advised them to go to Balaka hospital on Monday, will be helped there (even though Sofia has gone there already). Sofia plans to ask Kingsley to take her on Monday, Chikondi gave us the books of her twins to look at.

Sofia came to cut thelere her, because she was just alone at home. Will be drying and eating from June on, also selling. Gertrude said she should just give her youngest son to her ex-husband to take care of him. No, Sofia said, may be he will be going to SA later and send her blankets. husband will pay for ganyu to burn bricks and build the house because he doesn’t know how to do this himself. They will start in June, when all rains have finished and then start building in August.

Girl from [tiny crossroads market] came after some weeks of absence. Gertrude joked that she thought the girl must have gotten married somewhere. But had been ill, she said.

In morning GVH akupalira thonje in husband's field. Tinenenji passed by with khasu, maybe to Mrs Ntawanga's
field where she worked earlier too.

1902 Went to Mudzi A 2 for some pictures people requested. Asked Sandala about husband’s job at Mpaweni motel, she says he is manager there... Doesn’t know his salary, he just sends some money through others every now and then. Many husbands and wives keep hidden (kubisa) from each other the amount of money they have/get. Otherwise the other one may be begging, demanding too much. Depends on how the couple stays together, “if he likes money too much” women prefer not to tell. Others are open about it. She has told husband about 10,000MK loan she wants to get from CUMO (will receive March 24), because otherwise it will be difficult when she may need his help in paying back the loan... Wants to make both mandasi and bread, try to sell the bread at tea rooms in Mbwera, otherwise at school. Planned to go to [small crossroads market] to learn from some women there how to make bread, but Gertrude told her now she can teach her too. Will send a message when she has found money to buy the ingredients (sent by husband). They have now built a kitchen, with a chicken khola next to it, for future chickens.

1903 Then passed by Saibi who sat in front of her torn down house cleaning nkhwani. Sending first husband away was easy. She said: If you don't go, I will go - and he preferred not to stay alone in her home village. He didn’t work in the field, arguing that her relatives hated him, seemed to be waiting to be send away. Already had another wife, so was easy for him to go and stay there. After that he married another, but later went back to the second one. And now he is with another again. She [Saibi] had started a cassava BS with money borrowed from mother, then someone took cassava without being able to pay yet, so then she just stayed. Now she went to collect that money and bought a dengu full of guavas, are cheap, just paid 80MK for full dengu. After burning Saibi’s roof, Charity went to marry in Balaka, but the new husband already left her there, she is probably afraid to come home. Used to stay with Selina in house, so nowhere to stay now. Maybe pregnant, Gertrude speculated later, therefore staying there.

1904 Passed by Phingi going into their fields with a basin. Livia had still not returned (almost 10AM). And she is with the child on her back, Phingi worried. She will come, abwera, Gertrude assured Phingi. Gertrude promised to try and call her again, but Livia’s phone is still switched off. Phingi says she will beat her when she comes back. Levison had come to apologize yesterday, saying he will come bring the money as soon as he finds some.

1905 Phingi planted msewula on the plot near her house where they already harvested the maize. Just in case enough rains will still fall. Haven't had hard rains since Saturday, only some light rains.

1906 Lucia ([tiny crossroads market] vlg) came by when we were having lunch. Just joined us on the mat and chatted. After that stayed to closh until we left for [small crossroads market] at 3 PM. Met her boyfriend when going to [nearest tradingcenter] to sell mandasi there. Had already seen him several times when he spoke to her on road and said he would like to marry her, but that they could start with relationship so she could find out about his behavior. She accepted. App 3-4 months ago. She feels her g’mother bewitched her before she died, something seems to moving in her stomach, a sore inside oid. Had been praying and praying, changed to African Continent church, people (incl Mr Dauda) helped her pray, but to no avail. These people from African Continent told her not to go to sing’anga, but trust in God. But problem persisted. Then boyfriend gave her 300MK to go to traditional doctor, and she is now getting better. She also asked whether it is true that I have 3 kids, which she doubted because she had seen my pictures. “People like gossiping,” she sighted. Today at borehole they had been talking about Fatima’s divorce - had only heard about it today. Were surprised about it, hadn't expected that marriage to break.
Evelin and Kondwani came by after lunch. Although Evelin had said to us yesterday that she wanted to go to Balaka for paraffin, today she said she had been to the hospital there. Kondwani noticed new dress and sandals for child, but Evelin said she just borrowed those (?).

Went to check [small crossroads market] market, but found it deserted. Only under a tree opposite the market field someone selling 2 hips of second hand clothes, some tomatoes and onions, cucumber and usipa. Met Mr Chikombo, who explained this is a “seasonal” market, so will come to life again in June. Also Kima later that afternoon used the same (English) word to explain why we hadn’t found anything at [small crossroads market]. Mr Chikombo believes people will harvest by end March, another 3 weeks from now. Suset said however that she is worried that her dried maize will start germinating if the rains continue to fall. On way back from [small crossroads market] met with Saibi going that way with dengu full of guavas and children.

Passed by Suset to check on income&expenditure records. She had also listed her activities each day. I should change kupangira/kugulira (advised by Gertrude) back to Kugulira/kupatsira, I think. And ask the women to keep open lines between the days so I/Gertrude can translate. Both Suset and Kima asked Gertrude whether Livia had come back from Balaka, so had already heard about her staying the night there. Teleza hadn’t, apparently, and asked about it when she heard this. She had taken the child this time, therefore she was free to stay there, otherwise baby would have been crying all night, she commented. Gertrude said that Livia had come back and explained that she stayed night with brother who wanted to borrow the bicycle. The women kept quiet, seemed not to belief. Later discussed about a man called Kaliati, whose wife keeps on cheating him that the men he finds with her in the house are just relatives or friends. Haha, the woman with multiple husbands! Also talked about Chikondi, whose husband is often away again, maybe not happy with the big responsibility of a twin. When he goes back to his other wife, he even takes the maize or ufa that is left from what he bought for Chikondi. Teleza said she would throw all the maize or ufa away, so that at least all will go hungry, all will suffer, also the husband and other wife. They don't understand why she allows him to stay, there is no benefit for her, she will almost be harvesting her own maize. If he stays she will just have to share.

Then passed by Aisha who had begged another picture because other one got damaged by rain. Was surprised that we really came. Took nice pictures of her and kids, also Naima with baby, and later her husband (first putting on jeans, sneakers & T-shirt) wanted on picture. husband wanted Aisha and daughter of Rashida, Monya, to be on picture with him, he leunde on Monya. Gertrude said wife Naima must not have like that, but she just kept quiet. Maybe they are relatives, Gertrude wonders. Balakasi would like to be on a picture with all her family, but then when they have all bathed and dressed up. Gertrude asked why they never came to knit (anymore), no time, they answered (but were just sitting all together chatting when we arrived). But soon she will be pregnant again, said Venesi while hitting her belly which to me already seemed somewhat swollen, and then she will need a baby suit. Balakasi indeed had cellphone around her neck.

Sofia said that Phingi had just been cheating by saying that she would hit Livia when she would finally decided to come home: They were just chatting when Livia came back! Livia came back without phone... Says she spent night with brother who wanted to use the bike. Sofia said to Gertrude that she is happy she isn't married anymore, that she is growing her own food, gets some money every now and then from grandmother for soap. It's better to be taking care of one's children. Not all this hassle that Livia has now, without much benefit.

When we passed Jasmine’s on our way home found there a group pf women waiting to start knitting. Chisoni said she couldn't start alone, wouldn't manage - how are they going to solve this once Gertrude will be gone?? They complained they had nothing to do now that we had been gone in the afternoon. Quickly joined us at home: Blessings, Chisoni, Kondwani, Grace, Esnart. Blessings
brought own thread (from something old uit elkaar gehaald) to be knitting a V-jersey zonder mouwen for her son, like the one Gertrude has just knitted which Esnart wants to buy, preparing for cold season: “It’s good to be knitting something big now, to really learn,” Blessings said. The women laughed about Venesi’s boyfriend passing again on his bike towards her house: He is so busy visiting her, “tiona zotsitira zake...” - we will see the results of it, unclear whether they referred to pregnancy or infection... Gertrude is knitting a big poncho for tante Wil, as thanks for all the needles.

1924  
Friday, March 6.

1925  
GVH anapalira kumunda wa thonje, ndi atsikana angapo, from other vlgs. We had breakfast with pumpkin and popcorn (indeed, the maize we grow does not pop!). Tried to cook with pot I made myself, but took so long that Gertrude decided to switch to metal cooking pot. Bafa is falling apart now, because of rains and wind.

1926  
Livia comes back from mosque with Talina, Joy and Hana, all 4 with head scarf. Livia sees Gertrude has knitted a hat for child (ordered by Monya, but not yet paid for) which fits Joy, asks price (100MK) and says she takes it. Will come with money tomorrow after going to Balaka. Relationship still going strong. The boy even committed himself to visiting her parents next week Saturday, Livia has been moving around in Balaka yesterday to find them a house. He had told her rent can be 2000MK, but she found something for 1500, they will start renting it from end March and thus start living together per April. Joy had a nice new dress on. Livia said her brother gave it... Boyfriend of Livia says he will buy her a cellphone soon. She now made clear to Phingi that she does not want to marry the man from B village, mother “anadandaula” [complained]. Livia said that she told her yesterday about this boy from Balaka. The boy called on Gertrude’s phone and asked Gertrude whether she traveled well yesterday - thinking it was Livia, so she had been with him, not with brother as she said, and the phone was still with him in stead of “left at home, not wanting to take it to mosque”. Says her brother advised her not to marry, isn’t he buying soap for her (ndimakupatsa soap)? But will you also buy me clothes when I want? Said he would. Livia tells Gertrude that ex-HB of Sofia wants to divorce new wife and thinks about taking back Sofia “who knows how to take care of the family with little money.” His current wife just takes and spends all his money. I’ve heard this before, Gertrude then commented: Probably because she is a city girl, while Sofia is from the village. I deliberately interfered in conversation to make clear that I understood - kind of - what was being said. And that Gertrude was translating to me.

1928  
I asked whether boys here make an effort to have girls enjoy sex. Difficult question to explain, didn’t want to go into orgasm details... Livia said that sometimes a man wants more sex than the woman, sometimes other way around, difficult to solve. Eg Rosemary was married to chief Mudzi A for a year, then he left her, complaining that he was too old to give her all the sex she wanted. Also the current husband left for that reason, according to Livia.

1929  
Passed by Venesi to check on HH book. Asked whether it is true that where will be knitting examinations soon. And said it’s good that these women have something to do besides just gossiping. Next Monday adult school will start again. Had been stopped because people complained that they were too hungry to pay attention. Venesi received an instruction book with a wide variety of topics incl soil erosion, livestock keeping, stealing, health, HIV and AIDS, reading & writing, calculating, small scale Bss. She was told to start with just 2 chapters: Livestock and “stealing & murder”. Other schools were told to start with other chapters, later they will meet again and be instructed to start from chapter 1 and work through all of them. She received 2800MK for the 2 day workshop. She wore oorknopjes today, Gertrude says she had indeed written that she had bought these in Balaka after receiving the
workshop money (also children shoes a 500MK, a lot of things).

Evelin was playing bawo with Tinenenji in front of Hilda’s house, Hilda and husband of Amila were watching.

Not all women came to knit today: Innocent, Livia, Lovely, Blessings, Chisoni, Kondwani (but too tired to knit, had been to field to take maize for ufa), Grace, Tumanene, new face. Sofia said to Grace that she saw her with a boy. Grace answered that she has been spending time with him for quite a while, why mention it now? But didn't go into it further, kept it off. Later [Grace] was telling that a friend of the uncle with whom she stayed in Mzuzu had kept calling her “in-law” (alamu) while there, had called her today, talked for 2 hours. He asked her whether she had finished working on her field now, and when she confirmed he told her to come North again and marry him, or otherwise find him a wife. Hadn’t known, she said, that he called her alamu because he wanted to marry her! Other women commented that it is good to have a cellphone... [if Grace did not stay with uncle but previous partner in Mzuzu, she at least does try to keep up her story]

Livia wanted to ask Mavuto (g’son GVH) to escort her to field to take groundnuts to take to Balaka tomorrow. Sofia offered to accompany her. When gone Kondwani said: Mtedza akufuna atenge mawa ku Balaka, mwina akufuna akaperke kwa chibwenzi [Those groundnuts she wants to take to Balaka tomorrow, maybe she wants to give it to a boyfriend] (they don’t know about him) chimangonso anapereka koma kulima amalima yekha [she also brought maize (to Balaka) but the farming she did alone...]. Grace added: Mkomya kwa abambo (special treatment, esp nice food prepared to please husband)... Pobwera kumeneko olo 1 Kwacha, ine ayi sindichite... = And then coming back empty handed, not even 1 kwacha, I couldn’t do it. Giving boyfriend, trying to please him with food she cultivated without his help, but not getting back anything (she does seem to get quite a lot, but women don’t know this). Indeed Livia has earlier been taking maize cobs to Balaka.

When Gertrude and I were to Venesi, Grace said to others that Venesi had told her that I asked her to keep track of what she eats, spends, finds...)Gertrude thinks that others will now encourage these women to cheat, saying that if you don or don’t write this-and-this, you will not get...

Sofia commented that: Pali anthu ena osauka amadzionetsa ngati olemera, koma olemera amadzionetsa ngati osauka... [People who are poor want to look as if they are rich, but the rich want to look as if they are poor]. About friend of Grace who had moved to Balaka, and pretends to be richer than she is. Sofia also said later that she doesn’t want more children. Grace said: Bola, because you are taking care alone, not like Livia whose mother takes care when she goes off. You have to take all your kids....

Innocent remarked that she had seen a nice skirt in Balaka for 800MK, but no money. Someone else said that in a certain shop nice plates are being sold. Others commented they may check them out once they find money from cotton.

Grace broke a silence by saying that some people are never satisfied with what they have: When they have a bike, they want motorcycle, then car, then airplane.

Women talked about Kingsley and friend, who stopped school in St2 and 4 respectively. They go often, but just to play football. Teacher tried to persuade them to continue, play football after school. Even allowed them to enter in St6 or 7, and just repeat many times so that they don’t have to join the small children. And told them they could even be coming only 2 days a week ipv 5. Gertrude remembered that Kingsley indeed had trouble reading the letter of Doris. But GVH said that he is the one who writes in the divorce etc book...

In evening Sofia comes to borrow torch, wants to run to GVH ("amayi") to beg some paraffin, because she currently has some. In case Sofia’s son starts crying in night (not getting better).

Went to [nearest tradingcenter] , first to hospital to make appointment with Mrs Joshua, nurse, to interview her and try to get some factual data/statistics on number of birth per month.
But she had gone to Balaka, her house (iron sheets, electricity) is right there on the compound. I will call her to make appointment, met Blessings and daughter-in-law of Dora who had gone to hospital with ill kids. But the doctor had been beaten by angry patients yesterday and not shown up today.

At market tomatoes and guavas mainly, also cucumbers, eggplant, onions, dried fish, beans. Only 3 women selling mandasi, no zigumu (because mgaiwa difficult to find these days). No masamba or thobwa or chimanga chootcha/chophika. Livia’s ex-husband was frying chips this time in stead of selling fish. The woman of the restaurant had gone to a funeral, a younger woman with baby was sleeping on floor, got up to receive picture. We gave most pictures to the woman selling legumes, she would pass them on. The tomato selling woman outside the market whom we interviewed earlier has been here all throughout hunger season; sindinasiye. Bought her tomatoes somewhere at Ntcheu district, now more and more women are coming to sell their own harvested tomatoes. Coming months BS will be much better than the past months, she said.

March 7, Saturday

GVH is clearing away the cotton under trees in front of our house for us & all women to be chatting there in shade! Cotton isn’t growing well there anyway. After having been complaining so much about people visiting us too much, haha.

March 8, Sunday

Vanessa came later than usual to knit in afternoon. Kondwani said that Vanessa and husband had been fighting, he asked her why she washed her body so properly, whether she was going to meet anyone = man. But Kondwani said that it is unreasonable of him to act so jealous because “their child is still young”, meaning that she would not be able = allowed to be having sex with anyone at all. For ¾ months should refrain from sex. Vanessa just came to knit though, and after a while her husband passed by very angry, says Gertrude. [she remembered this story later, did not write it in her own notes]

March 9 2009, Monday - Lilongwe

Siambi says that it is cheaper for farmers to not grow maize at all, but buy just after harvest! He has been trying to convince ICRISAT employees, but only Chamanga has come to agree with him now.

Meeting at the office with film crew that flew in from Nairobi today. Siambi agreed with Thukwi, but also had 2 other villages selected nearby so the crew can check these out “because you (visionalists) see different things than we (agriculturalists)” which pleased the team. Festus from ICRAF however came in very defensively, sounding angry about the selecting of Salima: “we put in a lot of resources (human, financial)” and thus should be talked to first and be given the lead in deciding on the locations, want to show the team the places where their projects run best. Team remained very diplomatic, but also made clear their intentions are drawing an anthropological image (for the Irish public to feel surrounded, emerged within this 1 village). Siambi fully understood, and even though the Irish Aid, who funds and requested this multimedia project, did not fund any of the ICRISAT activities in Salima, as long as there are groundnuts, any groundnuts, he is fine. Told me later that this is why he had told Richard Jones he was not going to coordinate the film crew’s stay here for all the different centres, cause every one of them was surely wanting to show the team their own projects, fighting for precedence of their own. Siambi is leaving for Zim tomorrow - and probably
happy with that, but eating dinner with us tonight. If the team does opt for another village than Thukwi, then Gertrude and I will just head back to Balaka, I guess. Their loss. Don't really feel like going to Thukwi as a matter of fact.

1958

I was ok with taking a minibus to Chitedze, is no problem for me anymore. But No!! If you have the resources available, you have to take the car - in other words, more like “one who has the resources, does not use them!” - with a tone of, how can you even consider anything else! We cannot accept you using minibuses! Gray also remarked that this year will be a bumper harvest, rains have been good. Indeed, I hadn't realized as such. He asked me how the harvests prospect looked like in Balaka, I didn't know what to answer, what he wanted to know (quantities of bags of maize?) But then Gertrude said that the maize looks very depressing there, completely dead. Gray said that in the south eating maize starts earlier, but hunger also. And that this bumper harvest does not necessarily mean a later start of hunger season. It will lead, esp in South, to more people deciding to perform certain ceremonies like boys circumcision, girls initiation, remembering an uncle who died some years ago and who has not had a tombstone revealed. For all these food=maize is needed, and now that it is available this is a good year to perform these ceremonies, rather than another year when harvests are low.

1960

Stayed at Madidi Lodge. A Malawian (fat) couple was eating there when we checked in at about 4 pm. Gertrude commented about them, noticed them as strange: Are they married (pa banja)? But then, what an expensive thing to do, eating here together, drinking wine. And where are their children then, left then at home? Or are they pa chibwenzi?

1961

March 10, Tuesday Chitedze

Gertrude remembers: Phingi said she had gone to Esnart to borrow money to pay back with maize later, but Esnart had said that she had no money left. Later Esnart told Gertrude that she did have money, but that she knows Phingi is not good in repaying, and therefore refused to give her the money, cheating her that she had none left...

1962

March 11, Wednesday - Dedza

At bus depot in Lilongwe various men and women selling barks and powders and bottles liquids: traditional medicine. By for when one wants someone to fall in love with him or her, when a woman has missed a menstruation, when looking for a job, wanting to find wealth, for BS to go well, make up after a quarrel, have many boys propose to you, to not get ill after sleeping with a menstruating girl, but also when having head or stomach aches. In Kanengo Gertrude had her telephone bureau beside a trad med seller (says there are especially many there, because many women looking for men and many men looking for jobs and women - at that time stopped employing women to select tobacco in different grades, so women can only find employment as cook or washing uniforms etc) and saw him have many customers, both men and women, young and old. One teaspoon cost 20 to 30 MK, sometimes more teaspoons are needed, for period of some weeks. Different instructions: Put in water and wash body with it, put in porridge and eat, or in water and drink. Jasmine gave someone a trad medicine for fever, to put in boiling water and hand covered face above it, to steam.

1968

Dr Monyo came to chat in my office. “No time” to visit Bazale project, “they won’t release me here.” Doesn't really know what exact project is there, but when hearing that there was only 1 variety he concluded it must be a community seed bank start up. Says that all members must have received 5kg to plant and give back 10kg to community seed bank. But that because of lack of human resources cannot be checked/followed up properly. Nsinjiro cannot have rosette problem.
Marjolein gave me a report from an anthropologist who did a 1 month study for MSF on village health volunteers who should be present in every village. They are trained to notice signs of HIV/AIDS and encourage those people to go get blood tested. I haven’t heard about it in Mudzi B! Should check out whether there is a Village Health Committee.

Steve Photographer advises me to read Collapse, by Jared Diamond.

Seeing picture of Aisha, Gertrude remembers that she had put on a shawl (to wrap baby’s on back with) under her skirt on the day that they went to receive payment from MASAF. People had laughed about it: trying to look less thin!

Raphael (capacity builder, degree in rural development, major in sociology, employed at [organization], on trip with media team and us as driver): pesticide companies have the money/means to get out there, deliver their message and products to farmers (shops, extension workers), much more so then government. Thus farmers are more likely to receive pro-pesticide messages. About manure (after me telling about my puzzlement about people knowing it works better yet not making it): people say: have to fetch water from far, later have to transport all that manure to my field at 5 km distance etc (will you supply me with a wheel barrow?). Fertilizer is not only mixed with each other but also with sand, to be able to apply to whole field. Then farmers are happy, satisfied that they applied fertilizer to their entire field.

Jonathan Miller (coordinator of media team): Farmer Fields Schools very inspiring! By seeing fungi on crops/seeds through microscope, as part of teaching people about development of diseases etc.

March 15, Sunday: Lilongwe --> Mudzi B

Notes on previous days:

Raphael (driver of [organization]) said that in Kasungu some farmers decided to only grow tobacco, and with the money they find through selling tobacco buy maize when it’s cheap. However, this group plus the group of fulltime employed people (like himself, teachers etc) - who also buy all their maize - caused the maize prices to go up. Government is trying to encourage people to not stop growing maize, but make sure they grow at least some for own consumption, to ensure food sec. Bye bye specialization/moving out of subsistence farming...

One night Gertrude went out with Raphael to eat (others to Pottery, I tired/fed up, wanted to be alone and go to bed early - Gertrude and I shared room). He started talking about women that were after him. Sending him emails, one had transferred 20000MK to his bank account when he had requested to borrow 2000 from her. Another one requested money from him to start a banana BS, wanted 20000, he gave 30000 and agreed that she only had to pay back part of it. They spent night in hotel together, but on separate beds, he said. How his wife refuses to put on the miniskirts and trousers that he would like to see her in, so therefore he likes looking at other women. She is also not very talkative, so he finds nobody to chat with when he goes home, so only goes there to eat and sleep. She is Tumbuka, he was told to pay the price of 2 cows cash, but could take the girl after only paying for 1 = 15000MK. So when they’d divorce he can have the kids. I wondered whether a man is happy with that, maybe difficult to find new wife. Gertrude thinks it’s not difficult, especially if woman doesn’t have BS or other income. For single woman with kids it is more difficult to find new man, who is willing to take care of other’s kids too.

I saw him ask tel nr from girl working at hotel where we stayed in Dedza (Panjira Lodge, where he paid 4800 oid for single, standard room, but maybe refunded by [org]? or per diem?). Gertrude
saw them chatting on veranda after coming back from Pottery restaurant. He gave her 500MK to buy him a sponge which costs 20-30MK. She can keep the rest, “it's far to walk to the market” he justified this to Gertrude - which it's not, by the way. Gertrude asked him whether he had paid attention to the costs of her look today: a 1800 skirt, 2000 blouse, 1800 hair extensions. Is that possible with normal salary for hotel employees? (earning app 10000/month). No, Raphael said, she must have some people helping her/giving her money. Are you not afraid, you need to take care of your life! Gertrude advised him. He just laughed, saying he is not afraid, and that it just happens like this.

1990

Jones still with wife because she threatened to leave kids with him and he cannot afford to pay babysitter while he is out to work...

1992

Gertrude said pitiful that many people in Dedza vlg where media team worked are eating potatoes 3 times a day these days. Only some people have/can afford maize (have to walk far to get it). Others not complaining though, happy to at least have potatoes, “in other places people have nothing…”

1994

Innocent applied for loan from Esnart too, but did not get. While she has her food secured by mother, still takes loan. Gertrude says just after harvest prices also at 20MK/kg - so actually not different getting loan now or selling just after harvest.

1998

Chisoni had complained to husband over phone that she wasn’t staying well in Mudzi B/next to mother-in-law and wants to move to own home vlg at K. Both husband and MIL got angry, speculating that she may be having a boyfriend and therefore wants to go back to home vlg, to move around. So it is probably true that MIL sent her young daughter to follow Chisoni where ever she goes.

1999

At knitting club: Grace had changed from CCAP to mosque when married with man from Mangochi, but now has started going to CCAP again: “had no one to follow to mosque” - so seem to be divorced indeed.

2000

Meeting with Susan Watkins on at Catholic Women’s Org in Balaka: she seemed enthusiastic about my research and some of the anecdotes I told her, making notes every now and then (e.g. of my story about how Jane had classified groundnuts in as many categories as names she found mentioned in survey - while some where clearly different spellings of same word, others refer to the same variety but using different names - I told her this following her shock about the incredible low quality of research and report writing for Reach org oid that she was asked to consult. She spoke about culture of report writing, how reports become a cultural artifact (with list of acronyms to start with, even including HIV and USA), while content itself is based on horribly badly analyzed data.

2003

MDICP data shows that in Balaka 2/3 of first marriages end in divorce. Gave me article (George something) on stick. MDICP also found that wives of circumcised men are less often HIV infected (but high divorce and remarriage rate in South undo this advantage). Also shows that 97% of respondents think that risk of becoming HIV infected after 1 sexual act with HIV positive partner is high/very likely.

2004

Borrowed me book the Nature of Entrustment: Intimacy, exchange and the sacred in Africa by Parker Shipton (third of trilogy, third part will be on manipulating external lending initiatives & options for rural Africans to solve poverty). Told me to read Ch1,2,5 (en ev 6). Also gave me dissertation she was very enthusiastic about from Nicola Desmond, about risk perceptions in Tanzania.

2005

Made me realize again that I also really want to include data on development projects, eg
2006 interviews with Concern people (different positions). Won’t have time for that now, I think. But in June or Jan 2010. Susan hopes I will also be writing about what I have seen within ICRISAT (= Jane’s non-analyzing of collected data, people refraining from going into field).

2007 When arriving back in Mudzi B, son of Sofia comes yelling that we have arrived and as soon as he takes a better look at us, starts yelling that I have new shoes (= plastic shoes because of mud everywhere, which I paid too much for but are supposed to cost 200-300MK).

2008 We found GVH, Kondwani, Vanessa and Sofia (and some young and older kids) chatting outside fence of GVH’s compound.

2009 Small plots right of path to Mudzi B tree belong to Sofia: one with groundnuts (not weeded), one with potatoes (weeded). She told Gertrude that her ex-husband has not come to visit when she was ill... Also said that GVH planned to start harvesting tomorrow (= today, Monday). But when Gertrude went to check this morning (Monday March 16), GVH said she had indeed planned too, but now decided to first build a nkhokwe, for which she will have to get materials from far together with g’children. So probably won’t start until next weekend. Jane is back with GVH now. Sofia said that she just said that she decided she doesn’t want to be married now.

2010 Magda already harvested a small plot of maize we saw when passing by. Indeed Ms Mattiya said some people have started now (and all will be harvested by end of April, first maize, then groundnuts, then cotton - sweet potatoes cannot be kept for longer than 2-3 months, so people will just take some when they want to eat, not really harvest).

2014 Monday, March 16: Mudzi B

2015 We harvested our maize, even though it is not fully dried yet. Tatinonolo right away and the kernels are now on a mat outside to dry (although clouded...). Would have gone to chigayo tomorrow, but Gertrude suddenly got up because she heard a woman crying. Ran off to check who had died, whether someone here in vlg, or maybe it was just a woman passing through with news from another vlg. Found that is was the daughter-in-law of Dora: Thandizo died in hospital in Balaka last night... We met Tinenenji in Balaka yesterday, who had gone to visit grandmother, saying that she was doing fine. Already early, around 10 AM an ambulance with a number of women came driving past. Immediately screaming women and quiet men came running from all sides to welcome the deceased. Relatives have emptied half Thandizo’s maize field to cater for the grave diggers and visiting relatives. We wonder whether Tinenenji will inherit the land... The funeral itself will be tomorrow, today not enough time to dig grave and alert more distanced relatives. Now body is being washed, oa by Jasmine - who always helps when the deceased is a Muslim woman. Only older people help to wash.

2016 We will not be able to visit Evelin and Venesi to check on their HH boekjes because they live too near to Thandizo's house... Will get Suset's and Chikondi's, translate and check them at home and then decide whether to continue and how much to pay. Gertrude suggested to keep MASAF as guideline = 200MK/day. So 4000-5000/month...

2017 While harvesting both GVH and Jasmine complained we hadn't informed them we would be harvesting today, then they could have helped. But in reality nobody helps each other, says Gertrude. Only in form of ganyu. The most work is in transporting the heavy maize from field to house. When Hamra passed she asked surprised whether we already had a nkhokwe /whether we shouldn't build a nkhokwe first. No, will just store in house, isn’t much, answered Gertrude. When people want to store it in nkhokwe leave leaves around cob. When storing in bag: take off leaves and kernels.
Although GVH she would be getting materials for nkhokwe today, she went to J. vlg with Sofia to visit relative that is not getting better and afterwards she will go to her rice field at dambo. Maybe sent g’kids to buy material? Although Kingsley came to check whether we found our house in good condition, so her was around.

Daughter of Elube passed by, Gertrude asked whether she wasn’t going to school. No: Zovala zakuda - my clothes are dirty... Just used as an excuse, according to Gertrude, other kids do go to school in dirty clothes. Son of Elube also passed, gave him his picture, where he poses with his mountain bike: I look just like some one from SA! he said pleased.

Gertrude is drying seeds of pumpkin to store for giving to mother to plant next season. In Dedza only very small pumpkins, try if these will grow well there...

Went to fetch HH books and distribute pictures. Met Naima on her way to borehole together with Monya and Nelia. Dora is not selling mandasi at [small crossroads market] anymore, but will go to Balaka mawa to sell bananas. Venesi ordered full baby suit for her last born, saying that she doesn’t want other children so can buy whatever she wants for this last born. At her compound we found Lovely, Balakasi and Aisha preparing chicken in mpika with oil. Balakasi told us to pass by on way back again and receive some thobwa which we did. They didn’t say anything about celebration oid, so Gertrude thinks they just decided themselves to prepare all this. Many children playing around the nice food, but unlikely to receive some, says Gertrude. Maybe their mothers, to distribute themselves. Monya and Dora also came with their water. Lovely is daughter of brother of Balakasi. Lovely was feeding phala to Naima’s last born with finger, joking that that is the old way of eating phala, now there are spoons... Balakasi says she will start harvesting as soon as son-in-law has made a floor in their nkhokwe, material is already lying there. But he was that hanging around now. After we gave him pictures he brought out his other pictures, not many, all the same, stoere poses, zonnebril, petje achterstevoren, with bike, phone, money. Chenawe came with baby of Chikondi on back, saying that when she was young and giving birth she didn’t have anyone helping her out. Gertrude complained to Lovely that nobody from Mudzi A comes to chat or knit, L asked why and Gertrude referred her to women around. Balaksi said that we belong to Mudzi B vlg, so difficult for them to come. Chenawe gestured that it will lead to gossips, putting her hand in front of mouth (bijna als luchtkusjes).

Continued to Suset who gave HH book. Kima sitting outside kitchen taking therere leafs from branch for ndiwo, has malaria. Then to Teleza who already yelled from distance that she ate pumpkin today and nkhwani yesterday - so Janneke doesn’t have to ask that! Thought you had stopped moving around asking everybody questions! But was ok in explaining how she [Teleza] had managed to sent her husband away: Ankhoswe had already given up, told them not to come anymore, because husband simply did not change behavior. After year without ankhoswe she decided to turn to church elders, who organized 3 meetings on Sundays with her and husband and advised them, after which husband changed for a while but soon showed same behavior again. At third time Teleza was clear that she wanted a divorce, and both the elders and husband agreed. He did not marry again. She agrees that t is difficult to send husbands away: amakana - they always refuse.

Chikondi says she will start harvesting soon because people already started stealing, according to her to pay back the big debts they made by borrowing either the 1000MK from Esnart or the 1 bag of maize in exchange for 3 at J. village. Had been in hospital for 2 days with babies because coughing and sores in their mouths...
Lovely was preparing chicken today at Balakasi because she was told to do so by a deceased grandparent in a dream. She was told to clear the grave where the agogo is buried and prepare meat with nsima for all relatives to this agogo. Gertrude was told this by Vanessa.

Last week all participants in tree planting project were ordered by chief Mudzi A to help clear the path to [tiny crossroads market] for 3 days, voluntarily. The chief kept calling this; chitukuko.

Evelin went to [tiny crossroads market] school last week to check whether her child really attends classes (she wrote this in her HH book).

Grandson Davie is now back at Jasmine’s.

**Tuesday, March 17**

Sofia spent a night “at the funeral” = probably in one of the houses surrounding Thandizo’s house. Inside, sitting around the dead body, were probably only women like Jasmine, Chenawe, GVH - says Gertrude.

Many women cooking in front of entrance grave yard. When rains came all the women came to shelter in our hose, the whole floor was covered. Many basins were brought in with large mitanda nsima, nandolo and thelere. Gertrude says that the food that these women prepare for the boys who dig the grave (Kingsley, son of Elube etc) is supplied by family of deceased, but the food for the women is supplied by themselves. Some bring ufa, others some money, Gertrude also saw some bringing firewood.

Kondwani, Balakasi, Teleza, Thokozani, Mrs Ntawanga (who seemed to be in charge), Blessings, Elube, Rashida, wife of [Bicycle maker] + others from other villages. They ate in small groups surrounding 4 sets of basins with the different foods. After finishing they left one by one, then Mrs Ntawanga swept the floor and thanked us. Then Gertrude and I ate lunch (rice, beans, nkhwani) and found we were late to attend the funeral: Gertrude already heard men singing at the graveyard. We hurried to Thandizo’s house where some were crying loud. Sat with Evelin, Molly, Ada, Hamra en Alida. But not for long, but by bit women got up and left. A group including Venesi was cooking nsima in large pot under tree at some distance. Some women stayed for food.

In morning Amila came to chop the chunk of firewood, as she had promised a while ago. Told Gertrude that tomorrow everybody will be clearing the graveyard, and bringing some food to lunch together. She will be preparing thobwa, during funerals muslim women are not
allowed on the graveyard, but tomorrow everybody can enter.

2041 Before funeral we passed by Chikondi (1 baby sleeping on mat, other on back of her her sons) and Suset to give back the note books in which they keep track of income and expenditure. Gertrude and I had been looking through them yesterday, both rather recorded their activities then focusing on transfers, difficult to explain what I exactly want, but we made another effort. Paid them 2000mk and asked if they are willing to continue until June. Chikondi said she will be busy next 2 weeks harvesting, because thieves have already started stealing. But will start again by April 1, Suset says no problem.

2042 Eveles finished weeding her rice field last Wednesday. Is still coughing.

2043 The funeral cooking club complained that the men had requested 8 big plates of nsima while they were not with many.

2044 Kondwani, chief Mudzi B, Jane, Sofia, Blessings, g’dughter of GVH, daughter of Fissa, Lovely, some women from other village (daughter-in-law of GHV), Tumanene (bought thread to make jersey for daughter), some only played bawo. Chief Mudzi B said she doesn’t like knitting so enjoed the bawo. Chisoni didn’t come because ill (malungo), also Vanessa too ill to come. Her husband is now in village, back from his work in Liwonde (catching fish for sale), women said he is back because his wife is not getting better.

2045 Women discussed that one of the coming days GVH will hold 40 day ceremony for deceased husband. They also complained about behaviour of some of them to have been eaten nsima with beans at Thandizo’s funeral today, without contributing. While after 3 days the family will have to feed guests too, and after 40 days too. Some people even kill goats to be able to cater for all the eating guests at the 40th day after funeral.

2046 Jane said that the man she lived with in Balaka had just been playing cards.

2047 Women commented that husband of Dora will leave her again after eating her maize. When

2048 Gertrude went to have phone charged at Esnart she found her with some wounds in face; had been fighting, but couldn’t say more. Battery was empty, knitting women said that it was because brother of Esnart’s husband (boy who speaks English) had given ufa from house to friend without discussing with Esnart, but Blessings said this story may not be true.

2049 Women summoned Ada for refusing to marry the father of her child. Lucia said she is still angry for him leaving her when child was 1 month old. Will wait for another man to propose
her, but women agreed, then you will give birth to child with different father, is not good.

**March 18, Wednesday**

Susan Watkins said that fertility may go down during hunger season because women stop menstruating.

Evelin told us that is was the in-law of Esnart who recently impregnated his girlfriend who took the ufa from her house and beat her when she got angry about it. Also Esnart’s husband used to beat her, one day Gertrude found her with a black eye.

Evelin is daughter of Venesi’s sister.

Venesi gave ndiwo, soap, matches to chief Mudzi B as a thanks for having selected her as a volunteer teacher for concern universal - which brings a lot of income for Venesi (accommodation, transport & food allowances for attending workshops).

Gave Auleria 500mk as contribution to funeral. Folded very small, hidden in hand (when shaking hands as greeting, very secretive).

Livia has not mentioned anything about her boyfriend coming to talk to her parents - which he said he would do on last Saturday. The fact that Gertrude has not heard anything about it from either Livia or Phingi makes her believe that he did not come.

Pedal of Gertrude’s bike broke, went to [Bicycle maker] but he said he would have to charge a lot, because going to Balaka, and are only sold in pairs. Better go to Balaka yourself, he advised.

Gertrude noted that Venesi spends a lot on ndiwo: 100-150 per day in stead of the usual 30-40mk. Probably to accommodate/please her partner who apparently likes dried fish. She sometimes calls him amuna, other times bwenzi in her HH book.

I mentioned tha Auleria does not look very healthy herself either, it seems her face is getting thinner. “may be that is why she not getting married”, speculated Gertrude, “you can see that her youngest child is already in std 6”. Implying that there is no reason for AA not to have married again already.

Thokozani (who ate with funeral group in our house yesterday) said “ndadutsa” for first time again today since theft. Rosemary already started greeting some weeks back (when we met her on road
Grace was knitting on her veranda when we passed in the morning. She wanted to learn to knit something big and wanted to see if she can manage without Gertrude’s help. Gertrude gave her thread to be making a trouser for the baby suit ordered by Sweetness. Venesi wants to learn to make V-collar for jerseys, so Gertrude gave her the green jersey she is knitting for Rosa.

Young daughters of Elube pass by from borehole and yell: Apongo (friend), we will come and fetch some water for you! Which they said yesterday to, just a friendly thing to say. Won’t really do it, Gertrude asked why they hadn’t gone to school today: No reason.

We heard an ambulance not far away, soon Jasmine came by, telling that a 3 yr old grandchild of Alma had died in Balaka hospital (coughing, fever, vomiting). Jasmine seemed to blame the mother, who was moving around with men. Indeed Alma herself had complained about this too, telling the girl that she had already lost her sister to this behaviour, should learn from it, see now you lost your child because of it. When Hamra passed from borehole she disapproved of Alma having said this. Everybody knows the girl is an orphan, had nobody to take care of her, had to move around to find support. But Jasmine disagreed: she had a child, so she was an adult. Could just have taken her responsibility and work hard in the field. Instead she copied the behaviour of her deceased sister. Now her only child died, Alma had also encouraged her to work hard in the field, but the girl moved away, renting a house near the lime-factory near Balaka. Lovely came to get her pictures and said that the girl had been complaining at the borehole that her child kept her from moving around, that she had sometimes locked it up alone in the house at night that she considered killing it so that she could be free again. Lovely had then advised her to leave the child to her grandmother or owner of child (= father). The father had married to another because he was working alone in the field, his wife didn’t help: kuthamanga kulima. Funeral will be tomorrow, early, thinks Gertrude because the child was still young.

Charity passes by and comes to chat. Has grown father (her new husband doing BS of frying chips. Ah, muli ndi mwayi, says Gertrude, Charity had been going to [small crossroads market] with friends to be eating chips and was told by the one frying the chips that the owner of the BS (who has people frying chips on 3 places) is looking for a wife. Awetu agreed right away because she fancied living in town. They then met at the same frying place in [small crossroads market] and made arrangements for the marriage. She worked in his grocery shop, but the BS didn’t go very well so she started her own BS of selling matemba. They are renting a house in Balaka, buying everything (tomatoes, masamba). She had planted and fertilized maize here in Mudzi A, which her mother continued to look after when Charity moved to town. But mother told A that she can come and take the maize. A says she is happy to live in town, but when Gertrude asked her at beginning of conversation “zikuyenda”, Charity replied “sizikuyenda” [not going well]. So may be sister Selina was telling truth when she said Charitu had already been left by husband to find for herself. Charity had come with
ambulance from Balaka, because related to mother of child.

Jasmine started harvesting her nearly by maize field. Will put hybrid maize in bags and local in nkhokwe.

Arrived Friday morning from the Netherlands in Lilongwe together with my professor Sjaak van der Geest. used Friday to do shopping Gertrude texted long list of terms we need in village: matches, paraffin lamp, paraffin, vice, beans, sugar, cooking oil, salt, eggs, batteries, candles, washing powder, dish wash toilet paper, bike pedal. For my self I wanted 1 extra water (tap water in big bottle), airtime, crackers, a blanket or Gertrude and 1for Sjaak. Gertrude also requested beans, cabbage and tomatoes which I bought at Lizulu. Beans small bag for 200mk, cabbage 3 for 50mk tomatoes 12 for 200mk. we stayed at Kiboko, Gray took us around. We were just in time to make it to the office, greet some people, and get some things which I stored there. In the evening Monja and Frauke came for a drink, then had dinner with Emily at mamalai's (she craved for pizza on her 1 night in Lilongwe, having been in Balaka boma for over two months). I forgot to go to the typist and tried on Saturday morning but his office was closed. Tried to call, but answered by someone who didn’t speak English, so it can’t have been Davie...... Emily drove us back to Balaka, stopped on our way for a drink at Dedza pottery.

It is not as cold as I expected, only beginning now. Many tobacco trucks at Lilongwe Auction. Gertrude said that she heard that second hand clothes are expensive in Lilongwe because of all the tobacco sales. Prices offered for tobacco by foreign buyers are low, said Gray, and Bingu threatened (again) to deport them if they wouldn’t increase their prices otherwise there would be no benefit for Malawians. On Wednesday Bingu won the elections (billboards everywhere urging people: voterani so there is no Chichewa word for voting...), on Friday he was sworn in. everything went on peacefully.

No news at the office, DR Siambi was in Kenya, DR Monyo in Tanzania with Harvey and S. In Balaka district the cotton looks ready for harvesting. Indeed Gertrude said that at Mudzi B people have been harvesting twice already, although official buying will not start till next Monday. Some have already started selling it to vendors at low prices: 30-35k. Official buying will be done at Holy’s house at 75mk/kg. Emily said she heard that buying got delayed because rain had been falling making cotton heavier.

Went to greet GVH, but she had gone to receive some money that was sent by her son in SA. Went to greet chief Mudzi B who arrived with Vanessa and Kondwani carrying water to throw on dug soil to make clay for bricks for a house that was ordered by a brother of chief Mudzi B and Kondwani who stays in SA. husband of Vanessa was polishing the molded and dried bricks. They receive money for their work but not like salary for ganyu. The brother will think of them because they are his relatives, last time they when they did the same for his previous house that now collapsed, he sent them money for soap as thanks. The men who make the 12000 bricks (oldest son of Dora, son of Elube and husband of Vanessa) earn 5000mk each.

Sjaak said: few people do what you do (living in village). And he again emphasized I should give Gertrude
large role in dissertation. And thus should also ask about her experience of all this.

He asked Gertrude why women in general want to marry. Maybe to have children, was one of Gertrude’s suggestions. And build house, kitchen, toilet for them. But if a woman is finding money through other means, why not pay for labor to build her house or work on her field? She couldn’t really answer (don’t know, we can ask, but you know, you have lived your whole life in this country) then I remembered Victoria, but is a good liar, I said to Sjaak. Is also interesting, lying means she wants to hide something. Well yes but you can’t show which ones are lies. I was thinking about Victoria saying/assuming that she receives no money for volunteering at the adult literacy school, while Venesi later told us all teachers receive 1000mk per month. Sjaak suggested that we just start asking about ‘in general’, then later maybe saying ‘you yourself are a good example for this.”

Alma asked Gertrude whether it is true that Sofia (neighbor) received clothes, money and a phone from her ex-husband, asking Gertrude because she is from Sofia’s village. But Gertrude denied that it is true she had heard the same rumours and went to check with Sofia herself but Sofia said she does receive money for soap and maize every now and then (200mk, 500mk and nothing else). Ex-husband gave money for some bags of maize, in total he wants to for 5 bags of maize 2 for initiation ceremony of their daughter (to make nsima for all visitors as well as thobwa).

In morning an orphaned grandson of GVH was picking some cotton only a bucket full, not as ganyu. He receives orphan care money (once came to borrow Gertrude’s bike to get it and buy clothes with it as his grandmother had told him) GHV said she was going to her dimba field to harvest maize.

Vanessa passed by on her way to Hilda to borrow a chicken, when the chicken has babies she will keep two and return the rest.

Yesterday the pump stopped working. It has been reported at Balaka water board, but today Sunday and Bingu announced that tomorrow will be a public holiday to celebrate his new turn. Formal selling of cotton would start tomorrow but because of this public holiday. So walking long distances to fetch water.

Sjaak says he is surprised about primitiveness had expected a bit more luxury. ‘his’ village (in Ghana) is more like a town. Years ago, when he started, indeed also no electricity or sewage system but now there are even televisions.

I think he finds I am concerned too much with gossiping - discussing all the specific individual stories and actions of the people around us instead of talking with those people about how things are here in general. But I think that all those specific stories can also give me insights in how things are in general, eg when people have opinions about someone elses actions, a judgement. Nonetheless, it may indeed work well - less threatening, less direct - to talk about how things are in general. For example Victoria. “What are reasons for women to stay single?”

I intend to go in to the formal mode as soon as I ask a question. He makes provocative jokes (such as: Did you beat your husband like that too?). Also impressive: telling off drunk ex-husband of Rosemary after a conversation: hand on shoulder, saying firmly “ok, thanks for conversation” and gesturing with arm that the other can continue in the direction he was heading for.

Went to see men making bricks under Mudzi B tree which I didn’t think was of much interest until Sjaak pointed out that this is what women keep saying: that they need men to do this job for them. Only then did I brought out camera, the young men were putting clay in the moulds and carry them
to a cleared spot at some metres distance, saying that it is an easy job, one doesn’t have to go to school for that, they just did it once and then knew how to do it. But women can’t do it, too heavy, are not strong enough. Is fetching water not heavy too? Ah no, laughing, that is an easier job, clay is a heavier substance than water.

But when we then went to see a pile of burnt bricks at Hilda’s house, Hilda said she can make brick too. Also a door or a bafa she can make, learned by saying attention when husband was doing it. Other women don’t know how to do it (saying they need a man to do this) because they have just never paid attention/wanted closely when a man did it. But building a house she cannot do. I remember now that Rashida also made bricks herself... But mud and sticks house was made by husband.

On the way to chief Mudzi A passed by Hamra’s son who carried big trunks to pile of dried bricks. His wife died a month ago so now he plans to move back to his home village.

Greeted mr Ntawanga to whom Sjaak started to preach about using human manure. Laughing. A man who was with him spoke some English (Sjaak asked: Are you his brother? Yes, Are you staying together? Yes - I don’t think he understood what was being asked). This man objected that human feces bring diseases. Not if you leave them for 6 months, then they will not smell bad anymore, not look like feces but like black fertile soil. After they also objected that it would smell bad). Sjaak encouraged Mr Ntawanga to compare on the field where we were standing between human and goat manure and fertilizer. Then Mr Ntawanga asked him to sign his visitors book which has mainly FIDP visitors since September last year, not many (I made picture of the book). The goat khola partly collapsed, because FIDP had not come with cement nor iron sheets as they promised. Sjaak was shocked about this when I told him and asked whether Mr Ntawanga was disappointed.

Livia is also building a house - or rather have one built. She sold her maize to pay for the building (besides possible gifts from lovers, like the rasta man who sells beans and who promised to buy cement for her floor. She says she doesn’t like him though, because he has long hair, doesn’t know how to wash himself properly, drinks and smokes. She has been seen chatting to him at Pamela’s house and at her mother’s house when Phingi wasn’t in. Gertrude told me that Livia was proposed marriage via Emra, which Livia accepted without having seen the man. He then sent her fish (has a fish BS), but later she declined the man, saying to Gertrude that she did so because he said he didn’t want to go for blood testing. But Gertrude thinks she just said this because she expected Gertrude to ask about this.

In evening Phingi came by with Joy on back to chat, excusing that she had not come earlier because she had been harvesting cotton from morning to evening because she and husband had been ill for 2 weeks and therefore not harvested earlier. Had sores inside chest. I asked about the scale that I saw hanging at her veranda. Is from her son at J. village who buys maize to keep for selling at hunger season. He gives Phingi money to buy for her and comes to collect the maize every now and then. Today she only bought one bag.

Why do men move to the village of their wives, I asked her kufuna, kufuna, she answered, couples just choose where to live. This son had actually stayed with Phingi until he had his wife had 5 children. Only then did his wife’s uncle order the couple to move to the wife’s home village so that all those children would belong to that village. We are not like Tumbuka, Phingi said, who pay for their wives and then the wife has to move in with the man. This is our law, lamulo, so we can say that the uncle has more power over the wife than her husband? I asked. Phingi confirmed, Gertrude then started to apologize again for the many questions that I am asking.
Hazel is back in office & bored, but finally managed to rent shop. At Bwandiro, sharing with normal clothes seller. Thami blamed her for being an opportunist a week ago, since then not been in touch. She says still with him because of potential pilot show in South Africa, which would be together with him.

With Sjaak discussed about table of content: no place for ethnographic data! Better first description, then analysis. This morning he explicitly discussed research topic with Gertrude: why do women get married, why don't they stay alone? Is it love? No, not really. Then what? Don't know, we can ask. But you know, this is your country! Rather to build house, kitchen, toilet. Can't women do that? Ah, we are lazy,... weak. Men are stronger? Yes. And help in field, Gertrude added. Then he suggested what I had told him, about the threat that married women see in a single woman. Gertrude agreed that the married women are afraid that a single women may be in relationship with their husbands. But don't some women pay for people to build house, work on field? Ah no, want man to do that. Hm ja, so culture, Sjaak concluded. I thought of Victoria at Mudzi A 2, who does good in farming, recently had a new house built. Should talk to her about this! Gertrude told me ontzet that Kkondwani, chief Mudzi B, Vanessa don't have toilet, share a place for kusamba [washing their body]. When maize was in field, went there, but now after harvest bagging friends to use theirs (Kondwani came here one day to use toilet, complaining that she doesn't have toilet, has to beg friends). Sjaak then asked about the male point of view about this, but we said we have little contact with men. Should, he said & I agree. Later discussed with Gertrude that maybe husband of Naima (who I gave pictures - so may be willing to talk (openly). husband of Rose too?

Went to Catholic church sermon at [tiny crossroads market], because Sjaak thought I should at least once attend church and he was interested to do so too. From 9.30 to 12. Nice choir with impressive conductor whom I think is gay. Kima and Magda were there, Evelin with father, Meriam and daughter-in-law. Everybody was pressed to give money several times because next week pentecostal (pinksteren), priest will come for sermon, has to be fed. Over 2000MK was collected. Paintings on wall of a Jesus with black features, older man. Men and women were sitting on separate sides of the church, only the choir was mixed. Gertrude was asked to introduce us, as everybody would be curious (talking) about us... First question from congregation was whether Sjaak and I are couple.

Kima thanked me for coming to pray with them.

On way back greeted Alma who was kupeta mapira. I wanted to try too, but after failing (without losing mapira) she quickly took it away again. She showed how she beats the millet plant to get the seeds out (for eating fresh like that, or dry to make thobwa). Sjaak asked whether she beats her husband like that too. Gertrude didn't understand so that Alma answered that she used to do this for him to. Serve him water and a plate with fresh millet seeds. Then I corrected Gertrude, and Alma answered that she didn't beat husband, but husband beat her. With stick? With hands, fists - hitting herself with her fists in her eyes. When husband would be angry he would beat her, when she was angry they would discuss. What made him angry, I asked him. Then suddenly she said that this never happened to her, but to other women. When later Eveles joined us after having harvested some rice (came with grote stevige plastic lap on which she had been beating the rice plants, had left dengu cap with sijs, big spoon for beating and rice at Sweetness's house and asked Gertrude to go get it) she first threatened to beat Sjaak with her stick because he didn't come to visit her first. She asked Gertrude whether it was the same man as had come with me earlier (Feye). Alma had ordered Sjaak to sit at chair, but he refused, saying she should sit their because she is older. But he is guest, she argued back. Then they both sat on mat next to each other, she gave him hands full of millet seeds and showed how to throw them in his mouth at once. Eveles sat down and the two sisters were jokingly aan het kibbelen. Eveles said that Alma should make/give her husband (Sjaak) eggs, as Eveles had done for Feye. And that at least her husband (Feye) had worked on her land, while
Alma’s husband was just sitting there. Eveles asked when my husband would come again (for she wants to buy and prepare him Irish potatoes with cooking oil). I told her he sends his regards, but she doesn’t believe: I am jealous that he worked on her land, she had asked me to tell him to buy her fertiliser which he didn’t, so I hadn’t told him. And now I tell her he sends his regards?? Ah, you want to steal him from me! I joked back. Pfff, you gave him to me! In past, if man saw a nice woman he wanted to marry he would go to chief and tell him he wanted to take her a second wife...

I told Gertrude to tell them that Sjaak had said that they should have husbands to take care of them. Where are we going to find husbands? they answered, all older men are dead. Would you want then, aren't you better off alone? Yes, we have children to take care of us. Now if we slaughter a chicken, we can keep it all to ourselves in stead of sharing with husband. So better alone? Yes, better alone!

Monday May 25

Esnart told Gertrude this morning that she received a new cell phone from her husband in SA after having dropped the other one in the toilet by accident (?). she asked whether Gertrude can escort her to Balaka one day to sign a form to get a passport because she cannot write herself and her husband wants her to come to SA too. But first she has to go to his relatives now to discuss a family issue that she will tell Gertrude about later - probably the condom issue? Wonder if he still wants her to come after finding out about this, but surprising that/if he hasn’t yet.

Dorica refused the proposal she received in March, telling Gertrude that this is because she wants to continue school. Indeed she is still at school, at [tiny crossroads market].

Adult school started but few people showed up. Stopped after about a week. Venesi taught on topics as instructed by concern universal. Lovely complained about this, she just wanted to learn the alphabet and asked Gertrude to teach her during knitting sessions, but never showed up to learn. The teachers still receive their salary though. Women said they were too busy harvesting their maize. Also less women are coming for knitting these days. When Gertrude brought the bawo game many stopped knitting and instead played bawo. After some time took up knitting again, but slowly stopped coming. Only Kondwani, Esnart and Grace (but last one often just comes to show her knitting work to have it checked, may be busy at home with new boyfriend, guesses Gertrude). Tumanene was actively coming, but now moved away after quarelling and fighting with Jeneti and Ellesi about a plate they accused her of stealing. Also card playing!

Julia passed by shortly yesterday to check on a jersey and pants that Gertrude is knitting for her from an old torn vest. Left to buy some paraffin at 10mk at Jasmine’s - just a small spoon, enough for 1 evening. At [nearest tradingcenter] they sell half a liter for 120mk, at Balaka for 85mk. But she doesn’t have that much money. Knows that it is very expensive here, but like this can buy every day for that night. If sometimes they don’t have the 10mk, they sleep early in dark, why not save up all those 10mks and buy cheaper at town. But then I am in dark all those nights!

After our breakfast husband of Naima came with a phone that he got from brother of Naima who is in SA - expensive phone, Samsung with camera, costs 10.000mk in Lilongwe, says Gertrude. He wanted Gertrude to explain how to operate it. I made use of this opportunity and asked him about the reasons for men to get married. He said that he was able to do all the HH chores himself, like washing clothes, cooking, pounding maize (he often passes by with his bike to fetch water so he must have done that then too) because he lived alone for 6 years before getting married. He says he wanted to marry to have company in evenings, to have someone to chat to. Had a radio he listened to, but preferred a person... Didn’t want a girl from his village because they grew up together, they wouldn’t respect him. One day he visited his brother who married at Tulipesi and told him he
looked for a wife. Brother then suggested Naima and talked to her. She said that she too was looking for someone to marry with and a meeting was arranged.

Is it easy to find a chibwenzi? One has to propose various girls to find one, usually they don’t accept at the first time, so after proposing several you go back to the first and then she may accept, girls often say at the first time that they have to think about it. Boys don’t bring gifts to try to seduce them, only after they have accepted. But some boys say they don’t want chibwenzi only marriage because they may find the disease (kupeza matenda). Do many men (eg those you meet while at lake for BS) cheat their girl friends and wives? Yes, many do, having more at once. Not afraid of diseases? They say will die anyway, if they don’t catch the disease they will die of something else. AIDS has come for human beings, not for animals. If a wild animal comes (chirombo), they have to say “ndine mwamuna” - I am a man, I am not afraid, also for pregnancy they are not afraid. Always give some money after having sex, so when a girl comes to complain that she is pregnant the boy can refer to that money he gave which she could have used to prevent the pregnancy.

How much money is given then? Well for example Dorica was given 50 or 100mk by husband of Filimona before he married each time they had sex, but later a boy from Mudzi B 2 gave her up to 1500mk sometimes, after which she started to complain about the cheapness of the first one.

Boys feel special when several girls accept at their first proposal, think they are special and then don’t care anymore about things like AIDS or pregnancy. Do boys find that girls demand a lot? Some tell exactly what they want, for example they may have seen a certain jersey at market or on a friend, or they will say they want such-and-such shoes in this-and-this size. Then you either have to give money or buy it for her. But other girls don’t ask for anything for the first year, but in the end it is mostly the girls who decide what they want rather than boys to decide what they will give, Gertrude started to apologize again for all my questions, explaining again that I just want to understand etc. the boy said he is already a bit used to talk about this topic because at the VCT counseling they advise about how to avoid pregnancy and HIV. Did he not know that sex can lead to pregnancy before? Yes, heard from a friend when he was at puber age, he explained to him what happened at night.

We then went to chief Mudzi A to give traditional Dutch cookies, a plate decorated with Dutch village scene (farm house, sheep, windmill) and a cup with traditional city houses. GVH had looked at them elaborately, while Sjaak explained about them. Hamra immediately took the gifts and put them inside. Two young men had been talking with the chief when we had arrived and were still sitting near by, may be for that reason.

Chief already harvested part of his cotton, saving all to sell when official buying begins. It has been announced that the price will be 75mk/kg. Hamra asked if we wanted to see her cotton, but first wanted to sweep. Then invited us in their house to show a pile of cotton which is approximately 2 bales (5 x 50 kg bag is 1 bale). Didn’t want to estimate how much money she can get for this pile, and still has a bit left in the field. Will be eating sweets on her way back from selling the cotton! Most of the money she wants to keep to buy iron sheets for the new house that she plans to build near her current one. Will keep the old one for the goats that she received from FIDP. She is sleeping on her veranda these days because inside is full with goats and cotton. Discussed with sons that they will help her to build her own house, where she will sleep alone.

Her husband has to go, she immediately starts to talk with soft, low voice, saying that he had harvested 5 bags of maize and already sold 4 without sharing anything. She already discussed with him that he will indeed leave her. Shows her clothes that are wrapped in a chitenje hanging on wall - he did not
even buy her any piece of clothes, she doesn’t even have a bag to put her clothes in. When Sjaak enters the house she immediately jokes to the mzungu that he should buy her a bag for her clothes.

The chief doesn’t have plans with his cotton money yet, probably things like ziweto, zovala, ndiwo, paraffin, soap he summed up.

Kondwani later today told Gertrude that already for 4 years chief Mudzi A has been saying that he wants to build a house in Mudzi B. One year they even helped him to make bricks but up till now he has not started building. Gertrude and I wonder what he [Chief Mudzi A] did with the money he found through selling 4 bags of maize (part of which to Gertrude). He doesn’t drink, has no new clothes…. But does always have clean clothes, so at least he buys soap, Gertrude noticed. Don’t even just give dirty clothes to wife to be washed? Yes, but definitely with soap, because if wife brings own soap, husband will ask where she found it.

Continued to Naima to give picture she requested with her and the bikes. Were happy we came by to greet. Mother Balakasi came from field to greet us too, with a chitenje wrapped around her in such a way that she could fill it with cotton, Monya (daughter of Rashida) was there too again, Rashida herself came to greet too, carrying her grandchild on the back. Naima + Monya escorted us and promised they would come and chat more. Gertrude said: Amayi a bodza, mumanama! [Mrs Nonsense, you are lying]! Greeted Chenawe, old woman) who looks much healthier again, apologizing for not having come earlier to greet me, but husband was ill and still is ill.

Sjaak was shocked by baby’s of Chikondi, who are most 6 months old but still very small. But look healthy else wise. He wants to buy her fortified baby milk powder and wanted Gertrude to tell her in presence of the children and Doris… Gertrude was as brief as possible.

Gertrude started buying maize at 25 MK/kg, just like buyers at J. village until a daughter of Alma (who lives in Blantyre married to a driver) started to offer 30mk then Gertrude also raised up her price to 30mk.

Sofia said she dreamt that her grandfather (husband of GVH) told her to make other ceremony and made clothes for her oldest son from his clothe, she told GVH who then took in Sofia’s eldest son (before, her daughter had lived with GVH after a quarrel - Gertrude’s notebook)

Gertrude remembers that her friends/classmates at secondary school in Dedza usually received 300 to 500mk from their boyfriends (after I commented that that 1000mk which husband of Naima says Dorica received seems so much) not every time they had sex but sometimes on Sundays they may come give some money, soap or sugar, chat and leave so not necessary only after sex. Then they sometimes made appointments to meet somewhere. Sometimes another boyfriend would come later and give some money/presents too. The money was to make one self look beautiful to show off to friends that one has many boyfriends.

Only Sofia and Kondwani came to learn it and Sofia left early. They discussed that the ex-wife of Tumanene’s ex-husband came to Mudzi B to answer a call from the man from SA. Her child with this man stays with old Ayama at Mudzi B. They also discussed the following.

- Molly, Tinenenji and Vanessa were the ones to spread the story about the condoms under Esnart’s bed. They were called to Esnart’s house this morning to explain where they heard this story because it is not true.

- Husband of Elube went to GVH today to inform her that tomorrow the official buyers of cotton will
- Kingsley (who came to put new pedals on Gertrude’s bike) was asked why his grandmother gave 50mk to his girlfriend instead of himself. “Because I had no money,” he answered.

Gertrude remembers that on Saturday, women had commented that Pamela’s boyfriend had told friends that he likes Pamela because she knows various types of sex. The women then said that Evelin had brought a magazine from Mangochi after having lived there with her husband (who was before married to another woman, that is probably they never lived together..) with pictures of different types of sex the boy is very young, the women said otherwise he would not have not have been spreading this. Kondwani said that she had heard about kissing, but never about other sex positions it’s something that “azungu” do, not Malawians. Sjaak points out that Francine wrote a passage in her book about different positions practiced by bar girls.

Kondwani and Sofia discussed while knitting (Gertrude remembered topics by putting them in cellphone):

Parents that want their kids to be initiated this year will all contribute food to provide a meal where everybody can eat, both before and after the initiation.

When ex-husband of Fatima passed by Kondwani told Gertrude (Sofia had left) that her sister is now in relationship with him. She had come here to help GVH with 40 day ceremony after husband died, stayed for a week, helped harvesting etc. When she went back to her vlg he escorted her and still goes there. With Tinenenji, he just made her pregnant, is not taking care of her.

Grace’s boyfriend (who is married to another) passed by in direction of Grace. Kingsley commented to knitting women that he will not find her at home because she now works at the (mandasi) shop at [small crossroads market]. The women then said that the owner of that shop likes women, escorts the ones that work at his shop home after evening and that Grace will definitely be in relationship with him. The current boyfriend often spends the night at Grace’s even though he is married. Kondwani wondered how he cheats his wife, what he tells her the next morning. Then related of her brother who sometimes spent a night with other women and told he cheated his wife by telling her that there had been hyena’s so he couldn't move home. The wife had believed him, warning others that there have been hyena’s around. Maybe Livia’s boyfriend will buy something for his wife in the morning after having stayed the night away, to please her, so she won’t ask questions.

Son of Venesi sent a cellphone to his girlfriend and 3000MK (had before sent 2000MK, so total 5000MK now). They compared this to Chisoni’s husband, who left for SA earlier, but has not sent a cellphone yet. Only some money twice, and only in the beginning. Lovely had earlier said once that he doesn’t really like Chisoni, who is his senior.

Modesta (daughter of Auleria, daughter of Thandizo) passed by with boyfriend (son of Fissa). Kondwani commented that she only does that now that grandmother died, who would not have been happy to see this behavior. Doesn’t listen to her mother. Kondwani finds that she should work hard in school. Grandson of GVH started to wear his grandfather’s clothes without GVH telling him he could. GVH then asked Sofia to talk to him about it because he wouldn’t listen to her.

Kondwani wants to sell her cotton tomorrow. Gertrude then asked her (like I am asking people all the time too) what she plans to do with the money. Start BS, first of sugarcane, then cassava when it becomes available, and tomatoes.

One of the little boys that was hanging around the house is son of Florence, said Kondwani. She had him when she was young, impregnated by son of Elube who stays in SA. He is not taking care of this son. Often is not washed, compared to the other younger son of Florence and her current husband. One day Florence had been criticizing single women at borehole for not being able to keep their husbands from running away. While the same had happened to herself too.

Gertrude commented about girls from her boarding school in Dedza and girls in general that they usually first
try to find out whether a boy that proposed to them is doing a BS or having a job, can provide. So that they will not end up sleeping with someone who won’t be able to give them anything for it...

Sjaak commented that it is noteworthy that men sleep with women at women’s house (like Emra and Tinenenji and Pamela being caught red handed with other man at their own house). In Ghana women visit the men at night.

May 26, Tuesday

Gertrude bought 9 bags of maize (at 1200-1300 per bag) and 1 bag of groundnuts. Will need app 4 bags for own food, and plans to sell 5 when prices are high (about 3500). Bought the maize bit by bit from people from these villages who came to offer it to her. To buy food, clothes, even hair chemicals (Vanessa).

GVH came to greet, hardly slept because body aches after harvesting rice for long hours previous days. Is now finished, harvested 4 bags. I asked her whether people will come today to buy cotton. Hmm, we’ll see if they come. She said that today Kingsley and husband of Vanessa will try to fix pump (typical - were too busy making their bricks yesterday to do that, the women had to walk very far to fetch water for their HHs and the bricks).

Grace came by, nicely dressed, on bike. Gertrude asked where she was going: [small crossroads market]. To do what? To the shop. Is it yours or are you working there? I bought it - but then laughed, and said she is just working there. Do you still continue knitting? Yes, will still continue and come by with it to show.

Gertrude drying pumpkin seeds to give to mother to plant and share with other relatives.

Ok, I followed Sjaak’s advise to openly discuss research question with others, started with Gertrude. Asked Gertrude her opinion about whether projects that aim to improve rural women’s livelihoods can help to prevent HIV. I had to explain more, make more practical, so I gave examples of loans to start BS’s and increase maize harvests oid. Businesses will only lead to more HIV, she thinks, as it brings people to places where many people gather, so there they will be proposed by many. Has experienced this herself when running the telephone bureau. Many men come to propose. First leave 100 MK for a call that cost 50 MK, next day come to propose. Another may even give 500MK for a 100MK phone call. So you (the seller) can compare, and see that you can get a lot of money through these men. But giving maize is better, because eventually it is all about food. Food is the biggest problem. People speak about food, shelter and clothing as important to human beings, but she thinks food is most important. (later adds that women here had once been comparing between the last two, saying that one can live with few clothes, but a house is very important). About condoms, they were told at Church Youth gatherings that they were only afraid to get pregnant and therefore went for injections, not fearing HIV, while condoms can protect for both. But here in vlg Gertrude has seen that people are not afraid of both - or at least not trying to avoid either.

So, didn’t really get an answer that is useful, unfortunately.
The girl that worked at the shop at [small crossroads market] where Grace started working yesterday has been hired to buy cotton that is why the job became vacant. Kondwani and Sofia are convinced that Grace will be in a relationship. And enough to prove that he likes women. Grace is also known to like men and from this she will think she can receive a lot besides her salary.

Langmwale from concern universal was at [tiny crossroads market] to teach people to make mud stoves to save firewood and heard there that I had to come back so I decided to visit. He says they will spread the project throughout all villages before end of this year and invited us to come and visit [tiny crossroads market]. Will be there till Saturday. Only current project in Mudzi B is the tree nursery: some trees for firewood, others for replanting in their own fields to improve soil fertility. When Sjaak asked whether he was satisfied with the current state of the tree field, he confirmed. Another tree nursery will follow. Whenever Gertrude translated charcoal burner she meant this mud stove. Venesi has also learned to make these too. Langmwale said the adult school has not started yet (maybe the one week was just a pilot for the topics?) Sjaak asked him about boreholes, concern universal has the equipment but at Dedza. Balaka Water Board (government) does not. Costs about 800,000-900,000mk to make 1 borehole including searching for a good spot, has to be at least 70 meters deep to not dry up in a dry season why? why? I sense you are interested in making a borehole at Mudzi A? He sensed it right away. maybe therefore says lies that only concern universal has the equipment. Takes 1-2 months to make a borehole. Langmwale passed by the broken borehole at Ngwira and saw people try to fix boreholes who, he says, have been trained by the government to fix boreholes. When we went to check it out we found a group of men and women who told us they failed to fix because a part had to be replaced. I asked who were the ones trained by the government and they reluctantly/vaguely answered ex-husband of Fatima and Venesi was indeed the one who had spoken to us about being able to fix the pump etc, not one of the boys or men. Ex-husband of Fatima now left in trunk of ICRISAT car that came to pick up Sjaak (and 7 of Gertrude’s bags of maize), to buy a spare part at Balaka.
Walking towards the borehole, Gertrude had commented on the field of Emra that she had done all the work on her field alone and now after harvest got a new partner, who is just eating all her harvest. Criticism.

Sjaak remarked that my questions come across too curious sometimes, but I realize now that may have been a somewhat unconscious strategy. To make clear that I as a person am personally interested in them as individual person. So not uncaringly gathering data for an upcoming project.

Mother of chief Mudzi B came to see who was leaving when she heard a car. Said she knows Lilongwe, lived there with her first husband. Enjoyed it, went everywhere where Kamuzu Banda went, to sing and dance, in those days she was still strong. But husband had too many girlfriends, sometimes even brought them home. Therefore she decided to divorce him after 2 children and came back to Mudzi B. Here she remarried with father of chief Mudzi B, Kondwani and son who is in SA and is now having a house built to replace the big one that collapsed, where this old women used to live in. She had tried to advise her first husband to change his behaviour, but he didn’t. Some other women try to use traditional medicine, but she didn’t, doesn’t know why she didn’t.

Soon after the car left with Sjaak, Esnart called Gertrude (“so she has airtime” immediately commented) to check if he had gone because she felt ashamed to come while he was still here.

Women at borehole asked Gertrude whether I had come back to ask more questions. No, assured Gertrude, just to witness the selling of the harvest.

Gertrude says that she thinks that husband of Naima would not have talked as freely if there had been a voice recorder.

Sjaak asked Gertrude jokingly when she will come to the Netherlands. She was quiet, then cleverly answered: “when you tell me to come.” He suggested I buy her a laptop and teach her how to write emails so that I can still contact her when I am writing in NL. Send her texts to comment on etc.

According to Gertrude no one has refused to answer the Bridge and Moyo wa Thanzi questionnaires. But lied to many questions, they said at borehole.

Sjaak gave Gertrude 50 Euro’s. As soon as she left she showed me the bill and was of course very happy when I told her it’s the equivalent of 10.000 MK. She was also happy to see money from the Netherlands.

Sjaak secretly told her some things. Possibly that she should not hesitate to tell me when one of my questions is too rude etc. And for sure that I feel lonely sometimes - this I overheard him say. Maybe encouraging her to ask more questions about my world.

Gertrude exchanged a poncho for 50 kg of groundnuts with women who left for SA. The women also gave a motorcycle battery as a gift to Gertrude. Had received 5 from husband in SA gave 1 to GVH, other to Gertrude to remember her. For radio for example.

Sofia, chief Mudzi B and Gertrude went to the pump at [tiny crossroads market]. Grandson of GVH offered to help with bite, so Gertrude borrowed extra bucket from GVH. There she met a daughter in law of GVH from other village who complained about Livia having borrowed 1000 MK form her which she would repay with a bag of maize but still didn’t. Said they went to a china shop that same day in Balaka.
where Livia bought a skirt and shoes! May those have been the shoes and skirt that she told us to have received lover? [or maybe cheated to this woman that she bought?] The two women are together in tailoring course. DIL of GVH says she will just keep the tailoring machine when they will receive these until Livia gives her the money or maize. Sofia says Livia has only two bags of maize left. GVH said she would go to Phingi who probably does not know about all this to solve the issue.

Gertrude remembers that Livia sold over 1.5 bag of maize to her. First one for 1.250 MK, later half a bag for 650 or 700, later 9kg for 100 MK. Livia had to give back 1 bag to GVH and 1 to Esnart after having received 1000 MK from then before harvesting. Also sold 1 bag to her brother from J. village only for 1000 MK. And some more secret selling here and there. GVH wondered how what Livia did with all that money. “It is not that we see her or her children in nice new clothes.” Livia paid 1500mk to build house, Gertrude says Livia likes to buy chips and mandasi, hair chemicals and once hair extensions once saw her with bottle of body lotion, asked Gertrude to buy underwear for her for 200 MK in town, abortion coasted 500mk.

On way to borehole at [tiny crossroads market] chief Mudzi B said that at night thief entered our house (last Saturday) trying to steal bike, someone had tried to steal maize at Chikondi and two blankets were stolen at an old woman in another village. Also stole 2 chickens and maize at Magda at night before a rabbit was stolen from son of Fissa. Selling of masamba from dambo has now started. Chief Mudzi B had bought for 10 MK for dinner tonight.

They passed a man with a bag of cotton who told them he had just harvested it. And that “China” offers 90mk/kg. Empty bales have now been dropped at selling points at Mzengeza (near XXXX) and [nearest tradingcenter], so buying will start soon.

Mother of chief Mudzi B was not able to harvest all her maize. Just small bits everyday. Her children did not help so that children who went around looking for left behind cobs went to empty her field.

Sjaak does not seem to be bothered by fact that someone else is doing all HH chores.

Ellesi came to tell that husband of Ainessi had come some days ago to spend a night at his mother-in-law Rosemary. He came with some pots and plates for sale, which she says were stolen from a shop in the village where he stays now. Maybe he is the thief that stole from various houses last week. Gertrude asked Ellesi whether it is true that she had been proposed marriage through cell phone. The man had found Ellesi via husband of Lovely. She accepted and he sent money for school fees. Annie was very happy, telling everybody that her son-in-law from South Africa would come. But when he came, Ellesi found out that he is married in Balaka, where he is staying now. Then she told him she doesn’t want to marry. She waited a whole day for him to come, didn’t go to school, but he didn’t show up. I asked Gertrude whether Ellesi will now be expected to pay back the money, but she thinks definitely not. “It will be like revenge, because he said he wasn’t married but he was and he said he would come on a certain day but he didn’t.”

Jane came by in dark, around 6 pm, with friend whose child died just before I left for the Netherlands in March (who has started moving around with boys again, people say, in Balaka). They had come from Balaka. Jane had been with parents at J. village for some days after her father came back from the hospital. Yesterday she went back to her partner in Balaka, but heard from his mother that a certain girl had spent the night with him. The mother was not happy, saying that the girl is a prostitute who likes to drink beer and come there drunk. Jane and her friend wanted to beat this girl, but were advised by others to sit down and discuss, and have the boy decide with
whom he wants to marry. He chose Jane. Jane then pretended to leave but together with friend hid near Mlambe Lodge to see what husband would be doing. They saw the girl come back to him and he was happy. He promised he will come to her parents and arrange marriage, and he gave her 500 MK for transport to home village. She decided it is better not to stay with him in Balaka now but come to home village so that he will move quicker to arrange their engagement.

GVH had been encouraging her to marry a boy that sells veggies and proposed to her bringing a lot of vegetables, fish and small package of cooking oil, two or three times. But Jane doesn’t want to work in the field, wants to marry someone from town.

May 27 Wednesday

Sjaak had started to explain something about Caribbean, and then asked Gertrude whether she knew them, no. Near Cuba, Haiti, Dominion Republic, Mexico, South America. No, doesn’t know. Knows : Malawi, Zambia, South Africa, Kenya, Nairobi, Dar Salaam, Netherlands, Zimbabwe, United States, America (is it the same?), Italy, Germany, Swaziland. I add Botswana. Yes, saw map of world in school. Uganda, India, Tanzania and China.

Reading in Gertrude’s diary (March 25) about son of Venesi saying that wives with husbands in South Africa lack sex, so he moved around finding women who wanted sex. Spent nights at wife of owner of our house, but people didn’t belief him. Then he took his friend to hide in the kitchen while he knocked the door. The proof was that he was let in the kitchen while he knocked the door. The proof was that he was let in the house by the woman. I asked Gertrude whether such boyfriends will give money, since what these women lack is sex rather than money. Yes, definitely gives money, because that is what women expect from boyfriends. He gives to please her, and to make her sleep with him again next time when he wants, thinking that she may get more money. Like Desi who had her own BS (telephone burro) but still complained that her new boyfriend slept with her without even giving her money for soap.

When I inquired whether women may also have sex just to enjoy it, Gertrude first says that it is mostly to find the things that the women want. But some enjoy it too. For example Desi enjoyed it too, because she started at a young age, at boarding school. With a police man who gave her a lot. When they met she always came back with a bag full of bread and other things she liked, he had taken her in Lilongwe. Then they used a condom because the man said they had not seen each other for a year, maybe she had been moving around and could infect him. At boarding school Desi also had another boyfriend who gave her very little money, whom she thus really liked. And since she already received money and gifts from the police man she could manage a boyfriend who couldn’t give her much. This one made her pregnant; of course she tried to abort because he didn’t take care of her, preferred playing football over looking for money, so she didn’t want to marry him. But failed to abort. Later got pregnant from another man too, then didn’t want to abort because then he would definitely not marry her, while if she would keep his child at least maybe he would. Since she already had another child it would be difficult to find someone who wanted to marry her.

One day she had a fight with one of her boyfriends and came home crying. Didn’t speak for some days with each other. She flashed him, but he didn’t call back. Then she decided to go to his house and sleep with him so that he wouldn’t be angry with her anymore. If she would stay away much longer he would start looking for other women, if she would spend one night away other women may come to sleep with him. So I think she likes sex, Gertrude concludes, because she could have thought of other ways to please him.
Another reason why women with husbands in South Africa may still have boyfriends is that they just don’t receive enough money from their husband, says Gertrude. For example, daughter-in-law of GVH complained to Gertrude that her husband did not send enough. They have 6 children and he had only sent her 3000 MK 3 months ago, is not enough. So she came to Gertrude to flash her husband to ask for more. “And if I start relationships with other men to find enough money, he will get angry, because they will not accept to just give me money; I will have to sleep with them.”

Another daughter-in-law of GVH had come often to chat with Gertrude when she stayed with GVH to harvest her field her (lives in other village, her husband had moved to her because of her old mother who had no one else to take care of her). She told Gertrude that she has a boyfriend, but asked Gertrude not to tell anyone else. And this woman received always a lot from her husband in South Africa (e.g. 2000 MK each time). Her boyfriend also gave her money, like 100 MK. She liked him. Gertrude asked if they used condoms. No, forgot, and I like him, would like a child from him. If I would get pregnant now it would only be 1 month before my husband comes from South Africa, can pretend that the child is his. She defended her choice to have a boyfriend by saying that she doesn’t know what her husband is doing in South Africa, maybe sleeping with other women.

GVH is in relationship with the brother of this woman’s mother, says Jane, chief Mudzi B, Kondwani. They are not happy with this because it is not respectful to her husband who only died four months ago. “She has sons in South Africa who send her money. Why does she need to do this?” Gertrude asked DIL why GVH in relationship with her uncle, DIL answered that the man has a lot of livestock, big fields, and lots of harvest. He paid to make a new nkholwe for GVH. Some times he spends the night at GHV’s house. A mat, lamp and pillow are then at the kitchen, but Jane believes GVH just puts them there to cheat people that they don’t have a relationship. E.g. there was no parafin in the lamp. GVH had once gone to his village to find materials for nkholwe. Stayed the night away and back without materials and later he brought the materials for her and paid to build it. Also kitchen is too small place to put a visitor, especially since there are other houses on the compound.

Phingi warned the sister of this man that the husband of GVH died of AIDS, but people didn’t believe her, thought she said this out of jealousy, because she had once said she wished she could marry someone with sons of son-in-law in South Africa so she could receive money from them.

GVH sent a granddaughter to get our bike and gallon to fetch water for us at [tiny crossroads market].

Jane and Sofia passed by, on way to look for nkhwani at a certain field where they thought they may find some. Around 8 am.

Early in the morning GVH came to ask whether Jane passed by here yesterday she had heard her voice, but Jane had not come to greet. “I don’t know what I did wrong; she could at least come and tell why she is (apparently) angry with me.” But went to stay with a friend “instead of eating nsima from my field, as if I don’t love her.”

Esnart came to greet and check on a jersey for her child that she had ordered but thought Gertrude had sold it to someone else. But is still here, will sell at 550, but 500 is fine too, she told Esnart. Thread is how 100 MK per ball, used 3.5 balls. Husband of Esnart sent her money to start making bricks for a house in her home village and afterwards she will go to South Africa.

On our way to Suset husband of Molly passed by on bike with gallon tried on back. On his way to fetch water - so he is helping her. Young man, boy even. Gertrude then told me that Nola [grandmother/aunt of most women living around her] had been remarking that Molly is the only one amidst the relatives living around her to be married. Why,
I asked. Maybe because she is quiet, doesn’t move around a lot to gossip with friends...

Suset invited us in her house, 3 chairs, small table with cloth, small bag of chips, bowl with 3 small tomatoes, a cane reek with cups and plates, 3 posters of Bingu (“Mose wa lero” one said, the modern Moses) and a curtain of UDF chitenje. She voted for Bingu because he promised to give fertilizer coupons to everyone and sell the fertilizers for 500 MK each while Muluzi said people have to pay 2800 MK. [Radio was on]. Imagine if people couldn’t pay the 800 of last year, how will they be able to pay 2800? “Has a bedroom and another small room for children and goats (laughing a bit ashamed). Front door of wood within frame and a look back door made of bamboo. Shares kitchen with grandmother for boiling her beer, but with own equipment and ingredients. Cooks on charcoal burner outside own house, unless her charcoal is finished, then in grandmother’s kitchen. Wants to start building her own kitchen this year. With what money, I ask. Then she tells of a new loan scheme that she is enrolling in of Rural Finance. Heard about it through one of her beer customers. One has to gather a group of 15 people and then register at Balaka. Suset will borrow 20 000 MK paying back 26 000 in total in 3 terms over period of 1 year. The 15 members come from different villages. From my villages only herself, Tulipesi and Jasmine (but Innocent will be the one attending all the meetings for Jasmine). Meetings will be held at Suset’s house. Doesn’t know when next meeting will be, extension worker from RF will let them know, then she will inform us. Loan will come 3 weeks from now. To be used to increase yields, but also for BS’s, people can decide themselves. She didn’t go around telling everyone, just spreading the word and interested people came to her and she went to Balaka to fill a form. Most people are afraid to take a loan, however. She plans to use it for her beer BS (and kitchen).

Passed by Julia’s house but saw no-one so continued walking. Then Victoria yelled from mother’s house that for all we know she may be ill inside! Then she came over to greet us. Rashida passed by and stopped to greet and chat too. Said she wants a baby suit for grandchild on back (which always wears hat knitted by Gertrude). Gertrude asked about cotton, they said it has been announced that the official buying will start on Monday June 1. All club members have to sell at least 1 bag at husband of Elube at 80 MK/kg. Other bags people plan to sell at [small crossroads market]. Official price is 75 MK/kg for non members but they too heard the rumour that ‘China’ will buy for go or 95 MK/kg, at [small crossroads market]. “Then we will be drinking tea with milk!” Victoria said, and bread, Gertrude added.

At Suset’s, Gertrude had asked how BS was going. She said last week many customers drank without paying because they didn’t have money but they know they will get soon from selling cotton. Is it not difficult to get that money from them later, I asked. Ah no, not difficult, Suset said. Gertrude then said to me that they may be afraid that they will not be served anymore if they don’t pay.

Kingsley came to tell that the borehole has been fixed now, and that he is happy because he hadn’t washed his body for 9 days.

Went to Venesi to pay for keeping track of her incomes and expenditure. Found Phingi and Dorakutonola Venesi’s maize. Both were looking for empty cobs to make fire. Phingi had first gone to field to get some therere, then to Molly for tomatoes, then to Venesi for ‘firewood’ /fuel. Gertrude asked Venesi why some women who have their own income through BS or have enough food because they have a big field, still want to find someone to marry with. Because of human nature, you are an adult, you know what I mean: “Chifukwa cha chilengedwe munthu sangathe kukhala yekha. Ndiwe wamkulu, ukudziwa cholomwe ndikutanthauza.” Gertrude didn’t translate back to me, we had agreed that she would ask something like this as if chatting. But she asked straight away, boom. Next question should have been: but what about the disease? Then I asked about her teaching of the topics that Concern Universal told her to teach: livestock and theft. The women in the class were not
interested. They had to draw a map of the village, but the women complained it was a waste of time. Concern Universal had once asked them to sit down and list the problems they see as main problems, which were madzi and njala - but then Concern Universal is not concerned with these. Only teaches them about topics now that are not of interest to the participants.

After the topic trial all teachers met and had to report the problems they had faced to Concern Universal. Venesi pointed out that there were spelling mistakes in the book, the women were not interested in the topics and they lacked notebooks and pens. Concern Universal argued that they already supplied these materials to all participants, now they had to show their own commitment and buy new materials themselves. But the women said that they are not really interested anymore in helping them. On Monday the school will start again, Venesi was told yesterday by Mr Langmwale. But the women are not interested in coming anymore, I said. We will see who shows up, Venesi said, those who have not finished school will probably come, those who went far in primary school probably not anymore. Gave Venesi 3000 MK for tracking income and expenditure from half March till held May (couldn't pay them up till now because I didn't bring enough money).

When we got up to leave she [Venesi] informed Gertrude that the njiko [pump] has been fixed. Ex-husband of Fatima fixed it. But she too knows the working of the pump. If the boys would not be around, she and her friends would be able to fix it too. Ex-husband of Fatima had found yesterday that the parts cost more than what he had on him, so he went again this morning. Two parts at 250 MK each. All HHs pay 150 MK to the borehole committee each year, they will start collecting again soon because people will have money from cotton, will collect at the borehole. Jasmine was the treasurer, but she didn't have the money available. Had to go and borrow now for the parts. (She said after I asked if it isn’t difficult to keep that money for such a long time). This time they decided to collect the money and buy the parts that are most likely to need replacement and have the treasurer keep those.

I also asked Venesi what explained that she does better in life than some other women (went far in school, has high yields, often selected for projects). She answered that she is often selected for projects because she does exactly as she is told. When they tell her to come immediately, for example, she goes immediately, while others may first finish what they were doing. Why do you do so? Don’t know, maybe just born that way.

Molly passed by with dengu lit full of tomatoes that we saw her harvest when sitting a t Venesi’s. All green tomatoes. They turn red after some days. On table on veranda few small hips of tomatoes. She said Evelin went to [nearest tradingcenter] today, so we couldn’t pay her and get record book. Nola was putting some of the rice that she just harvested to dry in the sun. After that, pounding. Total 9 bags. Will keep 3, because she has many grandchildren, and sell 1 later. Doesn’t know price yet, will see what others ask them.

Walking home Hilda asked to be photographed with bucket of water on her head. Excused that she felt free to ask me that (jokingly though, but I made picture) since I am free to ask her questions too.

Then told chief Mudzi B that I would like a picture of everybody in Mudzi B, since this is my last time here, and asked her to tell me when would be Good day. Afternoon, I said, because of sun.
husband of Aisha came with husband of Naima because he wanted picture. Was on his way to other wife with bag of tomatoes. Wanted 2 pictures. Husband of Naima joked that we should not forget that he has 2 houses, one is Blantyre, other Lilongwe, therefore wants 2 pictures, to give each wife one. When they left I asked Gertrude and Evelin where the other wife lived. Evelin answered at M. village, with matter of fact voice, general knowledge apparently, nothing special.

Evelin came because we had been looking for her this morning and decided to stay, saying she has nothing to do at home. So Gertrude brought out the needles and thread. I told Gertrude to try and to ask whether Evelin is never bothered by other women in the village for being single. Gertrude started by saying that in Lilongwe women that stay alone are often talked about as being prostitutes. What about here? Evelin said she had thought it would be different in the city from here, because here it is like that too. She is single herself, and many people say that she is in relationship with the husband of Elube but it is not true. Then she kept quiet. Later she asked about Sjaak and Gertrude explained that he is a professor from my school who to see how my research was going here, and to see the village where I am doing my research. Sofia said it was good that he came. Later at 5pm she came in the house to bid me farewell, she was going home to catch her goats. She also told Gertrude that Tuesday she wore a new chitenje to the borehole, and then Lovely asked her where she got that chitenje. “It is because I am not married (chifukwa ndine osakwatira), that people ask me these questions, that people watch closely and wonder where I get my things, suspecting it is through men (possibly relatives or even husband)” Evelin complained to Gertrude. While she received the chitenje (together with another chitenje and body lotion) as payment for ganyu harvesting, drying and kutonola maize, mixing with atelic for the daughter of Alma who stays in Blantyre (with uncle of Evelin that she writes in HH book to receive money from/calling to sometimes?). Did this ganyu together with Grace, Lizzie and possibly Hilda.

At lunch Gertrude first talked about Livia telling Chief Mudzi B that she will need a letter to officialize a divorce with the boy who paid to the chief to be married to her. Because he paid, they are still officially married and she is not free to marry someone else (although Gertrude thinks that the chief would not refuse to marry Livia to someone else now, if she would wish). Both men and women can request such letters to officialize divorce, but will have to pay something. Chief told Livia, and since then Livia has not gone to pay. One time her [Livia] official husband came and said he had wanted to give her money to buy a lot of maize for him now that it is cheap, to be selling when prices are high. But friends had warned him, told him to first give her a small amount and see if she does as he says. So he gave her 1500MK, but she didn’t buy maize, just ate the money. “I have your child,” she defended herself, complaining to him that he doesn’t give her any money. He wierp tegen that she often came to beg some money for ndiwo or soap, or would send a child to beg for her.

Gertrude then asked me whether people in NL divorce for same reasons as here. I asked what the reasons are here: when one of the two is caught having a relationship with another one, for example. I told her one may get into a second relationship in NL, but often tell the first one after some time that you want to divorce to be living with the new partner. She was surprised that people are thus open about it, here everything secretive. I said my parents still together, but Feye’s divorced because mother had affair with father’s best friend. Reminded her of story that Desi was involved with 2 brothers. Gertrude had come home from church meeting in evening and found bed room door closed (which they shared), so ate nsima in living room and listened to radio, putting on the hat of a boy that she found in room, which she recognized as cap of one of the 2 brothers. Then the other came, saw the cap too and threatened Gertrude with knife to tell who were in bedroom. Eventually Desi came out, brother threatened to kill both Desi and his brother. Landlord complained about Desi’s behavior, bringing in many boys while Gertrude was at work. They moved 3 times (first paying 500, then
1200, then 1500 MK) because landlords were not happy with Desi's behavior. Gertrude could stay, but had to chase Desi, they said. After the brother-incidence Gertrude decided to buy her own bed, not share with Desi anymore because couldn't always enter, had to wait in evening before being able to sleep. But then Desi started to use Gertrude's bed when Gertrude was working, for in case some other boyfriend would look for her in her own bedroom. Gertrude once found condom package in bedroom and was surprised, but only when she found a small corner of a wrap in her bed another time did she ask Desi who then admitted and said she wouldn't do it again. Eventually it was Gertrude's mother who told Gertrude it was better to start living alone. Initially all was fine. Her neighbours were young families, the men sometimes came to use her phone to flash. One day 1 neighbor said he would come that evening because he was tired of his wife and he liked her, Gertrude told him she didn't want that. He knocked on her door anyway, but she didn't open. Later the other neighbor, who was always very respectful to her, also told her he had something to discuss with her and would come at 7 PM. When he came, she stepped outside but he said he couldn't discuss outside, but she persisted to stay outside. He said he'd be back at 9 PM, ok. Came back, she stepped outside again, he pushed that he wanted to see the inside of her house, that it could really not be discussed outside. But she declined. Both neighbors stopped greeting her, never talked to her again. Sometimes she had to stay in the house because both families were outside and angry with her.

I asked Gertrude whether she never at least tried to follow Desi's behavior, seeing how easy it is to find money. Ever since Gertrude started menstruating, however, her mother had scared by saying that if she would try sex once, she would immediately get AIDS and pregnant. So she was very afraid of it. Then when she saw Desi being busy with coming home from BS, wash, dress up nicely, spending money on nice hair and clothes etc, she didn't fancy it. Found enough money for herself, sometimes 800-1000MK per day with the telephone buro. Desi and others would make fun of her, saying she was jealous with them because she couldn't find a boyfriend herself. But many proposed to her! she defended herself. One time a boy had proposed chibwenzi and she thought about it seriously, until she saw him with another girl. He said she was just a friend, but the girl said she was his girlfriend. Since then she was afraid to trust boys. Now she has more experience in seeing who is serious and who is not, wants a boyfriend and marriage, but later, and only a serious one. For example will ask him to go for blood testing to check whether he is serious.

In case I forgot to write: Gertrude concluded that Suset is probably HIV positive from facts that she stopped breastfeeding her still very young child, eats meat often (image, at 350MK/kg!) and goes to Balaka without obvious reason. And Gertrude said (soon after I arrived back in Mudzi B on Saturday) that Livia had said that she didn't have a boyfriend, “but a boy is buying cement for her floor, so she is lying.”

In NL (as earlier in Lilongwe) I felt it a bit dirty to piss and shit inside house.

Books of GVH: Ndondomeko ya milandu - case record book. Only 2 cases, first one November 1 2008. Emra has to pay 1 chicken and 5 Mk to GVH. The case itself is not described, but probably for sleeping with another man. The case was reported by her husban. In the table of content the cases are numbered by type of complaint and date (tsiku), but under ‘tsiku’ is only written ‘lachiwiri’ and ‘lachitatu’.

Case number 2 : a woman from J. village complains that her husband comes home late at night and she knows the woman with whom he is cheating her and she wants the chief to talk to this woman. December 3, 2008 registered. November 17 case was solved. Because it was within family no penalty has to be paid. In “man should not be going to the woman again because his wife will be angry and she will have high blood pressure “decided GVH.

Suset was first married to son of Jasmine [who now stays at J. village].
Village registration is at mess. From 1980’s to 2007, not in order of date, not complete not true either, it seems, eg Florence’s children registered under same father, also Teleza’s, Tumanene’s.

Village Mudzi B, Village code 99, Traditional Authority [small crossroads market], TA code 06, District Balaka, district code
13. Village Mudzi A, village code 49, many children born at home. At group Mudzi B totally registered in book 556 births of which 102 at home and 454 in hospital. But some people registered twice in book. Gertrude tells Sofia who gave birth to 2 children at home once helped by Jasmine, other one helped by herself. Kondwani gave birth in bushes on her way to hospital, GVH helped her. GVH had given her a brick to tie to her back to keep her from giving birth before reaching the hospital-but didn’t help. Baby’s all survived. DIL of GVH gave birth to 2 in the hospital and 1 on her way to hospital. A passerby gave 100mk when she came out of the bushes with the baby, because although she didn’t reach [nearest trading center] hospital on time she managed to give birth.

Dora’s first son is from father of Jane.

Chief Mudzi B children from 3 different men. One still comes, a very fat man, who according to Kondwani only comes when chief Mudzi B received money from her brother in SA to eat it. Is not the father of last born [father last born related to Rosemary]. Came recently, then fought with Kondwani who accused him of only coming when there is something to get.

May 28, Thursday

Rosemary is harvesting cotton in GVH’s field next to our house, yesterday too: ganyu.

Alida passed by with [young] grandson, both carrying tin of water on head. Husband of Naima passed them and asked Alida why she made the boy to carry water too. Because she will be using it to wash his clothes, she answered.

Most-if not all-men here are circumsized, because of initiation ceremony.

Kondwani [told Gertrude that the husband of Elube is now open to her about sharing the ndiwo he buys between Evelin and his wife had bought 200mk matemba, half for Evelin, half for wife”]. He had also said that he likes Evelin because she looks like mzungu Janneke, light skinned. People say Evelin is enjoying half of his salary, and since he has a lot of cotton, she will get half of that too. Gertrude asked Kondwani why Elube does not go to GVH to complain. Kondwani said that Elube threatened her husband that she would, but he replied: what evidence do you have? E.g a piece of cloth from Evelin found in this house. If you go to GVH you will not have any witness. Just leave me if you don’t want this marriage. Kondwani said that Elube and Evelin don’t greet each other. Indeed one day when Evelin was here chatting, Elube passed by and only greeted Gertrude. Molly told other women that if they come at night they will find him at Evelin’s house. She was also the one who alerted Gettie [living near tiny crossroads market] that her husband was at Pamela’s house. Within 10 minutes Gettie came and caught them red handed. But apparently Elube does not want to catch her husband-and loose half salary?

When Venesi’s son in SA heard about Pamela being caught with Gertrude’s husband he sent a message that he will never send money to help Pamela because of this behavior. That he had planned to help her because she is alone, but now changed his mind, will only be helping his girlfriend and mother.
Evelin told Gertrude yesterday that she plans to go to Balaka to see Bingu. All the way to Balaka just to see Bingu, Gertrude asked unbelievingly. Ah, she has nothing to else to do today, Evelin answered. Gertrude thinks that may be she will be meeting husband of Elube there who is building at Balaka hospital. In Evelin’s HH book she writes that she buys small things at shops in different villages on same day, sometimes as far apart as M. village and J. village. Gertrude thinks maybe to be meeting with boyfriend/husband of M. village. She gets money from different people (uncle Chiponye=husband of daughter of Alma at Blantyre) or writes that she didn’t receive anything but still had some money left from the 2000mk I gave her half March as payment for keeping track of HH finances for first 2 weeks. May be cover ups for money she receives from a boyfriend/husband of Elube. Another strange thing in her HH book is the high quantity and frequency in which she buys lotion.

To Mudzi A II to greet everyone and talk more elaborately with Victoria, who is an example of a woman who manages well without husband. Gertrude said it is better to ask in general way, she did so with Venesi yesterday. Venesi then soon started about her own example. So I asked: what difficulties do women here find if they stay without husband? Amavutikira, it will be difficult for them to find soap, paraffin, body lotion, or build their house, dig toilet, build nkohwe”. Only then did she start about herself, that she able to pay for ganyu for field, build house etc, because she grows many different crops for sale. I asked her later how she manages to do so well without husband, she answers that she always makes a budget. After selling crops she puts money aside to pay for her daughter’s school fees, ganyu, soap for a number of months. Some women who may be able to take care of themselves, may just want someone to chat with, to accompany them”. Even if he is not proving all the things she wants. What about herself? Ah no has children and mother to chat with.

I told her that other single women had told us that other women feel threatened by them, jealous that they may be sleeping with their husbands. Yes happens to her too. People gossip about women that stay alone, saying/suspecting that they are moving around, having secret relationships. Like herself, she often goes to the church to help there (indeed when we went to her we found her on her way to the church, to discuss something about Pentecostal), e.g. mop etc. And the priest (ansemba) sometimes came to her house to discuss something. So people say that she is in relationship with one or some them, because she always looks nice and clean, compared to others, so there must be someone proving soap for her. Also Gertrude thinks someone must be helping her, also because we had once seen a man sitting behind her house. What else would he be doing there, maybe one of the priests, nowadays they often propose to women. Especially if they want to be helping someone, they propose to her”. I asked whether men visit her, thinking she may be wanting company, like what Gertrude told me about her neighbors in Lilongwe. Yes happens here too, that men knock on doors of unmarried women (divorced, widowed).But not to her, because she is staying in the house with children and her mother, so men are ashamed to come. But if she would be staying alone…

She doesn’t want to remarry, afraid of the same behavior as her previous husband: he had several relationships and she was afraid to find the disease. Also if she would remarry (and divorce and remarry) people will be saying that she likes men too much. But you were able to take care of yourself and children, but what about other women? I asked, Why do other women stay with a husband that moves around, despite of becoming HIV infected? Ulesi. They are afraid that they won’t be able to find themselves what their husbands used to give them to take care of themselves and children. Amangokhala [they just stay], especially if their husband has a lot of money. They prefer to receive at least a part of it (sharing it with other women) then not receiving anything at all.
Gertrude says again that it cannot happen, that this woman [Victoria] finds enough money through her own means (selling crops like cotton, tobacco, maize; salary for teaching at Adult school; seminars etc) to build such a nice house with iron sheets, buy soap and food for her children, pay school fees without somebody helping her, it cannot happen.

Another thing I don’t understand, I said, is why men in general have more money than women. Well, Victoria says, men are better at focusing at starting something and be serious about it, continue with it. While women try many things without finishing, soon trying something else. And, (when I probe for other possible reasons) men can go to the lake for example for their BS and stay there for 1 month or 2 and make money, while if women do that people will think she is married there, having relationships. And when women who stay behind see that this happens to a woman who has gone away for business they are afraid to go too, avoiding to be gossiped about like that. I suggest that it may also be more difficult for women to go away for a while because they may have children that they have to take care of, or and care for while men not. Was half heartedly confirmed and I suggested may be also because parents are more serious about sending their sons to school rather than daughters? Victoria confirmed this, saying that in other districts both boys and girls work hard in school, but Yao girls are just interested in marriage. Also Yao parents are more interested in getting their daughters married when they reach puberty rather than have them finish their school. In Mangochi, Machinga -where many Yao people live.

When I had talked with Gertrude about her reasons for not moving around with boys yesterday, she had also explained that she saw the example of her sisters, who married young (copying the behavior of their Yao friends in Mangochi) and led a poor life, struggling.

Where son of Hamra made a pile of dried bricks, there also neat piles of different sizes of firewood. And a 3 meter deep pit, rectangular, approximately 1,5 by 0,5 meter, for the toilet.

Chief Mudzi A asked a picture in front of the new bafa he made behind his house. So indeed not very serious about moving to Mudzi B.

Gertrude is surprised that only few people planted sweet potatoes, which are very easy to plant and don’t take long to grow. I said that I saw many children walking around eating a mbatata these days. Have been bought, answered Gertrude. When Kingsley harvested his sweet potatoes many people from this village went to buy. Husband of Filimona is also selling, they sell 20 MK for 9 (or 3 big) potatoes, while people could easily get them for free if they would have planted. May thinking that by then they would have money from selling their maize to buy potatoes. Kondwani: planting is during hunger season and then making ridges seems like a lot of work, because tired because of lack of food. Florence was harvesting cotton in her field alone second round.

The moon has come back, Gertrude comments that people will now hurry to get their cotton of the field because it will be easy to steal with light of moon.

On my way to Mudzi A II husband of Belita came from side path with 2 women, all very drunk. When we later went to Belita’s house to greet her, he came to greet me, I could not understand what he said, too drunk. Gertrude translated that he called me his wife.

Mother of Belita was brewing beer. Meriam said she wasn’t brewing, “umphawi,” no money for ingredients. Aren’t you growing cotton, Gertrude asked surprised. Yes, yes, she confessed, will sell on Monday and they start brewing again. She complained about lacking salt, can only be bought far, possibly hoping I would give some again. So I suggested she buys a big bag of salt with her cotton
money and start selling it here. She intends to do so indeed, also paraffin and soap, matches.

Has daughter-in-law bring us some boiled nandolo (pigeon peas) in skin—which they will be eating for lunch, without nsima because it will satisfy their stomach without nsima too. Like at pumpkin time, Gertrude says later, then people sometimes only eat pumpkin for lunch. I say that we don't have nandolo in our country, Gertrude too says there are no pigeon peas where she comes from. Where is that? Meriam makes use of this opportunity. Dedza, but met me in Lilongwe. Ah yes, we were wondering how you could have met up. Had been surprised that Gertrude was willing to work with me. Sometimes Italian azungu come to their church, saying they are willing to take a child with them to take care of, but people here are afraid to give their children, thinking that they will be cooked and eaten there. Gertrude also told me and Sjaak earlier that in the beginning people had been afraid that I had come to steal their blood. Two years ago people had come, hiding and stole blood.

Grandmother of Ganizani commented that I got very fat since last time she saw me, "they must have been harvesting where she was."

Bonny is pregnant I saw when we greeted her. Women in Mudzi B don't gossip much about that side [Mudzi A II], Gertrude only heard them about Bonny's husband who does not seem to be going back to SA, lazy. Half March Zain lowered its cell phone prices from 2000 to 1000 Mk-smart move, just when people would start harvesting and find money.

At lunch time GVH came by, had visited mud stove instruction project at [tiny crossroads market]. Apparently wants me to go there too, because Mr Langmwale said I had promised I would (he had only told me to go and see), and I guess she feels pleased if I please him. I asked what she thought of the project. lii, she couldn't do it, it's a lot of work to do those stoves, takes from 6 A.M. to 6 P.M, too much work not complicated though. The ones that are made now will be sold- so that's the benefit for those women making them (only women?). If people will not buy, they will probably stop soon. The ones that are trained now, by people from Lilongwe, will be training people in other surrounding villages. Victoria is apparently not there. GVH was asked to attend, but she puts harvesting her cotton on a higher priority.

Daughter of Venesi (born 1992) is pregnant again. Kondwani says that Levison is the father. They met every day in the banana trees at the dambo at 5/6PM. She says she goes to get tomatoes he passes there on his way from Balaka where he is building. Her body and face are fat now and she doesn't go to fetch water anymore, ashamed that other women will see she is pregnant again. Nobody knows who is the father of her first child. While pregnant she mentioned several boys as the father, Kondwani told Gertrude, but the baby's face does not resemble any of them. When Gertrude asked the girl about she just said he is from this village, but refused to tell her more. People say she is just copying the behavior of her mother, thinking it is good to have several relationships. Many couples meet for sex at those banana trees.

Kondwani said today that Livia was also pregnant from Levison, but she aborted. Levison even went to the chief to complain that Livia was telling everybody that he had impregnated her while not and his wife would get angry about it at him. Chief told him to discuss the issue with Livia's mother, but Gertrude doesn't know whether he did it. Gertrude says that she indeed had seen them chatting when MASAF was paying (but maybe because Levison still owed money to Livia). But Gertrude doesn't believe Levison was the father, because Livia never spoke about him. But also doesn't believe that the boyfriend from Balaka was the father, because she could have told him if it was him. Maybe didn't sleep with him and therefore couldn't tell him.
Evelin and Venesi passed by on in afternoon with basin, plates and some other things coming back from Balaka where they attended Bingu gathering. Knitting women (Sofia, Kondwani, Ellesi and Chikondi) commented. Where do they find money at this time? Imagine what they will be buying when start selling cotton! Was money I gave for HH books.

Bingu announced today in Balaka and on radio that indeed official buying of cotton will start Monday for at least 75Mk/kg.

Kondwani is only one of whom Gertrude heard that she plans to start a business after selling cotton (and today Meriam). Jasmine and Innocent did not mention. Livia said she plans to go to sister at Mangochi. "Definitely somebody will propose to me there, and I will accept.”

Curious to see how soon business will start after the cotton selling starts. We’ll go to [nearest trading center] on Tuesday to see Balaka market will be very busy too. Gertrude thinks, and everything will be more expensive because sellers know that buyers have money. Because she noticed that at Kanengo everything became more expensive too at time of tobacco selling.

Kingsley has lots of cotton, Sofia told Gertrude. Already harvested twice 8 bags, and now harvesting (alone) for third time.

Victoria also said this afternoon that women who run business are bigger risk of HIV infection - just like Gertrude said earlier. Because they move around a lot, sometimes going very far to get their merchandise, maybe even having to stay the night. Then men may propose to spend the night together and the woman can think she’ll find more money like that and accept.

Yesterday I asked Gertrude whether giving money after sex may be perceived as showing respect (that a woman feels used when a boy sleeps with her and then leaves her nothing), but Gertrude was not very out spoken about this. No obvious confirmation.

Gertrude brought out the 2 full baby sets that she had knitted for Chikondo’s twin. When Chikondi received 2000Mk from me yesterday for 2 weeks of recording her HH finances she immediately brought 1000Mk to Gertrude for the baby suits that cost 700 each. The remaining 400 will come later. The women asked Chikondi whether her husband is paying for these. She said: I don’t have a husband, he more like my brother because we don’t sleep together. He only comes sometimes to greet sometimes spends the night, but leaves early in the morning to back to his wife, doesn’t help me with anything in or around the house.

Chikondi said that Mr Ntawanga had said that the cotton price will be 35Mk/kg. Which made her decide to not plant any cotton next year, but in stead a lot of hybrid maize. She is happy because she harvested 6 bags of hybrid maize more than local maize. So next year will work hard to buy enough chemicals.

Gertrude bought 1 bottle of actellic to prevent weavils in the maize. She bought 900Mk enough for 8 bags, 12 months. Did not buy hybrid maize but only local maize because of higher risk of weavils in hybrid maize.

Sofia said the GVH is angry with her for not helping harvesting cotton, but child is ill, therefore not helping. [Sofia] Happy because received chicken from Jane’s father so now has 1 piece of livestock. Kondwani’s chicken laid 10-15 eggs so will have many chickens, K said happily.
Kondwani started about the man who proposed to Ellesi and how he had cheated her that he was not married and would come to meet her, how her mother had been telling everyone that she had son-in-law in SA. Ellesi said she should stop telling about this, that herself had already forgotten about him, happy that she to prepare for examilations at school to focus on.

Julia shortly joined us outside. When she left women commented that at least she looked clean now, but her children still dirty.” Other mothers would be ashamed to have other people see their children so dirty”.

I brought out chocolate for women sitting outside, but it is a difficult thing because they don’t want others to say that they only come here to eat (sweets). Indeed when Naima shortly came to greet she immediately saw and commented on the "sweets”.

I texted Sjaak that the knitting club had, gathered again, that the women had been ashamed to come while he was here. Ashamed or shy? He answered shy, but also to prevent gossip and insinuations that they would have only come to get something from him. Oei, he replied, that may cause problems with the baby powder milk.

Gertrude describes her afternoon at the Adult school again: under the tree, but most women not serious, chatting too loud to hear the teacher, not bringing even their pencils. Elube went to sit at some distance saying that she was cold but that she could hear what was being said. Venesi was teaching about ziweto, asked women to mention the types of livestock she wrote those on board and asked women one by one to read the words out loud. Then she said she saw that everybody was tired because they had been harvesting and that tomorrow they were going to draw a map of the village with all the livestock that the various houses had. Women had to bring some maize or stones to represent the types of livestock. And that tomorrow they had to come in time. Within a few minutes the class was over. The next day they indeed draw the map of the village in the sand, the women helped each other. Then Venesi drew the map on a paper and showed everyone. Again the class had only taken short period of time. Then Venesi told the women to go to GVH to help her make thobwa for the 40 day ceremony of husband.

Husband of Dora has left her again. People are laughing about this, saying he just came to eat her maize. Maybe his other wife started calling him wondering why he suddenly stayed away maybe the other woman had given birth and the no-sex months were over, maybe he got tired of Dora, or he didn’t want to harvest her cotton out, laziness or shame. As he had come unannounced Dora had no time to go injection, so maybe she is pregnant now, women discussed.

After Sjaak had been talking to son of Hamra, the son said to Gertrude that this man had asked him whether he can cook. So the son asked Gertrude to tell Sjaak he can cook very well indeed, because maybe Sjaak wanted to hire him as a cook, he concluded from the question.

Hamra was disappointed that Sjaak had left because “he had promised to get me bag for my clothes” while Sjaak had only said that he would think about it. Which may be enough here to be seen as confirmation. Like Gertrude who told Kingsley that "we will not forget about him” after coming back from Lilongwe next week. I want to give them some money to thank him for at our house last 2 months to protect.

May 29, Friday
Grace came by on her way to work at [small crossroads market] shop for some new knitting work. Told Gertrude that her boss gave her the bike on which she travels up and down there and she receives 4000Mk per month for 6 days a week. Tomorrow she plans to go to Balaka to buy hair chemicals. Gertrude had seen the man cycle towards Grace’s house the day before she started working there, he had gone to ask around there whether someone was interested in working for him and Grace then offered herself.

When Chikondi passed by on way to borehole with only one of her babies Gertrude warned her that there are many women at the borehole. Chikondi answered that she would just cheat them that she has a crying child at home (and thus needs to hurry).

Gertrude asked Grace why she wanted a job since she has a boyfriend; he cannot provide everything that I want, I can’t just depend on him for getting all that I want, that’s why decided to start working there. She is happy that she can be knitting while waiting for customers.

Tinenenji (pregnant) passed on her way to her field to get some nandolo for ndiwo. Gertrude told her to come to receive the picture I brought for her. When sitting at our veranda Elube passed by and kneeled to greet Tinenenji. Tinenenji then also kneeled and greeted Elube back. Showing respect between mother-in-law (apongozi) and daughter-in-law (since Tinenenji carries Elube’s son child-although they are not in relationship).

Sofia this morning helped GVH harvesting cotton will not formally paying for it, but after receiving the money GVH will probably "remember Sofia" and give her some too.

Visited the mud stove making site west of [tiny crossroads market] village. About 10 women and 1 man (chief Kambaula) among the women was also chief [tiny crossroads market]. One was taking clay a rectangular hole in soil (kept in hole for 19 days always wet covered with plastic). Two of the women were instructors brought in from other district, local women. A boy from GTZ was sitting in a bench reading news paper. He had come to instruct on the building of oven to burn the pots. Our near by house was already filled with pots to dry. On bottom of pot women had written their names or first letter-will receive 500Mk for each pot they sell. An open day will be organized when the stoves have been burnt to demonstrate the use and sell to those who are interested for 500Mk. Gertrude thinks the stoves are good, but not many will buy too much money for something they can do on 3 stones as they are used to, "if it would have been charcoal burners it would have been better, because those only cost 300Mk".

Mr Langwmale was away to buy ndiwo, but came back soon. He first said several times that people are VERY interested. Only later when I about his opinion why there is still hunger and poverty in Malawi in spite of so many projects did he say that there is some unwillingness from the villagers to participate. That they had hoped about 30-40 could be participating in the making of these stoves but only about 10 were willing. Because of illiteracy, they don’t see the benefit prefer doing the things they are used to do minding their own business, working on the field for example. When they become literate they become more critical thinkers and will understand the benefit, the need for development. But what do they need read and write for, I provoked, no newspapers to read or shopping lists to write. True, but mathematics will help them, eg calculating how much fertilizer they need. Or to see whether they make profit, I added. Before mentioning this reason for low impact of projects he said that many projects used to be initiated from government or organizations. But now there is ‘decentralization’: (local) people should initiate and "own" the projects. This project is really owned by people, he said. Gave this reason why there are no allowances involved: they own the training. Nothing, he emphasized cheerfully, they get absolutely nothing! Insinuating that they are
thus truly interested in learning (GVH had said that the benefit is that the women will earn 500Mk per sold stove).

They don’t even get a soft drink or lunch, assured the GTZ boy to me. Although Langwmale is proving ndiwo-but they feed him too, so. Meat every day! he said happily. Ah so there is a benefit for them, I remarked laughing. But why not, I asked, if not here these women could at least be harvesting cotton (either own or ganyu). Then Langwmale blamed GTZ, these are their rules: the participants should get nothing from the training because it is in their benefit.

Mainly women are participating, but anyone can choose to join. CU started with some information meeting, during which Reflect facilitators were selected ‘by the community themselves’, but CU criteria were: Literacy and willingness to work only a volunteer payment. Venesi for Mudzi B, Victoria for Mudzi A. Why women more active? May be cultural, Langmwale answered. When I probe, he said that men have to leave their home village after marriage to join wife so villages are not theirs, may feel less urged or responsible to work for the betterment of these communities that are not theirs.

This ”Energy Saving Project” started in January 2008 and will run till end 2012. Project documents were written by people from Malawi headquarter in Blantyre, country representative etc. Is only undertaken here in Balaka (although in Thyolo groups were also taught to make round stoves and according to Langwmale the group there already banked 3 million Mk by selling the stoves,” they are successful, even from Zomba and Zambia people came to buy.

The project started with a baseline in the majority of the villages in TA [Traditional Authority catchment] M.. Second output: literacy classes. Third output mud stove making. Next output will be business management, eg organize individual entrepreneurs in groups. ”But we have one enemy". Langmwale said: the charcoal vendors. We need to organize them too and get them to switch to other income generating activities. CU has provided the mud stove makers with a starter pack, like a mold (a tin bucket without bottom) and the bricks for the oven. These they can keep. The group is meant to continue making the stoves, even after tomorrow (=last instruction day, then the trainers go away again). Langwmale’s role is to oversee= sitting, reading newspaper, eat (a woman brought him a plate of groundnuts). The mud stove instructions have been started for only 19 groups now in TA M. [tiny crossroads market] was selected "because of shown interest by the community themselves", and because they had a place to get clay within the village," so they were more likely to actually do it”...

Langwmale grew up in village in Chikwawa. After school he got a diploma in community development, which took 3 years. Then he worked 4 years for the government in Nkhotakota, under Ministry of Women and Children, working with all sorts of projects like MASAF and Action Aid. Was trained on Reflect by Action Aid. Then he was asked by Concern Universal to work on a water sanitation project in Thyolo: (re) installing boreholes and shallow wells and toilets. By the end of the 3 year project 70% of the target community had water and sanitation so very successful. Salary etc much better at Concern Universal than government. But when project phased out he was unemployed. Worked with another organization (CARD org.) but for lower salary. After one month applied with Concern Universal again for this Energy Saving Project in Balaka and was selected. Lives in Balaka boma although he should actually be staying in rural area, he admitted," but there are many difficulties like electricity etc" gets house allowance on top of salary which is enough to rent a nice house in Balaka boma. And is in villages every day. Is married with 2 children, wife is from Nkhotakota. They do not cultivate land, because fertilizer is very expensive,10,000 Mk/50 kg. But all these people here, pointing at the women busy making the clay pots, they can get it for subsidized price. But many don’t even have the money for that so they sell the already arranged with some of the chiefs that next year he will buy a
lot of fertilizer coupons from them. He said to Gertrude that he had heard she was buying maize, how many. Gertrude answered honestly that she bought 9 maize, 1 g/nuts. And then she asked him, he bought 30 bags. To sell too, Gertrude and I asked at the same time. But he said for food, for his own family and to send to relatives in Chikwawa and Mzuzu because rains stopped there early January, so they harvested very little. When he heard that Gertrude bought only local maize he was surprised, "You're lucky! How come you managed to do that?" he asked. May be I was the first to start buying.

He could only buy hybrid which is much more difficulty to keep for long time. Also GVH could only buy hybrid (which people grow indeed mainly to sell), some cheated her putting a small layer of local on top of the hybrid maize. Coming season Langwmale plans to rent land for cotton. Tobacco is too much work, too much difficult. He didn't know that cotton selling will start on Monday, asked Gertrude the price. But then said that he doesn't think the companies will indeed be paying the price prescribed by Bingu, because of 'liberalization'. Bingu also tried to set a price for tobacco, but the foreign buyers did not give a shit and as soon as he left the auction hall they lowered their prices again.

Kissing is not usual here, says Gertrude, although people learn about it now through movies. When she was watching movies at boarding school though, kissing parts would be turned of. Then the older girls would be protesting, but the nuns said. "You just want to be practicing this".

Only Ellesi came to knit after school (why not harvesting cotton on her mother's field?), Gertrude asked her why she accepted marriage proposal from man in SA. He allowed her to continue school while he would stay in SA and pay for school fees.

Ellesi said she saw Goldy, daughter of Venesi, getting fat just like the first time she was pregnant. Gertrude asked about father of child, but Ellesi doesn't know either. When Grace was washing clothes at borehole a woman had asked her why she is getting so fat, was she eating nice food? Now Grace doesn't go borehole anymore.

Teleza came to ask if Gertrude could crosh 10 zipewa for a boy from Lilongwe, who probably plans to sell them there.

Julia ordered a hat to go with the pants and vest that Gertrude knitted for her youngest child from the thread of the old vest she had given. Gertrude asked if Julia wants to knit this and get the money for it, Ellesi accepted.

Balakasi now also came to have the cell phone that her son sent from SA explained the same one that husband of Naima came with. She said it is too complicated, she wants to sell it and buy a simpler one. Now who is the owner of the phone and what happened to Balakasi's other phone?

Quite a lot of chibwenzi relationships within these 2 villages, I said to Gertrude who then started to list them. I asked about people commenting that it is better to find a partner from far away. Especially boys want that. Gertrude said girls will accept anybody. Later she added: anybody they like. Boys want from far for same reason as husband of Naima said: is difficult to find a girl who respects you amidst the girls you grew up with, played with as a child. Gertrude said that especially boys with businesses are liked, but also those that have relatives in SA. When I asked about Ellesi's possible interest in Kingsley (who only started to grow cotton this year, so after they were in a relationship): the clothes he wears are often sent from SA by younger brothers of his deceased father. Gertrude "His father was first born of GVH, so definitely the other sons in SA will be helping him."
May 30, Saturday

Rosemary and Sodia harvesting cotton on GVH’s field.

Levison already drunk or still drunk in early morning, and radio very loud. He apparently received his salary, which Gertrude thinks cannot be different from husband of Kingsley, 6000 Mk. He said to Gertrude that he wants another picture for his wife, because the other one he gave to his girlfriend. He liked the picture because he looks fat on it because it was before the hunger season (yelling from some distance, so not afraid to mention his girlfriend in pubic). One time Thokozani had accused him from stealing maize from her mother, they fought and left for some days. Coming back he said he spent the nights at guest house in Balaka for 100Mk/night=no electricity, just a mat with 1 blanket. No girlfriend to stay with? Or was he lying about this? Gertrude thinks he have stayed with the woman he bragged about, who told him several times that she wants to sleep with him. But I think he could have been open about this to take revenge at Thokozani. Gertrude doubts because it was middle of the month, where would he have found that money?

Gertrude remarks at breakfast that Chikondi often writes that she pound maize for other women. You don’t think it is true, I ask. No, with 2 small babies, doesn’t think that women would ask her, thinking that she doesn’t have the power for it. Indeed, even at her own house 2 girls were doing the pounding rather than herself. So you think she hide something. I probe, but who would propose to a woman with 2 young babies? Ah, they can/will, especially knowing the behavior of her husband they will think she needs support.

Venesi and Pamela are full sisters, Harvey Tunga is full brother (husband of Haliday). Their mother was called Fissa,. Evelin has same father, but mother is not mentioned in book. Rosemary is also included in book, so must have been filled recently. Fulanki Ziwiya first husband of Livia is also in book. All names from Mudzi B are in book twice. Adela, daughter of Alma (born 1985), also registered in book as inhabitant of Mudzi B. Her husband is from M. village, may be they lived at Mudzi B for some time before moving to Blantyre. Some people I can’t find in the book, often not everything is filled.

Gertrude: love is giving the girl what she wants.

I asked her if she is not afraid that men may find her too old to propose too, but she doesn’t think so. But they may be thinking that she already has a boyfriend.

At lunch(nsima, eggs, cabbage-again) I asked Gertrude what she think will happen the coming weeks after cotton buying starts: women can find their own money and won't need boyfriends or will be more willing to accept proposals because they know there is money to be found. Definitely the last. Livia was already anticipating that after selling cotton her boyfriend (rasta) will be taking her to buy clothes. Pamela was saying how her boyfriend would be buying her plates because he has a lot of cotton.

Iii, Gertrude said, husband of Elube also has a lot of cotton, Evelin will be enjoying a lot of his money too. So you are convinced that she is in relationship with him even though she denies? Yes, because many people say so. Especially Molly must really know as she lives next to Evelin, definitely she can see him go in or out the house sometimes. Elube has so many kids to take care of, forcing her to accept that she has to have her husband’s income. May be afraid about what happened to Gertrude after she caught husband with Pamela.
About Jane and vegetable selling marriage proposer: She thought she could just make use of his interest, keep him giving to her for few months (indeed he came with veggies, matemba, cooking oil), before ditching him because she doesn't want a farmer as husband. But she hadn't expected he would be so serious, coming everyday. One day she was called from chatting with Gertrude to go and greet him because he had gone to GVH's house again. Soon after she came back and disappeared, telling Gertrude she doesn't want him. After a few hours waiting GVH had told the boy he better take his matemba and eat with his parents, and look for another wife elsewhere because apparently Jane wasn't interested in him. So, I concluded, GVH has no power over Jane, make her marry or at least please this boy to get his matemba. Gertrude then added that Jane's father likes boyfriend in Balaka, because this one had come to bring him milk and bread when he was in hospital.

Mr Langwmale came to bring Reflect documents as well as baseline questionnaire.

3SF: Have you ever gone for HIV test? Without first saying that they will not be asked about results
36h. When do you wash your hands? Multiple choice options given, but do not include “before eating”.

Kondwani and Vanessa said at bore hole that they heard from people at [small crossroads market] that 'China' will buy cotton at 90Mk/kg at [small crossroads market] starting on Monday. Asked Gertrude to help them carry their cotton to [small crossroads market].

REFLECT approach partly influenced by highly politicized guerillas in El Salvador. What happened when Fidel Castro and/ or Che Guevara came to Africa? Why no revolution here?

Gertrude went to collect firewood with Sofia, who told Gertrude that Livia had told her that she found a new boyfriend in Balaka. They had met last week, he is older. Yesterday they met for second time and he gave her 5ooMk. Sofia's husband sent 500Mk too and a packet of sugar, via a friend after he had been selling clothes at [nearest tradingcenter] . The friend is from this village and arrived in dark hours, 7 pm, Sofia was already sleeping but opened the door when he said he came to bring her money from her husband. Jasmine and Innocent thought Sofia had invited a man to spend the night with her and wanted to hide his bicycle so they could see who it is. Sofia overheard them because she was just sitting at the veranda. Angry with them, but didn't say anything.

Have you seen Grace, Sofia asked Gertrude, working at the shop whose owner likes to sleep with girls. He has never hired boys to work in his shop, only girls. Sofia is convinced that Grace will also be in relationship with him. Today her boyfriend had come to see her, stayed with her for long time. Sofia's husband borrowed 4000Mk to his father (husband of Jasmine) to buy maize, will pay back after selling his cotton.

Chikondi had said that I will be distributing blankets when making the picture, because I will be going. Sofia told her that yesterday I had really only made a picture at Mudzi B, but Chikondi answered that in Mudzi A I will give blankets. At the meeting at Mr Ntawanga's house Gertrude emphasized that indeed I only want to make picture for them to remember me and vice versa. I felt sorry for the old women who walked all the way from Mudzi A II.

Mr Ntawanga said we should wait for Mr Chikombo, who wanted to attend, thinking that I am leaving now. After the picture both Mr Ntawanga and chief Mudzi A gave a speech that I had said from beginning that I will only do research and that they should not expect more. Gertrude says we better gather the people from both the villages when giving a goodbye speech, otherwise they will be cheating each
other over what I gave or Joyd them.

Fish vendor said to Kondwana that he will come to her house this night. Then Kondwani answered loudly so that the other women at our house could hear that this is now the second time for him to say this but she doesn’t want, he should just go to other women. The vendor reprimanded her for talking so loud, that it was a secret. Kondwani bought matemba for 30 Mk, Vanessa also.

Tinenenji said that she wants a baby boy, who may later go to SA and send her support.

Young sister of Dorica passed by to buy paraffin. Women commented that she is now alone because Dorica went to visit her father at Mangochi to chat for some days. He had explained to her how to find him.

Emra said that she advised the man who had proposed marriage to Livia via her that Livia decided to go back to school again and that Livia likes men. No problem, he said, I’ll find someone else. Women discussed that it will be difficult for Livia to find a husband, everybody in village will tell the interested men that she likes men too much.

Livia stopped coming here as often as before, not chatting, not knitting. May be she got fed up with all the questions that Gertrude asked, says Gertrude. First Gertrude thought she is just too busy, but Sofia said that today she was just playing cards with her mother.

Husband of Naima passed by in dark, came to greet politely and begged for a picture of the two of us. Then apologized for being very drunk. He had gone to drink with husband of Filimona, who is now sleeping at graveyard, too drunk to get home. husband of Naima currently does BS of tomatoes, and is probably spending all his money on celebration of fact that on Monday he will find lot of money. Maybe no big plans everywhere for BSs because no need to make money!

Discussed with Gertrude about ways to thank women: chitenje for all the women we interviewed = app 85. Plus a goodbye party for everybody in the 2 villages, with beef, rice & lemonade. App 400 Euro (incl transport ed).

Walked to chigayo: only few buildings, of which one the chigayo (ufa everywhere) and a shop. Some women selling guave and tomatoes under tree. Maize is being bought. We then walked on on road between Balaka and [nearest tradingcenter], towards Balaka, to see “J. village town”: indeed some more & better houses, and one big shop with bicycle tires and even 1 mountainbike for sale, clothes, underwear and all the usual items. Three people were inside, a man eating thick porridge. A young woman sold us some breads (small & homemade a 5 MK, big & factory made a 15MK, Gertrude though the factory ones would be best). Next to shop many bags of maize and a scale, and men around it. Gertrude said that women who want to buy something go here, pretending they go to the maize mill, but then sell maize and buy whatever they want next door.

Main question for coming cotton selling days: Do women feel they don’t need men now because it’s easy for them to find money by themselves, or they are more likely to get involved with men, knowing they have money??

Walking to chigayo I asked Gertrude whether she looks forward to going back to Lilongwe: best wel. What
did you miss? Friends, mainly. No coke, fanta etc? Ah no. What will you miss from here? Living with you. No friends? Ah no. But you talked with many women, made no friends. But most just came for some time and then stopped coming. If they could have come all the time, then I could miss them. But if they would come all the time, others will say they come to get something from me, lot of gossiping, jealousy. Why so much gossiping here? Jealousy, or maybe just used. Same in area 25? There also, but less. Especially what Chikondi was saying: that unmarried women are watched closely. If you have new clothes or hair style they will say you have a boyfriend, especially when Gertrude found job as teacher and people didn't know yet that she had found job, and thus income. Earned 6000/month. But many of her old friends in Lilongwe have now married. One will have her wedding ceremony beginning of July and wants Gertrude to be brides maid. Bride and groom met at church choir. Church is good opportunity for many to meet boys/their boyfriends, and for boys to look for new boyfriends. Are they in love, I asked. Ah no, love grows bit by bit after staying together for some time. The girl just felt that she was getting at the age that it is good to find someone to marry, and she was lucky that a serious boy proposed.

Met boy who was in relationship with Lucia (who sold mandasi at [tiny crossroads market]), Gertrude hoorde hem uit over their relationship. He had done MSCE exams but didn’t pass as he wanted, wants to do them again, which disappointed Lucy who had thought they’d get married soon. But he wasn’t ready yet. So split up now. Indeed, when Lucy had once asked Gertrude to flash him, he didn't call back, said Gertrude.

Boy at Chigayo was drinking softdrink, smoking cigarette. Said price would be 20 in stead of 10 because of mzungu. But Gertrude refused and he agreed, but wanted picture. Gertrude thinks he is employed by owner, must be paying him high salary because otherwise stealing too much, easy to steal. I suggested he must be having many girlfriends, which Gertrude assured me indeed. When I later commented on the softdrink and cigarette and that he probably got paid, she said he may have stolen too. Definitely Grace is also stealing [at shop where she works], she said. Desi’s mother used to pay boy working at chigayo 12.000MK (but still he stole and she fired him). Gertrude thinks this boy will get more then husband of Elube and Levison (who do hard labor 5 days a week for 6000/month) because it is easy to steal, to keep him from stealing. But in shop also easy to steal (Grace, making 4000 for 5 days a week (shop open 6 days a week, not Saturday because owner is Seventh Day Baptist, Grace to CCAP on Sunday). When Gertrude was ill at time of tel buro, she asked friend to run BS for her and receive payment for it. At tobacco season Gertrude used to make 800 even 1000MK per day, but this girl came back with only 200 or 300. Others told her that there had been a lot of customers, so the girl had been stealing. When doing a BS it is better to do it yourself, because if you employ someone he will surely steal from you, Gertrude concluded.

Yesterday Grace came back walking because bike had to stay with owner to go to church in weekend. But a boy escorted her home, she said, unclear whether it was the owner or indeed just a boy.

husband Amila came back this morning after having disappeared again for some time after selling firewood to Gertrude. Said he went to his home vlg near [nearest tradingcenter].

Gertrude greeted a girl on road: had talked to her once at [small crossroads market] and had seen her too when Pamela and Gettie were fighting over Gettie’s husband. Gertrude had used hands, Pamela her shoe. First in bedroom, then in living room, until men came to part them. Then Gertrude told husband to follow her home which he first refused, but then people from this village told him to go, since this is not his vlg, he has no house here, they all know he is married to Gettie and even has a child at their house. Then he went. Shortly after Pamela came out of her house, asking where her child had gone. People commented that she has no shame, probably is used to this since it happened
several times now already. The next day she had left, also the man had left, taking some of the items in the house and selling half their cotton, for a low price since official buying had not yet started. They are said to have gone to Ntcheu, but they money he found selling cotton must have been just enough for their transport. He planned to start BS there. People said that Pamela will be finding new men at Ntcheu, doing the same again, cheating this one.

Chief Mudzi A came to say that we will meet at Mr Ntawanga’s for group picture, because his wife doesn’t like chatting to some women, so those women may not want to come to his compound...

May 31, Sunday

This community does not want to be understood/doorgelicht, leven zo ongeveer van het manipuleren van ontwikkelingsprojecten en elkaar, hebben er baat bij als die sluijer bedekt blijft, willen niet ontmaskerd worden. Niet vereerd dat ik geïnteresseerd iin hen ben, maar eerder bezorgd (e.g. HH lijst die niet blijkt te kloppen etc).

Sofia (harvesting a bit of cotton in GVHs field) told Gertrude this morning that her husband said he will come today to discuss renting a house for her at Liwonde turnoff (conveniently located for his BS in second hand clothes) to live there together. “Ever since I told him those angry words over the phone he has been treating me much better,” she said (see May 5, Gertrude’s notes). She earlier commented that he is thinner than before and suggested this may be because he is worried about how to take care of all his children (4 with her, 1 with new wife). He likes women and has been travelling a lot for his BS, so he may have other wives (with children) to take care of too... Did not mention the disease as possible cause of his weightloss. [Aug 20: volgens mij zei Gertrude hier nog achteraan, uit schaamte, insinueerde wel disease, saying he likes women, travels a lot].

After Moyo wa thanzi survey women at borehole laughed about how they had lied, about having more children in family and less maize harvested. Chief Mudzi B complained that it is now happening too often that people come to ask questions and then leave again, without any benefit for the respondents. They should now be bothering other villages. Every HH was questioned (where they found someone at home), but Gertrude not because not from this village and doing research. The interviewers didn’t want her to see the questions.

Rosemary still harvesting cotton in GVH’s field.

Village registration book: husband of Elube is Chilemba, born 1964. GVH born 1940, all her children were born at home. husband Jasmine 1961, Jasmine 1951. Jasmine said she was still very young when her parents decided she should be married to this one. In interview she said they married in 1964 - maybe married to another first? Or mistakes in book? First child registered 1973, last 1987.

Amila chased her husband when he came back yesterday. Sofia had asked whether they had shared their maize harvest, but Amila answered that he had not helped her on the field so she didn’t give him anything.

GVH came to greet, had been harvesting cotton since very early. Now going to cook breakfast. Just working alone, ‘g’children are not helping her, she complained. Cannot tell them to help her, they know it is Sunday today, so no school, so they can think by themselves that they can come and help her... Wants to harvest all her cotton before selling so that she finds a lot of money at once. Plans to keep come of it to hire ganyu, because she is alone now (and has more land!), wants to buy more
maize and build a new house because this one is getting very old now.

Chief Mudzi B passed to greet and asked how the picture taking went yesterday at Mudzi A. Sorry, she had told all women at Mudzi B to come, but some said they didn’t just want to come for a picture. Ah kwathu, sighed Salika (=chief), we always expect to receive something. Sorry to have disturbed you, said Gertrude.

Went to GVH to give back books, asked her when first people came to live here. Her mother came as a child with her parents, GVH born here in 1940, differences between now and past? No, everything still the same, I probed: same number of people? No less people. First chief was M., then chief Ch., then Bakili Muluzi became president and sub-TA [small crossroads market] was created with new chief. After that people were split in again in smaller groups and one of them with a chief Mudzi B. Two men were chiefs here before this one got installed when her breasts were still small. The previous chiefs, the uncle of her mother, had chosen her, when he died, she took his place. There were older people he could have chosen too, but they were not as closely related to him as she was. Her task was to give people some of the land that belonged to her family/chief-tainship when people got married. In past they used to get a big plot, now may be only 2 or 3 acres to build their house and grow their crops.

She [GVH] would always give the land to the wife, because that one would bare the children and stay at the same place while the man might move away to other places. But that happened less often in the past, not like now that men are just getting married everywhere. This changed when Kamuzu Banda came into power he gave only power to men, not to women. Then women were not able anymore to tell their husbands to how to behave.

In past children used to respect their elders, but now not anymore. Her parents sat down with their children in the evenings and told them how to behave properly. That is why her husband has never taken a stick to beat her, because she always remembered how to respect him, how to behave properly. She [GVH] tried to give her children the same kind of upbringing, but they are not listening to her, saying that that was the past, now there is freedom. Bingu also said it again, that there is now freedom of speech.

Girlfriend of Kingsley sat on our mat at GVH’s to greet us. Gertrude asked her when she came: yesterday, had spent the night. In which of the 3 houses of the compound, asked Gertrude, ah you ask too many questions, and then she left.

Kingsley hasn’t finished harvesting his cotton, will only start selling after he harvests everything. Kondwani harvested everything and will sell on Monday.

Vanessa has not finished harvesting but will start selling on Monday.
GVH said that because people are not following what their ancestors used to do and advise them, many children are falling ill.

Chief Mudzi B was cooking on one of those mud stoves that concern universal gave her. One day many women (incl Venesi and Vanessa) from different villages went to Bruce village and came back with a stove. Weren’t taught, just receive, says chief. She finds it works very well, using less firewood which is becoming difficult to find these days, so she says many women will went to have such a stove, even if they have to pay 500mk for it, but will rather go to learn to make one themselves, she thinks.

Asked mr Ntwanga about the CBO (see Gertrude’s notes) were told by DC to form a CBO otherwise they will not receive anything through development projects. Handouts and projects are only done through “CBO”. That day all the members contributed 100mk each inorder to register their CBO at district level. Is different from the VDC, the CBO is only there to receive whatever “they” (boma, organisations) want to give, while the VDC can go to ask for things, e.g a borehole. Mudzi A and the other villages under group Mudzi B asked for a borehole already 3 years ago, but nothing up till now, only at Mudzi B a borehole was built, Gertrude told me earlier that originally the borehole would be built at Mudzi A, but then the GVH got angry and demanded it to be built near her house.

The problem here is that in the past years there was no MP from this area in the Malawian parliament, who knows what is needed here, there were from other parts of Balaka, but there are enough boreholes there. But since this year there is an MP from this area, so hopefully things will get better. Why have all those development projects not stopped the poverty here, what’s wrong with those projects?

Many only stay at Balaka boma, don’t reach the villages, only FIDP reached here and we really benefited from that because they gave us goats. But then they didn’t give you the cement and malata (iron sheets) that they promised, I said (when we arrived we found him making a grass roof on the goat khola). Yes, that’s the problem of us Malawians the ones who received these items at district level must have decided to keep them for themselves instead of bringing the handouts and money to the villages they use it to buy a motorcycle or car for themselves.

Had earlier said that the problem here is that few people are educated, so difficult to run for MP. I told him to make sure that one of his children gets enough education to make it to MP to help this area. He and his wife laughed and said he will try, he will encourage his son not to marry young but stay in school. But it takes a lot of money to run for MP, he added, Gertrude answered that as the boy gets wiser he will find ways to get this money. About projects: the ones at district level only send resources to where their relatives are.
Chikondi had come to see if the baby suits were ready, wants to put them tomorrow, going to see a friend in early morning hours, to be back in time to sell her cotton at [small crossroads market]. husband of Elube will not start buying until Tuesday, husband can not help her transport all the cotton to [small crossroads market] because “banja latha” [marriage ended]. He told her last week that he is not coming back anymore, he waited for her to give birth, the babies are now 6 months, from now on it’s her own responsibility. She didn’t object or try to change his mind, just accepted, “what could she do?” why didn’t he wait for you to sell your cotton? Has his own…. Doesn’t want to remarry ever again. Last year she was working on her field while pregnant, coming home to cook for him. Won’t do it again, will take care of herself now. Even his parents told her that she better takes care of herself, stop the marriage with this man. Is not afraid of that other women will mistreat her like before, because they all know about the behaviour of this man. That he used to beat her after drinking beer. Pointed out the door that was lacking a part- he mined it, also forced away one of the corner poles on which the roof was resting.

I asked her [Chikondi] about the proper behaviour for men/husbands - she found the question hard to understand, probably too normal for her, never actively/explicitely thought about it. After some reformulations she said that a good man builds and maintains the house, and starts working on the field again soon after harvest to make new ridges. She couldn’t think of another male ‘udindo’ but for women it’s: taking care of the children, preparing food for her husband, welcome visitors, fetch water and firewood, I helped her. Taking care of the ill, she then added, sharing things with others when do people say that somebody is a good wife?). no nkhanza, e.g letting young children fetch water.

She [Chikondi] then gossiped with Gertrude that Pamela had come back again, to give 700mk to the chief to show that she is really married now. The man went to his house to collect the cotton to sell tomorrow but found that Gertrude had taken everything, all maize etc. she had even cut off the cotton plants that were not ripe yet to destroy them, went back to her mother. As payment for the fact that she left school for him.

Thokozani came by around 1pm with baby on back and big bucket with small, mainly unripe tomatoes for sale. We bought 12 small ones for 20mk.

Chikondi said about Pamela and new husband that he doesn’t know her behaviour, and she doesn’t know about his, for that matter.

I asked Gertrude what happened that Livia is not coming as often as before anymore, but Gertrude said she didn’t know, may be just busy with other things. But I read in her notes that app 10 days ago she told on Livia twice to Phingi...

Kondwani, Chisoni, Esnart and Ada came. Kondwani reprimanded Ada and later Tinenenji
for only coming now because they wanted their hair to braided, “while on other days you just let Gertrude knit here alone” Tinenenji soon left, because Gertrude busy with Chisoni’s hair and Ada also waiting. I asked where they are going tomorrow that they all want their hair braided but that only made them shy (betrapt).

Pamela also came, plans to stay here with new husband, son very ill, says Gertrude, insinuating that this is because Pamela is sleeping with other man than his father. Pamela said that Molly is not speaking to her (but probably also other way around), saying that Pamela is a prostitute. Pamela plans to go to grandmother in other village to solve this issue between her and Molly. Pamela escorted Grace’s new boyfriend, joking that she will warn his wife so that Grace can experience the same thing that happened to herself. Nola is not happy with Grace’s boyfriend, doesn’t want her to marry someone who already has a wife. Venesi told Grace to tell Nola that she doesn’t have enough money to take care of herself. Grace’s bf wants her to stop working at the shop because he knows the owner likes women, and that he is trying his best to find enough money for her. Today he gave her money to go to hair salon in Balaka (app 500mk, including chemicals), but Grace refuses to stop at the shop, because the boyfriend does not give her enough. Grace works with the sister of the wife of the owner because he expects many customers selling their cotton at [small crossroads market].

Chisoni and Esnart said that only few people will start BS now, most will just wait until their money starts to run out, then think of starting a BS. They will just be eating their cotton money. Indeed Jasmine & Innocent only talked about buying cloghes etc after selling cotton not about starting a BS.

Husband of Amila told her to stop her sugarcane BS, but she refused, saying that no one takes care of her, he doesn’t help her, this is her only way to find money for soap, can’t stop, he should just go.

Kondwani took a jersey knitted by Gertrude, will pay on Tuesday after selling her cotton. Afraid that other women will be taking it when they find money. Chisoni did not plant cotton, couldn’t manage alone, she says. Ada will not sell her cotton tomorrow because there will be many people, but is very happy that soon she will have a lot of money.

Kingsley has a lot of cotton, the women commented, his girlfriend will be enjoying a lot. They were surprised that GVH had invited the girl to spend the night, which they saw as encouraging Kingsley to marry her even though she knows that the girl has also relationships with some boys at her school.

Kingsley told us this morning that cotton prices will go up towards the end of the selling season, when few people have cotton left (buyers fighting over the last bits).
Rosa came to give another 100mk for her school uniform jersey, 300 of 400 is now paid of. Was on her way to shop to buy ingredients for mandasi that mother wants to start selling.

Kondwani said her brother came back from M. village where he got married. Wife had been angry with him for not giving money for ndiwo, but taking her groundnuts to serve as ndiwo (while they had worked on field together, according to his story). So decided to divorce, but may be he has another girlfriend, guessed Kondwani (but then you’d think he’d be going there in stead of home village). He got nsima for lunch from chief Mudzi B, Kondwani will feed him for dinner. Soon there will be some discussions to decide on divorce, he may be afraid to go to girlfriend before these discussions, says Gertrude.

Father of Ada’s child is coming to chat with her more often now, staying up till 7pm after which Ada escorts him out of village, going back to the wife he left her for. Soon you will have another child, the women laughed at her. No no, defended Ada, Gertrude thinks she may be afraid to admit to the other women that she wants to marry him again. He will probably move in with her again when his other wife gives birth, I laughed, pang’onopang’ono I am understanding how things work here.

Women laughed that Innocent, Sofia, Jasmine and Thokozani are playing cards at Jasmine’s house. For 1, 5, 20mk per game. After selling cotton they will be playing for 50mk per game, they prospected, we heard Innocent yell at Trinity that she has to wash the plates. Women disapproved that Talina now has to do all HH chores because Innocent is too busy playing cards (but I saw Innocent fetching water this morning and she cooked lunch together with Trinity).

When Gertrude asked Kondwani why Julia divorced her husband and then moved back to him after first having another man’s child, she just shrugged ‘kaya’ [don’t know], little gossiping about people from Mudzi A.

Esnart complained that 150mk is a lot for borehole contribution (per HH per year), at other places it is just 50mk.

Levison has been drunk the whole weekend, Thokozani said he left this morning without washing his body and hadn’t seen him since. He said he would wash wherever he went to, had really been flirting with Saibi some timeago, sitting together, Gertrude heard him say “I will touch your breasts” and made movement to do so, S pushed him away, saying that Hamra was there, both laughing and enjoying.

In early night many men voices, probably celebrating that soon they have money.
Monday June 1: Start of cotton selling!

Husband of Elube will start buying tomorrow - his fence is not ready yet. At borehole women said they will start selling tomorrow because today there will be a lot of people at [small crossroads market]. Both chief Mudzi A and Nyamwale said they want to buy 2 bags of maize with their cotton money.

Levison and son of Elube discussed that at B. village both China and NASFAM have already started buying, they will go there to check. Sofia - harvesting cotton in GVH’s field - yells to Levison that he shouldn’t be moving around but stay at home because he has a wife there. He yells back that Goldy (daughter Venesi) says he impregnated her, and that Livia had said the same, jokes that he better go buying some clothes for Goldy and that he’ll be having many children like this. Evelin and Esnart (one way to borehole) joke back that may be these girls want him, and therefore say these things [gemoedelijk].

Sofia’s husband usually comes around 7pm, but yesterday did not show up as he promised.

Emra also waits with selling her cotton till tomorrow, to first find out about the prices that will be offered at different places.

At 9am we went to [small crossroads market], but found nothing happening there yet, two big places where fenced with grass, one not yet finished. The buyers have arrived, said Grace (who was sitting in shop with boyfriend standing outside chatting with her), but the money not yet. We saw nobody on road carrying cotton, everybody apparently waiting until they hear the actual buying has started.

Gave picture to tomato woman who said that last Thursday was already quite busy with sellers, although few buyers. Shoes, clothes, tomatoes, sugarcane, mandasi and much more. From this week on sellers will be coming from far. Last year [cotton] buying had already started by now, may be delay because of elections. Emily had said because of unexpected last rains, that make the cotton heavier.

Venesi’s boyfriend was at bicycle repair shelter, with other young men, just hanging and chatting - may be he is one of the buyers?

Went to Evelin with some questions on her expenditure book. Found her outside with kids cleaning nkhwani from her field. Washed clothes drying on line, plus very luxurious big blanket, the ones which Blessings sold from SA for 8000mk. Surely Evelin hasn’t paid 8000mk for it, I assumed, ah no, may be from ex-husband, guessed Gertrude. I asked her why she had given 10mk
to the tree project, she giggled and said she had just written it, but not true. Hadn’t written down the 8000 she received from me, nor how she spent it, on that day the handwriting was very different, but when I asked about she just said she decided to change her handwriting for one day. I wanted to know why she had lied about the contribution for the tree project (says that nobody ever pays this), but Gertrude said we better leave it. She asked why we hadn’t come to church yesterday, ulesi [laziness] answered Gertrude, two priests had come and many people, some even had to stand outside the packed church. She wanted us to stay and chat, but said she’ll come tomorrow so Gertrude can apply “American” chemical in her hair.

Continued to old Ayami in Mudzi B with some general questions on differences between now and past. Talked while we shelled nandolo, Jeneti came back from her field, had now finished harvesting cotton. After the old woman we went to talk with Jeneti about her HIV infection. I told her that people had been saying she is infected and that I’d like to ask some questions about this, but don’t know if she is willing to be open about it, if not no problem at all. She said it is ok, she knows we are doing research and is happy that we felt free to come and ask her personaly rather than through other people. Decided to go for testing because “kudwaladwala” says that the father of (her daughter) Ellesi encouraged her to go for testing, although he hadn’t say anything about his own status. When she heard she is HIV positive she knew that she would be getting medication and get stronger again. Indeed looks very good now, happy and fat, no more sores but beautiful skin. Can work the whole day without getting tired and sleeps well again too. She first didn’t tell anyone in the village, but people knew because in the beginning she had to go every Friday to Balaka hospital to be informed about how to take care of her self.

There she was also prepared that people would be talking and laughing about her but she should just leave them, not take notice. She had to take a witness the first time who had to answer some questions too. Her mother (Ayami) said she couldn’t manage to go to Balaka, so Jeneti asked Elube. Gertrude commented later that “Elube went with her to hospital but didn’t think of getting tested herself”, how do you know she didn’t get tested, I asked, but filled in myself that if she had, she would probably look healthier, less weak and thin - and gossips about it would surely have spread. Jeneti says that although in beginning people outside her family (who didn’t have a problem with her status) talked and laughed about her behind her back, by now everybody talks to her again, come to chat with her. People laugh, but they don’t know whether they themselves will get cancer or TB, she said. Says that people laugh and gossip just as much about patients with cancer or TB as people with HIV. Laugh until they go to the hospital to get tested themselves for anything. Says she told her previous husband, but he didn’t say anything, thinks it is better for her not to marry again, because then she will have to give birth to many children and she will just be spreading the virus. I told her that that need not to be the case, she answered that she heard in the hospital that there are indeed many ways to prevent, “but maybe her husband would not allow her.

Jeneti grow cotton, now wants to hear about the prices offered at the places around us before
selling. With the money she finds she will first have to pay back 2000mk that she borrowed during hunger season. Also wants to buy materials for iron sheet roof, probably will be able to construct next hunger season, when she’ll sell maize for higher price.

2586 Ayami plans to use cotton money for zovala (buying at Balaka = cheaper), zakudya, thumba la chimanga. Asked her about proper behaviour for men/husbands and women/wives, good man: takes care of orphans that he finds in the home, bad: one who doesn’t take care of his wife, and kuyendayenda. She says that in the past people did not move around as much as now. Men would marry only 1 or 2 wives basi; “gender” made this to change, in past a man could tell his wife that she had to do something and she would do it, and vice versa.

2587 Livia came to have her hair braided, Ada too, Kondwani and Ellesi to knit. Discussed that Grace’s boyfriend spent the night at her house, so apparently Grace decided to ignore her grandmother and marry him anyway.

2588 Kondwani said that there are a lot of people at the maize mill, not pounding their maize by hand but paying for it, anticipating that they will soon have a lot of money. She plans to join Amila tomorrow to Luwawadzi to buy sugarcane to sell.

2589 Amila’s husband came and they quarrelled, again he told her to stop BS, but she still refused, saying that she cannot stop and that he should go like she told him to.

2590 Kondwani told that the brother of her ex-husband had come into her bedroom last night, without knocking oid. Checking if she was there with a man, she told him off, saying that she is not married to his brother anymore, that she can marry someone else if she wants to, but that for now she is just with her kids as he can see.

2591 Husband of Julia has been drunk since yesterday, drinking kachasu with Levison.

2592 Ex-husband of Fatima commented to Innocent and Sofia that he now wants a baby boy (from Tinenenji) not another baby girl. Kondwani commented: “why can’t he just marry her?”

2593 Everybody is just waiting for the cotton buying to start, no sign from any buying anywhere yet. Innocent’s father went to [small crossroads market] in afternoon to check, Ellesi said that they usually add a bit of water to their cotton to increase the weight. Kondwani said she didn’t know, this is her first year to grow cotton.

2594 Tuesday June 2
In early morning - Gertrude and I were still in bed - GVH came to bring us several kg’s of the rice she harvested. On her way to bring the same amount to Kondwani, harvested 2, 5 bags and decided to share the half bag among friends and relatives.

Rosemary still harvesting cotton in GVH’s field, now reached behind our toilet.

Chenawe indeed brought one of her orphaned grandchildren after her son died, but the child was just crying and crying, wanting to go back to home village. After some days t let her go Chenawe back, couldn’t manage.

When Gertrude had to stop secondary school because the one who paid died, her aunt argued that she better move to town. If she would stay in village and work the field others would say: you see, there is no benefit to going to school, so to set good example for others, she decided to take Gertrude to Lilongwe. Other cousins were encouraged to continue school by letting them spend their holidays with her in town.

On Gertrude’s field in Dedza her mother and sister harvested 4 bags of Irish potatoes. Gertrude paid 1000 for ganyu and 500 for fertilizer which mother bought at market. Some people sell subsidized fertilizer in small quantities, e.g 1kg for 100 or even 200mk, lot of profit!.

Chikondi went to pay condolences to a friend (hadn’t had time to go to funeral) and brought a basin of ufa.

GVH says maize price now at 2000mk per 50kg. Gertrude expects that as soon as cotton selling starts, price will go up to 2500mk because sellers know that people have money now.

Elube explained that today at 2pm there will be a meeting at [small crossroads market] for all the cotton buyers. The problem is that Bingu told the companies that their price should be at least 75mk/kg, but they are not willing to pay more than 60 or 65mk/kg.

Daughter-in-law of GVH called Gertrude to tell GVH that she has arrived in SA now.

Eveles says nice but collapsed house was built by son [Bicycle maker], he made the bricks himself and built the structure. Was apparently able to buy cement and paint, all looks very professional. All his 6 children were born in that house, some time ago he tried to make it habitable again by putting on grass roof, but was destroyed by winds. The structure where he keeps his bicycle parts and equipment in (and a mat with blankets, I saw when putting back pump) was also beautiful in past, can still see. “AND SHOE MANUFACTURE”, but very damaged, run
down, and with grass roof.

Boris came to complain that he has been the one filling in the HH notebook for Evelin [low self esteem, afraid she won't be able to live up to my expectations? Like [small crossroads market] woman we interviewed, had gedacht dat ze mijn vragen niet zou kunnen beantwoorden, maar viel haar achteraf alleszins mee], she had promised him some money for it but up to now only gave him 500. yesterday we told her to add the money (8000) that I gave her and how she spent it. He found out about the money (may be she told him to add? Would be quite stupid), and demanded more but she refused. Now he came to ask money from us for his work, but asked us not to tell Evelin because then there would be more fighting. We will just tell her to stop as of now, sometimes she told him how she had spent the money, other days she just told him to just write usual things. This explans why there was so much mention of body lotion, haha, Gertrude now says that Evelin begged Gertrude to help her writing, and they would share the money. Comparing Evelin’s signature on the receipt shows that indeed someone else wrote her HH book. In beginning still her own handwriting, switches March 5. Signatures of other women do resemble the handwriting in their books. Gertrude went to tell Evelin we don’t need more, and get the books back, but Boris had already said that he has the newest notebook and indeed Evelin said she would bring it posachedwa, now cooking (replacing plates without really doing anything). Gertrude sat down and said she’d wait, no please please I want to write about today, will bring it, really. And indeed soon she came to bring it, neatly filled up today by Boris including the 8000 I gave her.

Suset came to say that they will meet with “alangizi akulu” from Rural Finance tomorrow at [small crossroads market]. Didn’t find us at home so asked Jasmine to give us message. Jasmine said “at 9am”, at the same time pointing at the height of the sun around 9am.

Asked woman growing ICRISAT g/nuts and pigeon peasa about these new varieties: she says she likes them. Both higher yielding than the local variety, pigeon pea also early maturing. She expects to be eating the peas that now dry on the plants beginning of August (eating of fresh nandolo already started) while local variety and of August. Has to give back 35kg of g/nuts, Mr Chikombo will come to check if it’s really 35kg and then he will give it to chief who will keep till planting season and distribute to people (hm, I wonder if she will indeed). The rest she intends to eat and sell, harvested almost 5 bags, quite some people have already come to buy some of her g/nuts, but she told them to wait, first wants to repay ICRISAT. No-one of ICRISAT ever came, although they had promised, Mr Chikombo came once, then told her that the yield was not optimal because a lot of sun when she planted (= too little rain). She will plant again next year, hoping harvest will be even better. Did not grow local variety this year, will sell for same price as local variety = 2500/50kg. Especially fish vendors from Mangochi turn-off will be buying, to sell else where for higher price. She thinks they will tell buyers that it is a new, higher yielding variety, because they sell to farmers. The pigeon peas she just received, will not have to pay back, thinks she just received those to plant at the ridges. Will not sell much of it but keep till hunger season, otherwise she will go hungry then. Usually eat in
October, helps them, with dried cassava.

At [nearest tradingcenter] found little going on, no official cotton buyer. At hospital checked the birth register, in last 17 months peak was in August and September, almost double as much as Feb to July. Hence 9 months after hunger season, with smaller peak January this year, but in Feb number of births drops quite dramatically, strange. Seems that beginning of cotton selling or even just before many babies are made.

At [Bicycle maker]’s closed shop a poster was hung saying that “if you choose to stop taking ARVs you reduce the days of your life. Don’t be cheated continue taking ARVs as you were told by doctor”. With picture of a village woman sitting on a mat taking medication, with lichero with masamba next to her. Eveles didn’t know why it was hanging there, nobody else at home. She had wanted to work on the field (harvesting mawere) but since no-one else would watch the house she decided to stay. Was just sitting, watching ahead, on her head a piece of mosquitonet, also around her waist. Wasn’t using the mosquitonet anyway, so had decided to make it useful.

In morning made pictures of Jeneti in 2 different nice outfits, one with Ellesi. Also Lovely wanted another picture, for her husband, together with Ellesi, I told them to squat down so that I’d have a dark background (grass fence) but Lovely wouldn’t: I'm older than Ellesi, so has to be higher than her. Daughter of Lovely had a beaded collar around waist, just for decoration, said Lovely, to show that it is a girl. Just like holes in ears with us may be? Some women are told to put on something like that by their husbands, who say they like it. Gertrude pointed at some kind of beaded collar around another girl's neck and waist, same kind of decoration.

My bike chain kept falling if on trip to [nearest tradingcenter], but [Bicycle maker] not at home. Left bike with husband of Jasmine, she sat in kitchen, children outside on kitchen doorstep, eating fresh boiled nandolo. Husband at doorstep of his small house, potato in hand, bowl of nandolo (in peel) next to him. He will fix the bike, he said, Jasmine give me plate of nandolo, In morning I saw daughter of Amila eat a raw sweet potato. Gertrude thinks some not eating nsima because tired of nandolo for ndiwo, or will eat nsima around 2-3 pm.

Yesterday on our way to [small crossroads market] saw family Musitafa with water buckets (twice), so they also fetch water from other place.

Ada and Hilda were eating potato and pumpkin. Sofia was eating pumpkin, Haliday and kids were eating nsima with chicken. Pamela was cooking nsima together with Evelin. Gertrude heard that she had taken her maize to Ntcheu, may be therefore cooking with Evelin?
Many people came for a picture, Esnart said I heard you are taking pictures again and decided to come myself too, because can’t afford 50-60mk for a picture. When Amila came Gertrude asked about the situation with her husband, she had asked him to dig a toilet and build a bafa because it is uncomfortable to have to beg others to make use of theirs and she can’t afford 500 to have somebody do it for her. But he refused, saying she is now doing BS, finds her own money, even demanded her to buy him matemba because tired of masamba. He called her a prostitute, suggested that she wants to get back to her ex-husband, that he was probably the one who encouraged her to do BS.

Most people eating either nandolo for ndiwo, or buy masamba from vendors passing by (10-15mk) or matemba.

Boris came to thank us that we didn’t tell on him to Evelin [Gertrude said not to openly confront her], but requested some money for his work, haha! Told him that this is not our problem, we have stopped paying Evelin now because she is cheating, the material is almost useless (but interesting that and how she cheated, plus still informative about usual forms of income and expenditure), he should fight it out with Evelin if he wants some money for his work. He accepted, smelled drunken with kachasu, said Gertrude surprised.

JPhingi gave her breast to her (granddaughter) Hana (child’s mother Livia to Balaka for tailoring).

June 3

June 3: Mudzi B - [small crossroads market] - Balaka - Lilongwe

Sofia came for some pictures with me, later Phingi came to be photographed picking cotton. Complained about the low prices that are big offered for cotton - exploitation indeed! When I later told Harry and other colleagues at ICRISAT office they disapproved of low prices, comparing the 35 offered with the 75 Bingu had requested to be offered. “And if you think of the production costs of cotton…” Harry Msere said. Jasmine said she better only grow maize next year. The same was later that day said by woman of tea room in [small crossroads market]. Jasmine now has plans to buy a cellphone with her cotton money, and some iron sheets (malata) (and next year more to have enough for the whole roof), and clothes and maize.

Went with Innocent and Livia to Rural Finance meeting at [small crossroads market] on bike. Jasmine and Innocent apply for a loan together, but Innocent is the one actually going through all the hassle to get the loan. But apparently will have to pay off part of it too, because she later said to Gertrude that her new boyfriend will come in handy when paying of the new loan they are getting. Says she intends - and possibly seriously thinks so now - to buy dried fish at the lake and sell at Liwonde turnoff. When we were waiting at [small crossroads market] to see whether the alangizi from RF would indeed come (when we arrived and asked woman of tea room where meeting would be about him, she said she wasn’t sure whether he would really come, someone (who has bike taxi and wants loan too) went to check, later heard through
phone that alangizi was indeed on his way). Had said to meet at 9, but only arrived at 10. Most others also arrived way after 9 - including us bcz of flat tire which we pumped at husband of Magda. Suset was nicely dressed in skirt and blouse (2nd hand) and 1 oorbel. Innocent asked her where she got skirt, she did not elaborately answer. Both girls had the same small hand purse, which Innocent had bought on behalf of Suset in Balaka for 100MK, and then decided to buy herself the exact same one. Innocent was envisioning taking a cellphone from the purse, and held the imaginary phone against her ear, giggling with the prospect - possibly with cotton money.

Gertrude asked Livia about new boyfriend, Livia first denied. Gertrude then cheated her saying that she had seen Livia in Balaka chatting with a boy (but actually had heard through Sofia). Livia then admitted, explaining that mother had told her not to marry the rasta, because he smokes etc, “won’t help you.” Then she went to buy a new chitenje in town, but only could pay 300, promising seller she’d come with remaining 200 later. She says he then proposed to instead be his girlfriend. She agreed “so that she has someone to help her pay back the new RF loan” she justified to Gertrude. Gertrude asked why Livia just accepts all proposals from all men? “iii, auntie Getu…” Livia just laughed.

Women gossiped (who?) that Ellesi’s proposer from SA had come again, “but empty-handed, didn’t even bring her anything from SA!” Also said disapprovingly that he is much older than she, “even older than my husband” Pamela remarked. Mother is said to have responded very happy again to fact that man showed up after all, calling him her son-in-law. On our way to Balaka we met Ellesi (so again not to school today) and boy (not old!) walking. Gertrude concludes that she must definitely have accepted his proposal, otherwise you don’t escort someone all the way to Balaka on foot. Gertrude also noticed that Ellesi was wearing a new chitenje and hand bag (“but the blouse I knew already”), so boy probably did not come empty-handed at all.

Still at Kima’s house (to talk to Suset and have my tire pumped up) a young woman greeted us: mollig, in tight jeans, putting on a lot of make up. Young sister of Suset who lives in town, and “just came by to greet relatives in vlg.” Innocent said that the girl asked her before and now to join her to town. Innocent was pregnant the first time, so couldn’t, and this time declined. When I asked why she said there is no benefit to go to town. I laughed and said there clearly is a benefit, look at the girl, she is fat, has new clothes, cellphone, even make up! But Innocent said she is rather cheated while staying at home with parents than move around with men in town. I later asked Gertrude whether she thinks people look up or down to such a girl who is clearly doing well, but through disapprovable behavior. Difficult to answer, but eventually said that people will definitely think she is a prostitute, because “they know her behavior” (the jeans, make up etc, maybe used to move around with many boys when still in vlg too).

Chatting at tea room, waiting for alangizi to show up (again complaining about cotton prices, better just plant maize next year) a man passed by with 2 others carrying some katundu for him. Adult daughter of owner of tea room (owner lives somewhere else) told mother that the man had come week ago to find a wife, had proposed someone but her parents had refused. He was now on his way to the parents of another girl.

When the alangizi arrived on motorbike we all sat down in shade behind tea room. Alangizi and very old man (chief [small crossroads market]) sat down in small bench, others on or around bamboo mat. 6 women, 3 men (besides chief, who was just there for formality, not to get loan) who wanted to apply for loan. Alangizi first asked the name of the new club (Ti-something-e) and looked at the
torn out notebook page that secretary Suset handed over to him, with the names of the trencher, chair etc and the 10 members, including nr of people that were not there (Teleza, husband of Elube, Mr Tulipesi) asked each one of them about the kind of BS they are doing and how big a loan they would like to get: First woman makes mandasi (how many bags of flower do you use per week, where do you sell, how big is profit); next sells beans and rice; owner of tea room (incl selling of scones - which indeed were sold quite a lot while we where there, a 14MK); Suset mowa and plans to buy second hand clothes at Balaka, selling at [large commercial estate] secondary school; Livia selling fish at lake to sell at Liwonde turn off; Innocent sell rice; 1 man tailor (kusoka ndi machine); another sells cooking oil and paraffin; 1 man has bike taxi (says he makes 800-1000MK per day (?) & wants to either go around villages to buy maize at cheap price, or otherwise buy another bike and employ a cyclist. The loans they hoped to get ranged from 10.000 to 30.000MK. Livia had said: 10.000 or 20.000. What is it, 10 or 20? the alangizi replied. 20.000, mumbled Livia. Overall I felt the loan appliers seemed quite comfortable/confident to talk about their BS and loan wishes. I wonder though how much they indeed intend to plan the loan just for BS, like Suset who had earlier said to us she wants to build a kitchen with it. The alangizi asked whether they had loans before, half of them had received loans from CUMO before. He asked each one whether they had already fully repaid that loan, which they all confirmed. He then explained about the RF rules: first time borrowers can get a loan from 20.000 up to 50.000, rente is 33%. Second time borrowers can get 50.000-100.000MK, rente 32%. Continuing to lowest possible rent 30%. No matter the size of your loan, pay back takes place monthly over period of 1 year. But before getting loan, borrowers have to come up with a part of the pay back money already. If one wants to borrow 20.000, must first bring RF 4/5000 MK. This money is then taking of the total amount to be paid back, which is 26.600MK, so that the monthly pay back amount is around 22.000 divided by 12. Then there is also an insurance which the borrowers have to pay, which amounts to 116MK if one takes a 20.000MK loan. Group has to make its own set off rules (like paying fine when not attending meeting etc) and show them to alangizi. But I don’t see why the borrowers have to form a group (10- 15 members should be size of group), because after individually having repaid a loan one can get a new one - if Gertrude understood well. The man had started out by saying that the members all have to know each other, know where they all live and know what kind of assets each one has, eg a goat, so that they can take these items in case someone is not able to pay back. The members first have to follow a course, which should take app 2-3 weeks, twice a week 1,5 hours. After this course a supervisor of the alangizi will come to ask the members some questions to test their understanding of the course. If they pass, they’ll get the loan, otherwise more info meetings first (CUMO did not have this approach, said Gertrude - but should check!). The group (but especially chief) decided together that they will meet with alangizi on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 7.30AM. One of the men then said streng that they should all really be there at 7.30, not like today, agree to meet at 9, then not arrive till 10. After all the explaining and calculating of examples (with big calculator) the chief urged the alangizi to come with the money quickly so that these people can make use of the cotton selling and thus the lot of money going around, adding that fortunately this group has many young women who can easily find the start up money by going to Balaka and find some men to give them the money (!). People laughed and clapped at his remarks.

When Gertrude read Concern Universal’s Energy Saving Project doc she was surprised that Malawi was only 13th poorest country in world (indeed she earlier could only think of limited nr of countries in world).
Man chatted with Gertrude in minibus to Lilongwe, showing off about his plans to build own house, was at college, have lot of money, now working at Escom, invited to work at Botswana, playing with “nice cellphone with camera”. Eventually asked her number, she wrote down indeed, but cheated, gave wrong number. But not refusing...

Jasmine asked Gertrude what cotton is used for. To make clothes, Gertrude answered.

Yesterday at the meeting at [small crossroads market] one man said he will be paying 30mk per kg, but then he was thrown stones at, and he ran away. That was end of the meeting, it’s good to stop growing cotton now, we expected to get a lot of money, but they just cheated us, Jasmine complained.

June 10, Wednesday

After lowering their cell phone prices to 1500mk, zain got 2000.000 more subscribers - may be that’s why their network has so mainly problems now, (Monja said).

Gertrude often breaths as if she is near the fire.

Amila said her husband is now making a toilet and bafa.

Hoped to attend Adult school at Mudzi A, but Ms Ntawanga said it is everyday except Wednesdays, at African Continent Church near Serena.

Mr Ntawanga said that he had gone to the FIDP office in Balaka and now received 6 bags of cement for the floors of 4 kholas in Mudzi A. The iron sheets will still come, but the villagers have to provide trees and nails, “because they received goats to be able to buy these kind of little thing”. He has quite many goats, including young ones, between 7 and 10. About cotton, he said he went to ask and had been explained that last year cotton was taxed (msonkho) 10%, this year it is 17.5%. Therefore companies refuse to pay as much as last year, otherwise there will be no benefit for them. Now a lot of quarrelling about the price, probably farmers will end up selling for 20 or even 15mk/kg, Mr Ntawanga says pessimistically.

Jasmine had said that by this time last year, they had already spent all their cotton money. Sell and go to Balaka immediately to spend, within 2-3 days all the money is gone. At [large commercial estate] 40mk was offered justifying that they would not make much profit otherwise, selling elsewhere for 70mk. But now prices go down everywhere, Mr Ntawanga says, as the rumor spreads that the companies may not pay more than 20mk/kg. Gov advises that maize prices should go up to 50mk/kg.
Son of Hamra is really serious about building his house. Burnt and started building yesterday, all walls outside are already half way up! Will make 3 rooms: 1 to sit in, 1 for sleeping, 1 to keep stuff. Wants to finish quickly so that he can start clearing his land [wow, he is serious! Just like Victoria and Gertrude say about men & BS. What a difference with e.g. Livia, who is just awaiting gifts from lovers, which she then also partly spends on snacks], using clay between the bricks. Helped by his younger brother, husband of Filimona.

Door of Sofia’s house moved to Innocent’s new house by son of Dora.

Jasmine says people come to her for traditional medicine and sometimes it helps them. She doesn’t know whether people may say she is a witch. Clearly bit shocked by question, difference between sing’anga and mfiti (Gertrude used mfiti): mfiti tries to kill people while sing’anga tries to undo the mfiti’s spell, but she is not sing’anga, never went far to learn for it. Just got ill herself and was cured by sing’anga and asked her curer to teach her a bit about the trees and plants. But real sing’anga goes far to learn and fetch the traditional medicines.

Her brother had come to sell some traditional medicines around here, also went to bring some to Jasmine’s son (husband of Sofia) in Balaka. He told Gertrude he has medicines for getting employed, proposed, more customers in BS, she didn’t see anybody from here buy. Jasmine commented on Vanessa not using mud stove: Anangofuna- just decided not to use it. Jasmine did not receive but says she wants to try making one herself.

Brother of Kondwani is still here, but will discuss about marriage/divorce today, Gertrude heard at borehole.

Poster against AIDS in tearoom [small crossroads market] was received during meeting held at [small crossroads market] and hung just for decoration.

Livia said giggling that she wants Gertrude to braid her hair today, because she’ll be going to Balaka mawa [tomorrow].

I asked husband of Naima whether girls sometimes propose to men. Ah often, he answered, for example himself, 2 women asked him why he wasn’t proposing to them, why he just stayed at home with his wife. But he replied he doesn’t want them, and that it’s not good to propose other women when married. Koma zikuchitika [but it happens], but not all girls, only some. Son of Elube confirmed: zoona [true]….

Boys coming to see the pictures I had printed discussed that tomorrow at [large commercial estate] and [small crossroads market] 78 or 80mk/kg will be offered for cotton. One boy wanted the picture of Amila and him, all
laughed because Amila has eyes closed “as if he is drunk of kachasu!” and they looked like a couple. Boy is young brother of Kingsley, Kingsley also came to greet, had the 2 sons of Sofia on back of his bike for fun.

2647 Evelin came to have hair braided, so far no hard feelings about stopping with HH book, it seems.

2648 Women borrowing money from Esnart: Gertrude says “it was during njala, so Amila eg used the money to buy food. Jasmine probably used for the zigumu BS she then had.

2649 Evelin does not receive support from her relative in SA.

2650 Pamela’s brother once sent her money for fertilizer, after hearing about her having been caught red-handed with husband of Gertrude, Venesi’s son says he will not support her, only mother and girlfriend.

2651 Livia came to flash boyfriend and laughed a lot with Gertrude about brother of Jasmine who has been staying with Jasmine for some days now after arranging the ceremony at J. village for Innocent’s deceased sister. He comes from Mangochi and has been selling traditional medicine eg yesterday at Balaka. He sent Jasmine to propose to chief Mudzi B who accepted immediately. He then went to chat with her after coming back from Balaka, and gave 200mk. She was happy and said that it is cold these days, needs a warm top… Livia also said that chief Mudzi B may have accepted after seeing that he has a nice bike and nice clothes, thinking he has a lot of money. He plans to go to Balaka tomorrow together with Innocent to buy chief Mudzi B a packet of sugar, some ndiwo and a warm top. He says he wants to put her up in a house in Balaka, where he can be doing BS and spend several weeks with his wife in Mangochi and other weeks with this new wife in Balaka. He likes fact that he will have two wives from now on. Livia commented that chief Mudzi B just accepts all offers she gets, but when pregnant is soon left by all those men.

2652 Livia flashed boyfriend in Balaka (china shop) as he requested but he didn’t call back. If he will, she asked Gertrude to tell him she’ll come at 9 am tomorrow. She is a bit scared though, because both this one and the chitenje seller stay at the same neighbourhood in Balaka (near railway crossing, near ADMARC). This boy really urged her to come, has prepared something for her, his brother is coming too.

2653 Livia is confused about the 2 families intertwining now: brother of Jasmine is (indirectly) related to Sofia (wife of his nephew) and now wants to marry someone who is (indirectly) related to Sofia too (because chief Mudzi B is related to GVH: GVH’s elder sister gave birth to chief Mudzi B). Livia doesn’t know how this will work out, whether it can be accepted.
Just like upset about GVH in relationship with relative of daughter-in-law.

Often “uncle” and “achimwene” are used both to refer to same relative (both Boris and Kondwani about the old man who divorced and temporarily moved in with her).

Aisha said she had been away when “I was making pictures again”. Amila had also said she heard “I was making pictures again” and therefore came to have one taken too. This rumour probably started when I went to take picture of Jeneti.

When Gertrude went to pick her bike at the DADO’s office in Balaka somebody was just on his way out with her bike at 4.30- knocking off. Felt ashamed and said he just wanted to buy something at the market. Her pedal was broken off again, “sorry sorry”, the man said, “it happened when I just went to the market to buy something.

Thursday June 11

Livia came and told Gertrude that mother was angry with her for not wanting to teach her how to operate a cell phone, accusing Livia of being jealousy with Phingi’s phone. Livia says she only sent mother to Gertrude because she doesn’t know very well herself. Then her mother told her to take Hana with her to Balaka today, but boyfriend doesn’t know she has children. Asked Talina to watch Hana today, but she refused, now Livia will try to have a friend of her in Balaka take care of the child.

Daughter of Alma has been going to SA last month to buy items for sale in Malawi. Went together with a friend who did same BS, that woman found a boyfriend in SA who bought her some of the items she sold in Malawi. She then divorced her husband in Malawi, because the boyfriend could provide her with the things she needed and wanted. Alma’s daughter wanted to follow her friend’s example, but Alma convinced her to stay with her husband, who had been with her for quite some years now. Kondwani, Sofia and another woman from Mudzi B told Gertrude this story. Women commented that they don’t understand why Alma’s daughter would divorce, because they have a nice house and a car, she just looks theway she looks because of him, she has everything she could want…

GVH came to bring a lot of thobwa, on her way to field to get some nandolo for ndiwo. She looks fatter, Gertrude says: may be she went for blood testing, just like her son (had recently bought milk for him, “because he is on ARV’s now,” said Gertrude. Wants him to get strong, he is indeed getting better now).
I asked why Emra was ordered to pay a chicken and 5mk: because of sleeping with Ndaba. But why did Pamela and Tinenenji not have to pay similar fines after being caught red-handed? Pamela because she paid to marry the man, and about Tinenenji no official complaint was made. But GVH will go there to demand either money or a chicken for being pregnant without husband, also to Goldy, because they set a bad example. The DC had called all chiefs to [small crossroads market] to instruct them that impregnating without marrying should be punished by paying 1000mk. The man should pay, but if it is unclear who did it, the woman will have to pay. If not, and the child dies then a grave will not be dug until the penalty is paid. Chief Mudzi B should be the one to find out from pregnant women like Tinenenji and Goldy who is the owner of the child and then go to him to get the money.

With Tinenenji it is not necessary to ask about impregnater, because they were caught red-handed, but for Goldy, chief Mudzi B should have brought together the parents of Goldy and Levison and find out the truth about the matter, but because chief Mudzi B is friends with both parents, she just leaves it. Now GVH will have to do it.

Gertrude thinks it is true that GVH’s son at J. village is HIV positive, because: GVH says he is getting strong again now, and Sofia said that he used to have many girlfriends and wives.

Son of Sofia came along with GVH and felt very lucky when he found two left behind potatoes in one of our ridges where we had already harvested.

Gertrude saw ex-husband of Gettie walk from Mudzi B towards [tiny crossroads market] yesterday morning, coming back around lunch time, leaving again around 4pm. Sofia saw Gettie at her home village when passing by on way to a funeral. Man told Sofia he is not working now, ashamed, will start in August again, when third term starts.

Gertrude encouraged many women, especially Innocent and Kondwani but also others, to knit shoes, chipewa, jerseys etc and give to Gertrude because people come here to the house to buy. But no-one ever come to sell something [low self esteem?]. Innocent often said she was making something for sale, but later said she had been joking. Chisoni borrowed 4 balls of thread from Gertrude to make a poncho for sale. Came to ask what price to ask, Gertrude advised her to ask 600mk. Chisoni wanted to sell for more, make more profit. But Gertrude told her no-one will buy, can only make big profit when making and selling many poncho’s.

Innocent is now doubting to take the Rural Finance loan, fearing that she won’t be able to pay back during hunger season when people will be eating just relish even without tomatoes, not even having 10mk for fish. Therefore asked at RF meeting whether they also
have to pay back during the months when people are working in the field. Alangizi said yes, Innocent thinks of her mother, who faced problems paying back the CUMO loan, leading her to wonder whether they will not struggle this time too. Even Jasmine herself was doubting whether she should continue, may be better start a BS with the money she finds after selling cotton, expecting app 10,000mk. said: ndikuopa. Gertrude encouraged them to take the loan, saying 2000mk is not much to have to pay back each month, can manage if they are serious, go to all the market days.

People think there will be more suffering in the coming hunger season, because many grow a lot of cotton, thinking that they will buy extra maize with their cotton money. Many also started selling their maize right after harvest, rationalizing that they will buy extra maize after selling their cotton. GVH says cotton price will be 70mk/kg, but unclear when the buying will start, sub- TA [small crossroads market] has called for a chiefs meeting tomorrow about the cotton buying.

Married son of GVH who is now in SA (married at Ch. village, with woman who does tailoring course with Livia) came to Mudzi B one day to greet people. Venesi then invited him to go to her field with her so she could give him some mango’s. Kondwani told Gertrude, “that’s the way they do in order to attract men”). Pamela had even gone to his house to bring plate of mango’s and chat (wife of man angry). “while there are mango trees everywhere!” said Kondwani.

On May 18 Innocent grinded 100kg of maize, and yesterday went again with 35kg. must be eating a lot! Only brought a plate of ufa to the ceremony at J. village. Indeed eat nsima at any time of the day they like, and make a lot of thobwa these days. Are only with 3 adults, 1 big and 2 small children. While Elube has many children to feed but only went to chigayo with 1 bag some weeks ago. Gertrude doesn’t think Jasmine and fam spend their ufa in other way, just eat and drink a lot.

Chisoni passed by with nandolo from her field, saying she was just begging others from the ndiwo they cooked, so decided to go get some ndiwo herself now - probably sharing too? [Chisoni] Asked Gertrude to explain her some features of her new phone, sent from SA (only language options: English, French and Romana). Even the 1500mk zain phone only has English and French, no chichewa. Chisoni said Jeneti went with Lovely and Blessings to check where Ellesi is staying at Bazale before they will go to Lilongwe next week. He makes a living by travelling to SA to buy itewsms and selling them to Malawi.

GVH was shelling nandolo - local variety. Already ate fresh hybrid nandolo earlier, now drying on the plant. Hybrid nandolo she received from concern universal: planted some, ate the rest. High yielding and early maturing, good variety. But next year will still plant
half local, half hybrid. Taste is a bit different and needs to continue what ancestors were
doing. Her children must know the crops that their own ancestors grew, although nothing
bad will happen if they stop growing local variety. Shelled a big full basin, not to keep,
just for ndiwo, will send you some too, she said. This new variety is similar to the one
ICRISAT distributed, she answers, some chiefs received too, but not her.

Vanessa explained that she was 1 of 16 women in 3 villages that received a mud stove
from concern universal. All chiefs received, and the others were selected through a
firewood collection contest. But were told that you need 3 relatively big sticks of firewood
for the mud stove, while she usually, just finds small twigs, therefore cooks more often on
the usual stones. Buit does like the mud stove, because after cooking on it, it stays warm
so she can heat water on it without making new fire. There were indeed some ashes in the
mud stove, it does look used, although at the moment she had a pot of water on the 3
stones-fire with indeed mostly small twigs).

I asked chief Mudzi B about the marriage advising (kulangiza): ankhoswe of man and
woman plus chief of village and bride + groom gather and advise for only a few minutes
on the proper behaviour for man and woman. That they should respect each other mainly,
first woman is advised that she has to respect her husband, listen to what he orders, wash
his cloths, give him water for washing body, cook well, kneel down when addressing him,
don’t be rude (osachita mwano, kuwalemekeza abambo, azimvera lamulo la bamboo,
kuwachapira, kuika madzi osamba kubafa akamapita kunchito, kuphika bwino, kusita
(ironing, “even if he is not working,” she added), kugwada osati kuima (saying kneeled
down, tha: “bamboo ndaika madzi/chakudya”). Then the man is advised to take care of his
wife if she is ill (if he loves her he puts madzi osamba for her own fire + in bafa, cooks for
her, washes her clothes in case she doesn’t get better), after quarrelling he should apologize
or buy her something eg clothes to make her happy (akadwala aziwonetsa chikondi,
akalakwa azinena pepani kapena kugula chovala kumutsangalatsa). After this they all go
to GVH who then says more or less the same things, adding that “this man did not come by
car or bicycle but by foot. You choose yourself to accept his offer anyway. Later when
either of you changes behaviour, once you get more things, you can remind each other of
how you started off together without anything,”: mwamuona mwamunayo wabwera
pagalimoto kapena panjinga? Ayi! Wamukonda wekha! (you loved him yourself) you can
ask your husband angrily later: unali ndani? And he may answer: ndinali ovutika, tapeza
zinthu limodzi. (I was poor, we found all these things together).

Why do many people not follow the advised proper behaviour, I asked, they don’t
apologize to each other, have different hearts (osamva pepani wamnzako, mitima
ndiyosiyana), they don’t sit together to discuss, are stubborn/unforgiving (kusakhal
pamodzi kukambirana, osagonjerana). I had to push, reemphasize that things are different
where I come from, chief first kept saying that men and women are advised the same
things (respect each other), only when I asked if men is told to bring madzi osamba for
wife did she and Gertrude laugh.

Jasmine came to ask how to add units to cellphone, Gertrude was fetching water, so I tried to explain. She then went on to chigayo, but Innocent went yesterday too, I asked. Innocent went with 1.5 tin, now I am going with 1.5 tin too so well have 3 tins of ufa which will last us 6 weeks, said Jasmine. Gertrude doesn’t belief it will last them so long.

At [small crossroads market] clothes and ziteje sellers, matemba, shoes, restaurant, tomatoes, goat meat, chips, kanyenya, mat, bananas. But not many people at all.

Mr Chikombo was there, he said that government and cotton companies are still discussing. Gov wants companies to pay at least 70mk/kg; companies want the gov to lower taxes so that they can make some profits, otherwise cannot pay more than 30-35mk/kg. the Chinese are new buyers on the market, they are willing to pay, says Mr Chikombo, but are in cotton buying association, one cannot start before others. They were supposed ly the ones who last year said they will pay 150mk/kg this year, but Mr Chikombo doubts whether this was hard promise, “people talk a lot” some years ago few people were growing cotton anymore, because of lowering prices. We had to campaign to get them back to growing cotton, said Mr Chikombo.

But later says that people should actually focus on growing food crops rather than cash crops. From his experience nobody keeps any of the cotton money he/she receives, buy clothes, soap, bicycle, ironsheets. Last year many good houses were built after selling cotton. Last year buying started in April already (explaining the birth peak in Dec/Jan). nobody can keep some of the money till hunger season because the money is just too little: average of 15.000mk, with maximum 30.000mk.

Mr Chikombo has been working here since 1996, by that time there were not any projects (he mentions as change that he has seen throughout those 13 years). Due to his presence there are now more projects coming. At Mudzi A it is FIDP and concern universal (but are fighting because both work on agroforestry, FIDP was there first and wants CU to pull back, afraid that their mutual donor - the EU - will find out that they duplicate, but CU paid villagers 200mk/day to plant the trees, so people are more happy with the CU tree project because of this benefit), at Mudzi B only concern. ICRISAT is at J. village, K. village and Ch. village. why is there still poverty and njala, what do projects do wrong, I asked. Don’t focus enough on food security, should be much more on intensifying, manure for example, but they’ve learned how to make manure, but find it too much work, I said. Hmm, yes, he laughed, it is labour intensive indeed, and benefit is not directly visible, takes some years. But he is of course agriculturally biased. Nobody has any idea when the cotton companies and the gov will break this impasse. The longer one keeps cotton the lighter the weight, but elsewise no problems, can’t go bad.
At 3pm went to church near Serena but found other meeting going on there. Serena said they usually meet at her place in such a case, but today probably not since the teacher had not come yet, while usually she had arrived by that hour. On our way back to main path found Mrs Ntawanga, Chikondi and Julia and young sister of Chikondi with some ragged notebooks and pens. Had they smelled that I was going to see their adult school attendance? I did ask Mrs Ntawanga about it yesterday, and she saw us pass on bike, just before 3pm. She started to make excuses, saying that they don’t have any pens, so have to wait for children to come home from school, therefore delayed (lower standards knock off before 1.30pm, but std 8 has afternoon classes till 3 or 4 pm to prepare for examinations). Coming back from [small crossroads market] we found Serena and Aisha with the other women, on a mat, children playing around them.

In front a nice and shiny blackboard with the date and “masamu” (sums): 15 divided by 5, 9 divided by 3, 14 divided by 7 etc. the women had copied them in their notebooks and made them, then having them checked by Victoria who sat to side. Chikondi was first to finish, then others had problems, Mrs Ntawanga was secretly helped by her younger daughter, Aisha and Serena took longest, Aisha didn’t understand that 14 divided by 7 is not 7. when everybody had finished Julia gave 5 multiplication sums: 2x2, 2x6, 2x7, 2x8, 2x9. as example she did 2x5, drawing 5 couples of 2 lines and then counting all the lines. Young daughter of Mrs Ntawanga and Julia did all the sums like that: drawing many lines, either on back of notebook or on hand. After that the class was finished.

When we arrived for the 2nd time, Victoria said she had been delayed because she collected firewood for a certain ceremony in the church. Somebody suggested that they should pray to wrap up the meeting, but as they hadn’t prayed at the beginning either they decided just to say “God is great” and have it over with.

Victoria complained that only few women are participating although many can’t read and write, but are ashamed to come. Last week only 3 came, now at least 4, but still not many. Most just ask others to read for them when necessary.

She also complained about the cotton impasse, the cheating that the buying will start next Monday, each week. Chikondi said it’s dangerous to have all that cotton inside the house, it may burn when they take a burning stick inside by lack of matches. If the cotton catches fire, difficult to put it out.

Granddaughter of Eveles came to bring basin of rice, already cleaned from husk. Some people go to the chigayo for this, said Jasmine. Most keep it in the husks and only pound what they want to be eating.

Friday June 12 Mudzi B - Balaka - Mudzi B
Livia came in early morning, had indeed met with China shop boyfriend. Had been able to leave Hana with a friend who sells tomatoes at Balaka. She asked him money, saying that she needs 500mk to get a loan at Rural Finance. He didn’t give her anything, except his word that he will give her a cell phone which she can sell to find money. She said she just wants money from him, but he seems more serious, said again he wants to see her parents, but she didn’t give tel ur. Sofia came to greet too, and to thank very much for the help we had given to Kingsley (I gave him 2500mk for guarding at this house for the time I was in NL). He bought some clothes with it, she said. Clearly wanted to let us know that she knows about the money, but why?

Discussed yesterday with Gertrude that a goodbye party may not be much appreciated: it will involved a lot of work for the women, may cause quarells about who ate more and less meat, some people may even be ashamed to show up at all. Gertrude thought of several 40 day ceremonies, to which some didn’t want to go cook, not wanting everybody to look at them, and indeed gossips about who just came to eat (funeral of Thandizo), who ate meat while others just beans etc. and what I understood of 40 day ceremony of husband of GVH: men are eating, while women just busy fetching firewood, cooking and cleaning.

husband of Sofia had eventually called back yesterday. Gertrude told him about the door having been taken from her house, he just said to tell A that he will see what to do.

Ch. clinic closed since Tuesday because health officer had to go to Blantyre. I asked his wife at his house, said he was in town, by Monday clinic open again. Gertrude saw him sit in another village with some men and loud radio. He told her he had gone to Blantyre, just returned, had closed clinic for these days.

At Balaka DC was not in yet, were referred to a man with “rehabilitation” in title above his door, Mr Clif Thyanga, he did the big man act: bit offended that I have been doing research for 10 months without informing/involving him. And “what is the benefit for us?” On what basis did you select Mudzi B village? - interrogating me. told him I had only manoeuvred via the DADO, coming from an agricultural research institute. But cross-cutting issues are involved, he objected. I could get the old Balaka Socio-economic profile (2003) if I paid 1500mk, he didn’t want to give me the draft of the 2009 one, which should be out end of this month (jaja). About borehole (“is one really needed there?” put it in writing, that it’s really needed and that you are willing to assist with funds. Although hadn’t mentioned that last part) he estimated costs at 1.8000.000mk, because it involves lot of expertise and machinery that they have only few of. Referred me to the Water Department for better information, Mr Mapsele. We didn’t find him in his office (to Salima) but Mr Charles Mkwate (Water engineer) said it used to be about 1 million MK, but now some offer it for 850.000mk, including siting and drilling, the whole package. If I have the funds, they can
Continued to Balaka district hospital where we were easily referred to the maternity ward after telling at reception that we want to see birth register. There we were put aside because “busy”. After half an hour we knocked on door again, now could come in immediately and the woman who was later called away for woman in labour (in same room where we were looking through registers!) took time to look through all the registers with me lot more disorganised than [nearest trading center] hospital. All different books, only some months summaries gave total number of deliveries. She murmured/excused that she had heard of a survey that was going to take place but the one who knew more about it wasn’t in today. April 2008 could not be found, meanwhile the pregnant woman behind a curtain was puffing and suffering loudly. The nurse asked another who went to check: ndikubwera? No, nodded the other, not necessary yet and the woman in labour was left to suffer alone again. A bit later the nurse did go when I told her I had bothered her enough, never mind April 2008. I suspect much of the data is in correct, still a peak is clearest from July to September.

Mr Langwmale was at Catholic Women’s Org for a meeting on agroforestry, for government employees and CU field officers, since Tuesday till Friday. Mr Chikombo was at DADO’s office, may be for this meeting too. When I called, Langwmale came to CU office, I gave him doc’s back (ao baseline questionnaire), he bought copy of Balaka socio-ee profile, is really trying his best! Apologized for not having visited, was very busy but will come next week. I asked him about baseline data for Mudzi B, he said impossible to retrieve, all put together in computer. He had asked his boss but boss had said it’s a very big “book” (folder?) and analysis is not finalized yet (typical). But will inform me when it is (if ever).

Continued to Malawi cotton company near CU office. Were unloading seeds, the women overlooking the unloading of truck was officer incharge, Queen Chembonga. Also doesn’t know when buying can start. Today government is meeting with buyers again. She has to await instructions from bosses in Blantyre, people at [small crossroads market] are mainlymiddlemen who then sell to cotton company at Balaka. At DC the man had said that they (gov? companies?) are trying to avoid the humpy tobacco sellings repeating itself in the cotton selling.

Ate fried chicken and rice for 600 at Zembani Lodge (Lucius Banda’s place)

Found Rural Finance Office in same building as AEDC Bazale: MRFC = Malawi Rural Finance Company. At desk the mlangizi (Mr Chipembere) who had come to [small crossroads market] for meeting with potential borrowers group, also there his supervisor and another colleague. He only was employed 3 months ago. He has to do everything for all Balaka clients = finding new clients, training groups, going after payments. Is only employee at Balaka office,
First thing Mr Chipembere started to explain was that they have 4 types of loans: “personal loan” (for employees, recovery of loan is via salary, subtracted), Individual loan” for small and bigger (from 60,000mk, recovery of loan through sale of commodities. For loans less than 500,000 HH items like fridge or motor vehicle (depending on state and age) and especially land for loans bigger than 5000,000mk advance payment of 20% of total loan must be given compulsary. Insurance at 0.85% of total loan, in case client dies during 12 months in which loan should be repaid.

The insurance company pays MRFC the full loan amount back, MRFC takes the amount that the client still had to pay back, the rest goes to family of deceased. “group based loan” for groups of 5 to 9 members, also recovery through sale of commodities if loan is not paid back. Minimum loan 50,000, max 5000,000. have to enrol in 4 week training program to be taught about group dynamics, BS management, credit procedures, record keeping, MRFC’s conditions. Then supervisor goes to check if borrowers are well enough informed/educated, but I doubt now how serious these men take this. They sai they should be going every day for 4 weeks - intensive training - but go only once a week because of lack of man power and to save fuel etc.

Indeed Mr Chipembere said he unfortunately hadn’t been able to make it yesterday, and has a meeting next Tuesday, but will go on Wednesday or Thursday. First said he spends two days fulltime in the office: Monday and Tuesday, other 3 days in the field: finding new clients and chasing people who haven’t paid. Then supervisor interrupted, saying he is in office on Mondays and Fridays (not Tuesdays - to cover for that he is in office today).

When I asked what they do when monthly pay back is not made: “we warn client”. And then if he or she still doesn’t pay back?” then we snatch katundu”, the supervisor said vigorously “yeah!” the 2 other confirmed, laughing. Makes me think of article I read recently, in which staff of microcredit org was described as aggressively enjoying taking items from non-paying borrowers. If not enough money can be recovered by snatching katundu (should be worth 150% of loan) then legal action follows.

Fourth type of loan is “micro BS loan” - this is the one for [small crossroads market] group, should have 10-20 members, no commodities are needed as back up to get loan. Advance payment of 20% of (individual) loan has to be made by all members before loans are given. When someone is
unable to pay monthly pay back, the other members have to pay. “peer pressure” they call
this, officially minimum loan is 10,000, but they prefer not to give this. Supposedly because
that amount is too small for someone to make any substantial profit, probably because they
don’t find it worth the effort, making just 3300mk. Max loan is 50,000 for first time
borrowers, advance payment for 2nd time borrowers is 15%, interest 32%. After 3 years of
paying back without any default (“also paying bach when we don’t ask for it, coming to the
office to pay”) advance payment is only 10% and interest 30%, called “prime customer”.

There are many credit agencies these days, they confirm: FINCA, CUMO, Pride Malawi.
They are different in sense that they provide bigger loans, monthly payable back instead of
(bi-) weekly + over 12 months period. And we can be found everywhere, supervisor
exaggerated, “that’s why we are called rural”, and pay back rate? Is good assured
supervisor, avoiding real numbers so probably not very good. Interests are used for daily
operating costs of company: salaries, motor bikes, fuel etc. donors sometimes involve
them in projects, eg by paying the advance payment for clients.

Currently 6 groups are in some stage of enrolling in Balaka, some starting training like
small crossroads market group, other just got their first loans.

Bought 90 bags of 500 grams kitchen salt (small stones instead of ‘table salt’ = powder)
for 5000mk. Women will benefit from chitenje, their family from salt. Also bought 3
piles of dried fish (app 10 cm in length) at 100mk, 5 fishes each. For Eveles who had
basin of rice brought yesterday, and small bottle of cooking oil, hired bike taxi to carry all
this weight home (200mk, but gave 500mk which he was pleasantly surprised about). Put
bales of salt in plastic bags (at 40mk) so that no-one would see that we came into village
with lot of salt.

Livia came to chat, Gertrude asked why she doesn’t want to marry. No need to, is able to
find everything she needs right now, like money for soap (from her boyfriends). She
[Livia] thinks that after next meeting with RF mlangizi they will get their loan - although
he had been clear at the first meeting, which she attended, that they first have to do a
training. According to RF man also the other credit agencies have their new members
follow a training first.

Suset came to chat too, they discussed cotton impasse. Livia joked that she will just make
a mattress with her cotton, when boyfriend of Venesi passed by towards [small crossroads
market], Suset commented he is a friend of the father of her child and she once asked him
whether he is now married to Venesi. Ah no, he replied, she is not my wife, just
chibwenzi, will not marry her, already have got my wife, this is not marriage at all. Indeed
never spends a night at Venesi’s, comes often, but only during day. Not staying some
weeks here, some weeks with other wife - so it is not marriage. Gertrude concludes
without doubt, “but still he is giving her
everything like money as we saw in her HH book, so she thinks they are married, but he always goes back to his wife to spend the night, so he is cheating her, “Gertrude concludes now with some uncertainty.

Like boyfriend of Grace does spend nights at her house, even though he has another wife else where, (leading women to wonder how he cheats his wife about this). According to Suset, Grace is currently “chatting” with 4 men/boyfriends (including father of her first born daughter Belki (who is about 6-7 years old, stays with daughter of Alma in Blantyre) who is married at [small crossroads market]. Also told the story that one day 2 of her boyfriends were at the shop, as Livia had told Gertrude too. Suset overheard Grace and owner of shop talking in shop about some underwear, which was Grace’s size according to owner of shop - which to Suset definitely means that they are in a relationship. But his wife is Venesi’s friend, and she told Venesi that her husband is on ARV, so Grace will be infected too, said Venesi.

A man passed by of whom both Livia and Suset ordered grasses for roof, at 100mk per bundle. (needing about 15-20 bundles for roof of small house like Livia, estimates Gertrude). WHILE Chikondi passes by with grasses everyday, preparing for the rainy season. Florence today said that her friends had started collecting grasses, she should start too. Can be found just around, eg where we went to fetch firewood. Gertrude wonders where Livia plans to find the money to pay for all that grass for her roof, may be with the loan from Rural Finance, because has only 2 bags of cotton, not even ½ bale.

Evelin came in dark, under pretence that she came to ask whether Gertrude had bought hair chemical in town for her today. While she had earlier said she didn’t want it anymore. Please escort me, Evelin asked. Gertrude first refused because already completely dark (no moon yet), but then agreed, assuming Evelin had something to say. Indeed, she had heard that Venesi is still continuing to write for us, thus will receive 4000mk extra, and Evelin had already made a budget with that money. Gertrude just answered that she received enough money, 10,000 in total, to have been buying all she wants. And today is already June 12, almost 15, when others will stop too. Evelin wanted to know if she had done anything wrong, but Gertrude assured her that was really not the case. As said, we just found it enough. Intriguing that Gertrude won’t tell her the truth (that she had somebody else to do the assignment for her) or at least that we felt there were too many doubts about her work (eg that she had “just written” about giving money to the tree project, and changing of the handwriting - which we both confronted her with, not to speak of the body lotion she supposedly bought very often). Gertrude is afraid that it will surely cause quarrels if she is open with Evelin about fact that we know she paid Boris to do the job for her. Boris will then get angry with Gertrude for telling Evelin, better they don’t find out as long as we are here, she feels.

Gertrude was told at 7th day Adventist church in Lilongwe that she will need a letter from the church she attended in the months she was absent there. Have many rules, she says, also not allowed to braid hair. When she did once, she was reprimanded, but later some
rich church members braided their hair and elders didn’t stop them. When working on Saturday (petrol attendants school) she was visited by the elders too and told to stop. She said, “what can I do? Classes are on Saturday and Sunday. You are challenging us! She was told to stop, stopped going but her mother begged her to go back, to any church, either Catholic or 7th day, may be will go back to “my own church now, she said, meaning catholic (I laughed surprised about all the strict rules). I told her she can go to church tomorrow, to say goodbye (then she told me about request for letter), but she emphasised that it’s better to go to mother to talk to the nurse, who may be out later on the day.

About Livia: “is gossiping and laughing about Grace having many boyfriends! Apparently can see that it is bad, but does the same herself!.

June 13, Saturday

Livia came to bring trunk of firewood, she got a lot from her field, so mother had told her to bring us some. Asked for the number of her boyfriend in Balaka (china shop), wants to flash him with mother’s phone to say she’ll come to Balaka tomorrow.

Some men sweeping at graveyard, ceremony at Nola for Livia’s young mother (aunt). Also lit fire at graveyard to clear bushes, Gertrude said many people will be attending the ceremony, afraid that they will be revenged when they don’t. that people won’t go to their ceremonies, but if you go, can also lead to gossips that you only went there to eat. Can’t go and not eat, then you’ll also be revenged: people will come to your ceremony and not eat. Livia’s young mother passed away years ago, in principle should get rememberance ceremony every year, but can be for several family members at same time. Not only when somebody is told in dream.

Chikondi cheated some people that we were the ones who named her baby’s, and that we gave her the baby blankets (because we named them). She greets us now with A[name of one son] (Gertrude) and A[name of other son] (me).

House son Hamra now almost finished, all bricks have been put, grass for roof is waiting besides house. Probably did not cost him any money: made the bricks himself, did building together with brother, and collected the grasses himself. He had lot of potatoes for sale, “of course” his wife had land in her home village (next one in direction of [nearest tradingcenter] ), but Gertrude thinks he also had own land, given by mother. Has 3 children who will come stay in new house once finished and with Hamra.

Found nurse Joshua at home, sat inside for interview: 2 big couches and 2 big chairs, coffee table and 3 cupboards. Big TV (with cloth over it) and big stereo music player
Painting of map of Malawi with zebra on wall, cramped, name is Roseby Joshua, born March 24 1959 in Zomba village. Family moved to Balaka village when she was 5, because not enough space for cultivation. When she was in std 6 her sister got very ill, in hospital she saw nurses working and became interested in becoming nurse herself. Uncle paid her school fees when she stayed with him, but after he died, her parents took over. Of their 10 children, 8 went to secondary school, parents themselves had not, managed to pay all the school fees through selling of crops like sugarcane, bananas, cotton. All children had specific dreams (nurse, teacher) and the parents saw they worked hard in school indeed. Even paid for nursing school, 3 years (2 yrs general nursing, 1yr midwifery). Roseby passed examinations but was put on waiting list due to lack of space. Stayed home 6 months after finishing sec school and before starting nursing school. Helped at home, the usual tasks, farming etc.

Completed training in May 1988, started working in June. Was very easy to find job. First at CHAM hospital for some months, then to CHAM hospital in Dedza for 2 years. Married there in 1990. when I asked how she had come in relationship with this man she became shy. Just chatted, then he proposed. Still together, 3 kids (1 in form 4, 2 in private primary schools)

When on first pregnancy leave at home village in Balaka, the local health clinic begged her to work there during her 3 months leave. And after that begged her to stay, priest paid her salary (Utale health clinic). Worked there for 12 years, but very tiresome because often she was the only nurse there, doing all shifts, no resting. Other nurses would quickly leave again, complaining about lack of transport, far distance to their homes. Decided to move to government hospital where she would at least have some time off, share work with other nurses.

May 2002 to [nearest trading center] hospital, works with 2 other nurses.

Husband [of nurse Joshua] does not work, renting 3 acres, cultivated by ganyu workers. This year only grew local maize (other years sometimes groundnuts too). Usually harvests about 100 bags, but this year only 80 because of heavy rains. For food and sale, always enough since she moved to [nearest trading center], when I asked ‘local or hybrid’, she “confessed” local, excusing that she grew hybrid before, likes it a lot only had problems with storage, found that it couldn’t be kept long.

Says she and husband decide together on expenditure, but when I ask about TV she says she decided, because her eldest child often went to video shop to see films and she feared that he’d see bad things there.

Do you [nurse Joshua] have impression that most people are well informed about
HIV/AIDS? According to their behaviour, it seems that they don’t believe what they are told. You can be telling a woman that she is HIV positive, and next year she will come pregnant. They often die after their second pregnancy. Often don’t even reveal their status to their husband, afraid he will end the marriage, men usually don’t come to get tested, most are female. The males that come are most often boys, men only when they are very sick, have STDs eg that’s when they get tested. Seems they trust themselves, or don’t want to believe that they may be at risk.

Also condoms are almost exclusively taken by boys (for free). HIV prevalence very high, out of very 10 pregnant women, 4 or more are usually found positive. Once tested positive some don’t come back anymore for further antenatal checkups, deliver at home, or go to a traditional doctor. Some don’t come to hospital at all, afraid of the tests.

She repeats that many women seem reluctant to tell their husband’s when HIV positive, afraid that their families will break. Don’t tell until they get very ill, she thinks it is ignorance rather than lack of information that HIV continues to spread. People like their culture, having 2 or 3 wives. Infection spreads because of their marriage behaviour, when a man is found HIV positive and is told to bring his wives for testing he happily brings all his wives, while women just keep quiet. She estimates that about half of the people that are referred to Balaka for CD4 count, don’t go, “don’t trust the results and just stay at home”. Only those with very low CD4 get ARV others are put on Bactrim daily. Pregnant women that are HIV positive but not on ARV get nevverapine pill to take home and take in when true labour starts. And are advised to come to hospital with baby even if they deliver on their way to hospital or at home within 72 hours so that baby can get nevaperine too. But some only come after 2 weeks or so to get their free bed net, some people even tear their HIV test results from their health passport.

At VCT mainly youth is coming, adults only tested when they are pregnant, want family planning or all very ill.

[Nurse Joshua:] Why do some women stay with husband that moves around and may infect them with HIV? May be poverty, thinking that if they will chase their husband they won’t be able to find what she needs. Or the husband may be threatening her, that he’ll kill her if she wants to divorce. In her opinion it is not easy to find a new husband (I suggested it is), women are not often proposed. Man may look at the way somebody is dressed and think that she is already married.NB: herself relatively old when married, husband not working and her general reasons for staying with useless husband (she puts him in low risk categorie because not working, “keeping husband for respect outsiders, violet threats), using jargon (root causes”).

For women who are not working, stay with husband because they need his help in taking care of the children, women who do work may think they can’t stay without husband. Thinking that
people won’t respect them if they are single, saying that she is an uhule. So they keep their husband to be respected or because he may threaten them with violence - she [nurse Joshua] mentions again. Some men are faithfull, if she hears he is not moving around, then can just decide to keep him, not to face problems (said this at several points - may be trying to say that her husband is not moving around. Al;so threats she mentioned several times, referring to her own situation?) faithfulness may be related to religion, as for muslims it is not a son to have multiple wives while for Christians it is (she CCAP). Religion plus cultural beliefs cause risky behaviours, she says. But also she has noticed that The men who like to have girlfriends besides their wife are the ones who have money, who have a job. They are at higher risk of HIV, when they have money, they like to go to a bar, drinking and seeing their friends having girlfriends, they want that to, and forget about their wives. While those who don’t work stay at home and take care of their wives and families “money and beer are root causes,” she said, clearly having worked with a problem tree participatory method (like in the adult school guide book) NB: herself relatively old when married, husband not working and her general reasons for staying with useless husband (she puts him in low risk categorie because not working, “keeping husband for respect outsiders, violet threats), using jargon (root causes”).

2731 Thinks that income generating projects for women will help (I asked), for those who get involved with men for support, can now find another means if assisting their family. But there are not enough NGO’s providing loans for all who want. When I object that loans may also put some into deeper problems, she states that “their problem is understanding [debt]”.

2732 She is off duty now, cannot access the birth registers and apparently didn’t want to ask fellow nurse. Better come back Monday.

2733

2734 Livia said yesterday (at gossiping about Grace and her many boyfriends) that she herself still goes for injection, because does not want another child. But nothing about preventing HIV.

2735 Gertrude asked Rosa about her plans with her cotton money: no specific plans yet, but definitely not school fees, father will have to pay those.

2736 Asked cotton buyer at [nearest trading center] how much he pays, he took a long time to answer, then decided to opt for 70mk. Bodza [nonsense], at [tiny crossroads market] saw scale of maize buyer, pays 30mk/kg.

2737 Venesi came to say that she has been called by concern to meet at their office tomorrow for a
workshop: doesn’t know where but was told that it will take quite a lot of days. Will be taught about BS management and will receive loan to buy the mud stoves and sell them. But doesn’t think many will be buying, because price is way to high for what it looks like. Has one standing outside her kitchen herself, so isn’t using it. Because it needs a lot of firewood, and often doesn’t have that. But she has, does use it, she says, will tell the CU staff that the price is too high. Came to say that she won’t be here on 15th when we were supposed to get her HH book. Complained about the waiting for the cotton buying to start. Last year price was 65mk, if they could at least get the same now. Somebody started buying at 38 now at [small crossroads market], she said, but he is afraid to be caught.

Everybody has to wait till Bingu gives the sign. Venesi speculated that Bingu was to show his power as the new president, hence refusing to give in. she [Venesi] was selected as REFLECT facilitator through an exam, which was done by 5 women from each of Mudzi B’s 6 villages, so 30 in total. Those who had most education, and were seen fit by the communities. Not selected by chiefs, she said explicitly. Exam had questions like how they planned best.

I asked her whether she has to share her harvest with the husband she divorced, Ah no. but what will he be eating? He will buy, si mwamuna? (isn’t he a man?), has BS of buying buckets, pots, cups, and exchanging them for chicken, and sell these.

Sofia came to greet on way to chief Mudzi B to pound rice which she planned to eat with nsinjiro because lacking ndiwo. At chief Mudzi B just to chat at same time. Kondwani came to greet too, hadn’t seen me today yet. Kondwani and Gertrude played bawo, Ada knitted.

Pamela came to ask Gertrude about jersey, her child looked seriously ill, vert weak and thin. “mutu”, she said, head ache.

Chisoni had been sleeping in afternoon and come for some chatting. Said she’ii just eat potato tonight, because tired of nandolo, when Goldy passed by, Venesi commented that she is pregnant, and that Venesi had seen her with a boy at [tiny crossroads market] but also with Levison, so that it will be difficult to know who is the father.

Sofia said that she had seen that Livia put up a mosquitonet in her new house (without roof), so wants to start staying there now, Sofia concluded, and will start cooking her own food now. We will see, Kondwani commented. Sofia said she had decided to join the cooking group at funerals, paid 50mk contribution, “so that people will help her if something happens to her”.

Livia’s house was first built by Jasmine’s brother from J. village, but Livia complained that he didn’t
work hard. She paid him 800 or 1000mk, and then asked the sons of Elube to finish the job, paying them the remaining 700 or 500mk.

2745

Brother of Jasmine who came from Mangochi probably bought bike on pick up truck, as people often do, says Gertrude.

2746

What Venesi answered on CU’s test on how she will approach the advising of elders: ndidzawalemekeza (I will respect them), sindidzadiwonetsa ozindikira (I will not show as if I know everything), ndidzalankhula mawu mwaulemu (I will talk to them in a respectful manner).

2747

**Sunday June 14**

2748

When Gertrude went to borrow axe at Phingi’s in morning, saw indeed Livia coming out her new house. Livia said she will start cooking her own food too. Gertrude asked about relationship between chief Mudzi B and uncle of Innocent. He is now staying with Sofia’s ex-husband in Balaka, looking for a house to rent for him and chief Mudzi B. Either he makes a lot of money through selling traditional medicine or he works very hard in the field, or he is cheating chief Mudzi B, meanwhile sleeping with her.

2749

Venesi came to sign for the 4000mk I gave her yesterday for the last month of keeping track of income and expenditure. Still wasn’t called by CU with further instructions.

2750

I was impressed by Kondwani’s quick bawo playing - needs good calculating skills! Ada, Tumanene and Jasmine also. Jasmine commented herself that she didn’t go to school, but can calculate well at bawo. Many women like the game.

2751

Gertrude will go back to Area 25, Desi found a house for her there for 1000mk. A simple one room house without electricity within a fenced compound. The owner lives in the big house (with electricity) with adult daughters of Gertrude’s age, with whom 1 of them Gertrude had been together at school. The landlady doesn’t like to put in single women, afraid that it will bring many boys on her property, but knows from daughter that Gertrude doesn’t involved in boys. Another small house is rented out to a (big) family, they have electricity. There a tap and a well on the compound. And a big light from the main house, but travelling to skyway BS college each day will cost her 160mk/day = 3200mk per month! So she’d better rent a more expensive house near old town so she can go to school on bike. But maybe prefers an Area where she is familiar, has some contacts incl relatives or just because here a house was found for her through her network. Let’s see if she moves to town later on.
Chikondi came to tell that her husband had been borrowing money to repay with maize later, and now came to demand maize from her for this. Chikondi refused to give because he had not helped her in the field. Then he became angry and threatened to burn her house down and kill her. She now moved her maize to her mother, and spent the night at Holy. Will stay there for some days, afraid that he’ll come back. He indeed tried to burn the house, but failed. The HH book got burnt a bit too, that’s why so many women are not married at Mudzi A, she said, because men can be very bad. That’s why at meetings you will see many women and only few men. I asked about the son of Hamra who now moved to Mudzi A. He is good, hard working man, the wife who just died was still his first, and he had built a nice house, with toilet, bafa and kitchen. They had 3 children, but 1 died, the wife died because of head aches. “Banja lake linali la chikondi” - there was love in their union/family, said Chikondi.

Levison came asking about his picture - which I forgot to develop. Had nails in his hand which he was going to bring them to his girlfriend, he said jokingly. Was on his way to buy cooking oil because already eating masamba cooked with some tomatoes for 4 days, today wants to have oil added. May be exchanged the (stolen?) nails for oil? Or gave them to Livia? A girl passed and he [Levison] remarked it was friend of Doris, and that those girls don’t like chatting to people, he wouldn’t want to marry them. Is happy with his own wife, although they fight a lot. It’s just like football, he said, sometimes you fall, but then get up and continue, still enjoying the game.

Following Gertrude’s write up of 3 knitting club conversations - when Phingi and Livia went to ceremony for Phingi’s daughter at J. village, people complained that they didn’t invite anyone from Mudzi B (cannot go without invitation), while the woman used to have friends here too. But the one who decided to make the ceremony chose to do it at J. village instead of Mudzi B.

- Hair extensions not allowed in mosque. Cost about 85-150mk per packet. Gertrude bought 2 of 150mk for her current coupe. Grace put them for free, but Gertrude gave her 200mk for it.

- Complaining about Jeneti asking high prices for her sweet potatoes (as first one to start selling. One for 10mk, “as if we are azungu [white people]!” where are school children going to find enough money to buy that? Is it after harvest time already? - referring to the time when people finish harvesting and children look for left behind maize cobs to sell. “It’s a sin”, when I will harvest mine I will sell for 1mk/piece”.

- Discussion about using dried empty maize cobs for firewood.

- Ada should put on chitenje on babygirl, because one of the elders may see her in a top
alone and reprimand Ada for not covering up, for inappropriate dressing of child.

Tumanene flashed husband: “I troubled my husband to come inorder to give me another child, I want to knit a baby suit”. Kondwani first commented that her last born is still young but later agreed that that one is growing up now. Ada and Kondwani reprimanded Tumanene for flashing her husband in stead of waiting for him to call her, husbands should be calling by himself. He doesn’t charge his phone, Tumanene excused him. Pff, that only costs 30mk, objected Vanessa. You’re flashing him as if he will change his mind (about coming back to you) - Kondwani. He will come, replied Tumanene, I am not worried, he will come after 3 years, when last born is old enough to go to school.

Tumanene asked Gertrude to share a sponge with her and is reprimanded for this too, for begging a visitor while at her house. Gertrude tells her to take one. I will, says Tumanene, this is your house, “ngati munthu osapempha ndiye kuti ndi wakuba” - without begging it’s stealing. At Lilongwe they sell at 20-30mk, don’t give, says Vanessa, there are many at M. village. Tumanene doesn’t know that place, Kondwani explains.

When your husband is in the house and a woman comes at your veranda you should beat her (as she may be coming for your husband), says Tumanene when Vanessa says that Ada comes to her veranda often to chat. Kondwani agrees, “just beat her”. But later says, but she is your friend, can come to greet your husband. Then Vanessa says she will never go to greet a friends whose husband just come back from SA (may lead to suspicious). Then tells the story of how she had joked to one of her friends that she wanted soap. Then the friend had replied that she didn’t want soap, but her husband. Vanessa very angry when a car comes with many things to unload from SA I will not go and help her! My husband gives me enough, although he is as poor as Lazarus!

Innoncet asks for the name of the friend (‘may be its my mother” - Is your mother a liar” Kondwani then asked). Kondwani said they should leave it, had told Vanessa so too when she had come to complain just after it happened. We should not gossip so much, “koma kwa Mudzi B kuno mabodza sadzatha!” - but concludes herself that people at Mudzi B won’t stop gossip. Then speaks about Chikondi as a liar, repeating the story that Chikondi had been gossiping about a woman with a husband in SA who was moving around with many men. The husband had heard about it and said that he trusts his wife, and that “Chikondi better not be dead” when he comes back so that he can punish her. Vanessa said she now started to chat with women who don’t have husband in SA. Tumanene replies she will not stop chatting with Vanessa “because we used to share ndiwo” = koma ndidzibwera kudzacheza, sindisiya, chifukwa timagayirana ndiwo.

Tumanene singing. Kondwni: she is happy because she spoke to her husband now. Tumanene: “ndimamukonda mwamuna wanga”, if I am married it is through this phone.
Conversation 2

- Jane comes and asks if I am sleeping, are you ashamed to be chatting otherwise? Asks Sofia. B denies: if one is ashamed to eat, you will die of hunger. Later Jane says that her uncle called saying that he is in Salima, while actually at Mangochi, cheating (amanama) “chimodzimodzi kuba” says Kondwani: cheating is as bad as stealing. Later Jane asks if one can go to a ceremony without having been called to come and eat. No, says Sofia.

Ellesi remarks that father of Dorica has come. Sofia says: angofuna adye chimanga adzipita” - he just wants to eat the maize and go again.

- Jane says she is angry about not having been able to play netball yesterday, and that tomorrow they’ll be able to play even though there will be a funeral because it will end at 2 pm. Sofia then says: mumafuna mudziwonetsa miyendo kwa amuna = you always want to show your legs to men. Ayi, says Jane. Later Ellesi says about netball: komwe adzipita anyamata ifenso atsikana komweko = wherever boys go, we girls will also go there.

- Davie staying at Sofia’s house for some days after having been quarrelling with Jasmine and Innocent. Moved back to Jasmine for only few days, then Jasmine fell ill and had bad dreams in which her deceased daughter (mother of Davie) told her that Davie should go live with his young mother at Zomba. He left soon after and has not been back since. Gertrude believes Jasmine really had dreams “because she was very ill”. Took 2-3 weeks for her to get better after Davie left.

- Kondwani: hear what happened to me yesterday! Jane gave me 50mk which she had found at J. village. Was I wrong to give it? asked Jane. no no, my kids bought fish with it and ate.

- Jane to daughter of Rosemary: must comb your hair, you look like someone suffering from AIDS! = ukukhala ngati odwala Edzi. Meaning having less hair on scalp, says Gertrude. You’re the one who gave her AIDS, Ada then joked to Jane. “Maybe” adds Kondwani.

Conversation 3

- Brief mention that Esnart is not able to fetch water, because beaten by Boris after having accused him of stealing ufa.
- Livia was sent by Phingi to beg some onions but Gertrude didn’t have. Tumanene says: why doesn’t she just buy? Kondwani: sindikudziwa koma alibe manyazi [I don’t know, but she has no shame].

- Kondwani says her son is refusing to eat okra, share me some beans, to Sofia who answers “no problem, I will give you”.

- About Evelin not willing to share thread (“dsoesn’t like chatting to people”)

- After Tumanene leaves, Kondwani gossiping that “Tumanene’s husband sends her ugly clothes from SA, as if from Malawi, while Blessings had said there are nice clothes for sale at SA. Tumanene is even ashamed to put on those clothes.

- Lovely says that “even though people will gossip about me, I will come so that aunt Gertrude should apply chemical in my hair so that it will grow”.

- Lovely and Jasmine have phones but are not able to read/write (except own name), so won’t be able to send/read text message.

Chief Mudzi B should not go stay at Balaka, feels Gertrude. Then she will have to pay for everything: rent, food, firewood. Will not know when husband will choose to come and pay for these things. Here at least she has her own house and field, indeed Innocent said too about Sofia whose husband wants her to move to Liwonde, but she hesitates because she knows he moves around a lot, and when he isnot around she will be the one to find money for rent, food etc.

**Last interviews Mudzi A II (others in laptop)**


2. As many other women their first answer is that the “ntchito” of men and women is different. Probing more didn’t make them very talkative. Men: cutting down trees, women cook. Further difference: men can give women a mamba (impregnate).

3. Men can do certain things that will help them get a job which women can’t, are stronger.

4. There are org’s that can help (as if I am testing them on this), like OREC. For both
men and women.

5. A woman can’t know beforehand whether a man will be good or not, can only accept his proposal! Maybe stay together because they discuss well within their family.

6. Many men are not satisfied with 1 woman, they want more.

7. Chilengedwe….. [nature]

8. Some are happy with it, depending on the way in which the woman finds the money. Not if she finds it through men.

Mother twins, Josephine

2. It’s difficult for men and women to work together. While women work in the field men are often drinking beer. Most men don’t behave well, are talkative. As soon as they have some money, they just spend it on beer (talking about her own situation, Gertrude comments later).

3. A couple may grow crops together, but then when its time to sell the man will behave angry and just keep all the money to himself, not sharing it with his wife. The woman will just quietly accept, afraid of his anger. Other men can find money by being a carpenter or builder.

4. The wife may say: “lets divorce”. The man will just marry another (kukwatira wina), may be first threaten to do so, saying that “may be another will be of better behaviour than you!” to his wife.

5. It’s not good to marry many men. If unhappy, better discuss that each should find his/her own money and just stay together like that.

6. When one is unhappy with the behaviour of the other, will divorce and try another partner. Because partners don’t change their behaviour, people exchange partners.

7. Because of nature, and its difficult to know whether the next husband will be better, you can’t know his behaviour until you are married.

8. Some accept that the wife is the one looking for food, while himself he just eats. Are
even happy with that, but as said, its bad to be moving from one husband to another and another.

9. Panopa its better, women can do gain do, are allowed to take loans now.

First impressions from interviews: Men (are perceived to) easily abandon their wife as soon as they are slightly unsatisfied with her, while women try harder to stay with husband. Out of need for support, especially when she has his children (another husband may not take care of kids of a previous husband) - men are perceived to be better in finding money than women because of superior intelligence and physical strength. Other reasons to accept a bad or useless husband: to be respected by other people (bad to be hopping from one husband to the next) and to avoid suspicion of married women that the single woman is after their husband’s. “Chilengedwe” also often mentioned as reason for wanting marriage, meaning human nature(which can not be controlled), which according to Gertrude refers both to sex and the fact that it’s perceived natural for a man and woman to live together, same thing. And God’s demand that man should have wife and woman should have husband. It’s easier for a man to find another partner than viceversa because only men can actively propose, while women just have to wait passively. Sometimes have to wait a long time and then are happy to find someone willing to marry, won’t leave that one quicly, not wanting to take the risk of having to wait long again. Chilakolako (desire) also mentioned sometimes as reason for/staying with useless husband. And one can never know whether a next husband will be better, can only find out in marriage.

Monday June 15

Pamela comes by to greet, says she is fine but headache. I show her my infected wound on leg and ask what I could do: capsules - a painkiller she did know that is was caused by flies.

Last year people started offering 50mk/kg cotton at [small crossroads market], until at [large commercial estate] offering 65mk, then prices increased everywhere.

We found Aisha chatting with her husband in the shade of nkhokwe. Ex-husband of Balakasi came to visit when we were there.

Sofia said that if we had given money they would just have spent it on other things, now at least have nice chitenje.

Annoying that 2 from Mudzi A (Rosebill saying she stayed with family in-law while husband was in prison, now he is out again and they are moving back to Mudzi A & twin of
daughter of Josephine) came to demand their salt and chitenje although they don’t live in village at all. Cheated the first time, so as to be interviewed and receive soap and salt. Gertrude still felt we should give, otherwise “may get angry, people may gossip/talk bad”. Everything to avoid confrontations.

Magda and Chenawe complained about how everybody is now just staying without washing (because lack of soap/body lotion) because of the delays in cotton buying. Chenawe has no ufa to eat: can’t eat mgaiwa because of stomach problems and no money to pay people to pound maize for her to make ufa woyera. But both still have maize to sell, but prefer not to. Just said to show that people are getting worried now. Chenawe calculated that they spent: chemicals 350, seeds 400mk - and then only offering 35mk??

Mrs Ntawanga went to adult school, but teacher didn’t come, saying that since we are moving around giving gift nobody would probably show up, but stay at home and wait.


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Balaka Hospital birth stats

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At [nearest trading center] Bought some masamba (20mk), tomatoes 10mk, bananas 5 for 10mk, 2 chunks of cassava for 20mk. Still 1 cotton buyer, with some cotton, but no customers. Loud movie sounds, about Jim Morrison. [Bicycle maker] seems to have opened a shop at the veranda of closed shop: old and new bicycle parts.

Hamra answered that men usually have more money than women because some men, after having worked on the field together with wife just sell the crops and keep the money. Her son laughed that she was so free to answer, but husband complained: Do you see that they are writing what you are saying there!? Then Hamra said to Gertrude IIII, those questions you are asking are getting me into trouble! No just joking - laughing hard while chief Mudzi A continued to complain.

Most women hope we will visit them again, or at least call, Rosa had waited with sister from 4pm till dark at our house to ask for Gertrude’s telephone number. Suset was chosen “by the people from the village” to volunteer for UNICEF “kids week”. Gertrude says it may indeed be just like that, people are gathered (who ever feel like coming) and they choose people of whom they know they went far with education or a committee gathers at Mr Ntawanga and chooses such people on behalf of the village.
**Tuesday June 16**

Yesterday there has been rumours that cotton buying would start. Husband of Vanessa went to [small crossroads market] to check, but came with bad news.

Early morning Hamra came to say that Filimona is not in village these days, what are we going to do? Worried she won’t get her gift, AARGH!

Others who do exam to become REFLECT facilitators: husband of Rose, Lizzie, Teleza, Akileni (Mudzi A II).

Passed by all people in Mudzi B to bid farewell, wish them all the best in future, give chitenje and 500gms salt and ask questions to some (not all because lacking time).

Findings: several mentioned it is looked down upon to go for ganyu or BS as a woman. People will make fun of you, or at least some are afraid this may happen. Something I suspected, but never heard about yet. Amila said that people laugh at her for doing sugarcane BS (going to [tiny crossroads market] today with heavy bundle, bought for 400 total, sold half of it yesterday for 400, so remaining half will be profit. At 4pm, yesterday too and sold a lot, so apparently good time, already on her way three people stop her to buy, for 10-15-20 mk), only asking her why she acts as if she is not married. Pamela thought that may be people are poor here because they prefer to stay at home when somebody comes offer them ganyu/ask if they can do ganyu, “because people may think you are very poor” when accepting to do ganyu, eg in somebody else’s house.

Amila borrowed 200 mk to start this sugarcane BS, is first year. Sold cassava and zitumbuwa before. Sell at school, [tiny crossroads market] or in Mudzi B.

Many women happy with the chitenje. Jeneti said since she was born nobody has never given her a chitenje like that (Bingu? Can’t believe). Alma also said nobody ever does this, Dora said that people from other villages had been mocking Mudzi B for allowing me to do all this research without any benefit to them, but now they will be angry and everybody in Mudzi B and Mudzi A happy. GVH said she has been called to sub-TA twice about allowing a mzungu to stay in village, saying that I have only come to steal their blood (to sell elsewhere for high prices). Indeed used to happen, says Gertrude, when she was about 9-10 years a big car came from nowhere with people who came to take blood, supposedly to sell elsewhere for high price. Teacher told all pupils to run and hide, but come to think of it, they were black people not azungu. But don’t know who sent them. Also often people are killed, their body found without eyes etc. And many accidents with a lot of blood. During Muluzi, who was owner of satanic church. If you become member will find lot of money, but you have to kill someone, or offer body parts/blood of someone
else. But how this got to be connected with white people, kaya.

But now GVH will go back to Sub-TA and proof them wrong, showing the chitenje, and the picture of us together!

Amila said - when when we met her with sugarcane - I am called an uhule [prostitute], but you can’t see I am just doing BS! Proud, laughing. Indeed Suset said a similar thing, and Teleza too, that single women paying for something are often talked about as “must be prostitute, if she can pay for that” even if people know you do BS like the zitenje seller at sawaliu, who said a husband is a good cover up when you’re BS is doing well, then people can think you got the money from him and not through prostitution/men (Florence and twins suggested that a husband may not be happy with his wife finding own income, suspecting it may come from other men. Or afraid that she’ll meet other men when doing BS (Pamela). Amila also said that people laugh at those doing BS (especially if married) as way to discourage them. Venesig if she is tired sometimes eating masamba everyday and once buys matemba, those with husband’s in SA (who can just sit back and eat matemba everyday) say you’ll pretend/want to be like them, that you’re copying their behaviour. They want to be special, show off with their privileged position.

Many women said convinced that a woman who can take care of herself will not want to marry. Others say because of chilengedwe, or insinuate sexual desire. Rosemary said, just in case you fail to take care of self and kids sufficiently during njala or in case you’ll fall ill.

Tinenenji was surprised we didn’t ask her where her husband/owner of pregnancy is, laughing. The chitenje design that I choose is not liked (only Belita and Christina), other say disapprovingly: colour! Yellow with red, cheerful as opposed to all others with lot of brown. I could have known, in shop they were somewhere below in corner, last year’s pile. The chitenje with Christmas balls (black, earthred and oker) was very “latest fashion” according to Blessings and Lovely, they both chose it, but both came back later to change for a very blue one. But then seeing all they chose another, but Lovely dared to come back again to change to the blue one after all. Also Kondwani came to change while she had already cut hers in 2. Not ashamed!

When I commented on [Bicycle maker]’s bike parts ‘shop’ on veranda, wondering where he found money to buy all parts. Gertrude said that his wife takes loan from CUMO but usually doesn’t do BS herself (only recently started mandasi BS).

Livia comes to show phone boyfriend gave her to sell, a samsung with KLEP. Gertrude comes in laughing to show me, has no backside to keep battery in - nor a battery: “he cheated
husband Jasmine and Nyamwale are making mkeka/mphasa.

Ellesi will come back to ngwira to write examinations for JSC in Sept, said mother, Gertrude: but may be pregnant by then, or at least too busy with marriage to find time to study for it. Will indeed go to Lilongwe.

When Gertrude in Lilongwe to school, used to get up around 2/3 am to fetch water for bricks to be in time for school. Was laughed at too by other women who were just staying, asking her why she didn’t just get married. Not understanding why she was working her ass off.

Livia complained that her mother accused her of stealing a chicken and selling to Suset. “well, that’s what you usually do,” said Gertrude, why not just confess and say you won’t do it again”. Ah, but I didn’t do it, said Livia laughing. She bought a pot today to start cooking on her own, saying that she received money from her brother. Gertrude asked her how come she is proposed so often. Livia said giggling that she applies traditional medicine.

Alma was separating madeya from mphale, drying the madeya on mat in sun. maybe to keep as payment for ganyu workers during hunger season, when maize is very expensive and people grind madeya to make ufa, although it tastesa bitter. Dried madeya + some water added at chigayo.

Blessings, Esnart, Jeneti, Lovely, Fissa, Haliday, Nola, Alma, Holy, Magda still ate their own maize until the next harvest. GVH bought at the end, but only 1 bag (at ADMARC, because chief). Tumanene also had to buy, despite husband in SA, at 400 MK (he did send money though).

Husband of Lizzie plans to go back to SA: his second hand clothes BS is not going as he hoped. Will await cotton money, then head back, Lizzie says she hasn’t asked him about his job there.

I was wondering about Livia saying she just wants to find money through her boyfriends in town (eg for the RF advance payment), surely they want to sleep with her in return. But when and where, Gertrude thinks in cheap resthouse like the ones Levison talked about, or at their houses if they don’t have a wife there. Livia said she chatted with the China shop boyfriend at his veranda, which Gertrude immediately interpreted as: Aha, so he’s not married.
Wednesday June 17

GVH harvested her cotton with younger brother of Kingsley. Came to say that she will go to sub-TA to report that I will now be leaving, because she also informed him when I came. They will be thinking that she received a lot from this mzungu, so could we please give her another chitenje to give there? She heard that today or tomorrow people will start buying at [nearest tradingcenter] with 40mk, at [large commercial estate] for 35mk/kg cotton. They will wait selling though, buyers will increase their prices to bid up to each other, attract more sellers.

Mother chief Mudzi B came to complain she hadn’t received chitenje, “am I not your friend?” Yesterday, Hamra tried to make us give her the chitenje for Filimona, saying eventually that Filimona had taken hers yesterday. I told her Filimona should come to our house to get it, because I want to ask her some questions. Viola came to ask what about her daughter, Serena came in morning “to bring some groundnuts” and receive her chitenje. DIL of Dora watched all the giving and choosing from a distance, Doris bluntly said she would like a chitenje too.

Had great chat at Musitafa’s, interviewed mother and Charity together, because they were just sitting together anyway (mother zooming the chitenje that Chikondi had chosen and cut in 2, just for free because “Chikondi doesn’t know how to sow”). Doris came to flash someone with Mrs M’s TNM phone (2800mk) and started answering the questions too. Florence later also joined, were all quite free to talk, adding to each others answers. After finishing Mrs M asked if I could tell them something about my country, eg how we find husband. Saibi also joined (wanted to change 500mk and had big full bottle of body lotion which she put on her children and herself) whether we pay when marrying, if we have ankhoswe, who helps at quarrels, if we grow maize, farm or not, have livestock, many companies/jobs, people working at our house (where very surprised and excited about the machines we have for washing clothes and dishes, first thing they told Hamra and Viola when they joined), have chiefs. Florence kept saying I should take her to my country, she’ll manage to just eat bread instead of nsima (but 2 whole loafs in morning to fill stomach). Saibi cleverly remarked that here people need strong food like nsima because doing hard physical labour. Whether there is AIDS, graveyards, prisons just like here. Whether we can take care of a sick person (“just lying on the mat”) for a year, if we have villages or only towns (village’s, but each house has own water tap and electricity. “Here we only see electricity - and beds - when at hospital!”). g answered some questions by herself, e.g. whether we know nsima some don’t, others know it from books. Florence said she thought there must be a lot of AIDS in mzungu land because when she stayed in Lilongwe, lived near a house with male and female azungu, and big windows and she could see them all chatting with each other (in different couples all the time). How many children do we get, concluding amongst each other that if they will bare less children, bit by bit they will do better too. How we prevent after having 2-3 kids, I explained we usually prevent before. Myself for example - but Gertrude
didn’t translate that part. But here after getting injection, difficult to get pregnant for long time, Saibi said. Whether it’s the same medication, maybe because I had reminded them again that my questions may seem strange to them, because it’s all so normal to them how things go here, but should try to remember that were I come from everything is very different. Florence said: take me, just like Madonna took a Malawian child. Will they be watching me in NL like we have been watching at you? If we do initiation ceremony when girls start to menstruate, and if when one’s brother or sister is fighting somewhere, you take your friends there to help/take revenge?

Mrs Musitafa has still not received sewing machine, although they have arrived, she says were told they’d receive the machine and some money and cloth to get their BS started with. Still going 2x/week, gave birth to 10 kids, Charity surprised me with clever answers.

Moyowathanzi survey maybe from Uni of Penn women at Catholic women’s org Balaka. When I said to Musitafa’s that with us some people at death give their organs to a sick person, they concluded that baby’s must just be born more intelligent in NL, that they are able to do these kind of things.

Rural Finance mlangizi came indeed today, teaching them about record keeping and the life insurance (Innocent says that if someone's husband would die, she’d get money as condolence), encouraging them to find the deposit quickly. Can choose to 1000 for record keeping book, and 1500 as insurance when money may get stolen, husband of Jasmine told wife not to take loan, will only cause problems, if Innocent will be out doing BS someone needs to stay at home, and Jasmine is getting too old for this, should just be selling zigumu from home. Decided that with Innocent’s 1500 loan they will buy 2 bags of maize to keep till njala to make zigumu. With rest Innocent will go to lake, buy fish, spend night and then sell at Liwonde turn-off, then home to write record book and go again. When tired of all this travelling will just sell at [nearest tradingcenter] or [small crossroads market].

Hamra came to say that husband of Filimona says she is at hospital, therefore can’t come. Just gave her chitenje and salt now. Then Viola also came, saying that her daughter is ill and therefore can’t come. Gertrude told her that the zitenje are finished now, but according to me she doesn’t deserve because we never saw her again after first interview.

June 17 [in notitieboekje met groene bamboe-kaart]

Elube came to ask chitenje for (lying) woman behind Lovely. Chief Mudzi B & Kondwani came to “chat”, “mentioning” their mother who still hadn’t received a chitenje. Adding that she overheard Elube family discuss they’ll ask the chitenje - “but will just keep it themselves!” said chief, “is not good, don’t appreciate what they received.”

Alma came to listen to her song on my voice rec again, and to thank that the chitenje that I gave was double, didn’t know!

Son of Hamra was fined 1000MK today at big tree: 500 for chief of wife’s home vlg, 500 for her family
for having knocked on wife’s door asking for nsima just after her death. He says to anger his mother-in-law and make her send him away (should stay 40 days in case of Muslim, up to 1 year for other religions in wife’s home vlg when she dies, but he wanted to go). Walking back, Hamra told him not to pay.

Elube said we should just give Fatima’s chitenje to her, but Gertrude said we will bring it to her. “Maybe at hospital, better give it to me…” Wurgneigingen.

Balakasi did “all sorts of BSs”: zigumu, zitumbuwa. With money used to hire people to work in her field, but now just works hard in her field herself. Gertrude said earlier that she may have stopped BS when son went to SA (sending her some money every now and then, or other things she may want, like her phone with camera).

Decided to share the 6 cans of milkpowder among all women who gave birth to a (weak) baby during my stay here: Chikondi 2 cans, Christina (ill, coughing during pregnancy, but looks strong now), Ada, Monya (doctor diagnosed baby as malnourished), Holy. Bottle I bought as suggested by Sjaak I’ll gove to Chikondi, for whom he had meant all 6 cans… But I have tried very much to be fair, treat everybody equally, don’t want to leave suddenly leaving 1 much more than others. Especially Chikondi, who will definitely not explain it’s from Sjaak, but brag how we privileged her over all others. Considering how she lied about me having bought her the babyblankets (although that may also have been to cover up how she found the money for it, as we told her to keep quiet about the HH book I asked to write. Indirectly I indeed paid for the blankets...

Sofia will go to stay with her sister at Liwonde turn off by end June together with husband. He says he wants to divorce his new wife now, thinking back of how he and Sofia used to help each other with their BSs. In stead of a cellphone he will gove her money to start a fish BS, meanwhile looking for a house to rent. She is happy he wants to get back together with her, but will leave some children here with grandmother, to first check out how things will be going there. husband wants to go there by end June, thinking that cotton buying may start on first of July - promising good BS for his second hands clothes BS. He had sent Sofia rice, beans and 10 bars of soap, given to Innocent, but the rice pack was open (app 10 kg left) and 2 bars of soap missing. Sofia told him to either bring it himself from now, or through anyone but Innocent… Complaining about Innocent that she doesn’t even have her own blanket, uses mother’s...

Impressions from last interviews cont’d:

Women try harder to make marriage work, but if not, they “chase him”, while men “get up and leave”. Men don’t often make efforts to complain to ankhoswe & discuss & try to change wife. Just find another and leave - in that order.

Vendor at [nearest tradingcenter] currently offers 15 MK/kg cotton! Jasmine says that people say that on radio it was announced that cotton selling will start on July 1. Livia brought nsima (ufa woyera) and nandolo, prepared by Phingi - knowing that we’d be too busy to cook. Rather, too packed to cook… Very nice! Is what most people eat these days: ufa woyera and nandolo. We brought 2 cabbages as thanks, for which she came to thank because very tired of nandolo each and every day.

Livia said that (ex)husband of Sofia plans to move together with his current wife and child to first see if she’ll improve when he takes her far from her mother. So far her mother cooked the food that her daughter then gave to her husband.

Jasmine gave trad med for daughter of chief Mudzi B, to keep her baby after loosing her first.
June 18, LAST DAY IN VLG!!

Jeneti came to greet and tell us that Ellesi will be staying at Mtsilitsa in Lilongwe. When she left walked past GVH’s cotton field where Sofia’s brother doing ganyu harvesting cotton (“she [GVH] will definitely give him something [money] after selling the cotton”, is the way Gertrude put it. Gertrude heard already heard rumours about them 2 being in relationship, and indeed they started talking (quite openly, although no one around) that he had come to her house but found her out, yes she had been to funeral of Z’mother-in-law. That he should come to her house, and that she wants lemons, if he had known he could have brought her some. He told her to go home and cook him potatoes, and send someone to let him know when they are cooked. Will do. He is married at M. village.

Elube passed him a little later with water from njiko and asked him whether he had seen Jeneti now. Yes, talked to her.

Jeneti: I came to greet you here in field...
BF: I came to your house in morning but didn’t find you. Are you back now?
J: Yes, failed to go to Blantyre (where MIL will be buried), because of size of car.
BF: Your mother was getting worried because no one staying in your house, as Ellesi is now married... I will come to your house, but want some potatoes.
J: I will cook. Do you drink tea?
BF: Yes, and I know how to buy sugar (usually buy, so will do it here too)
BF: Send someone to let me know when they are ready.
J: I want some lemons...
BF: Came to your house yesterday, but didn’t find you. If I had know, would have brought you some.
J: I am going now (to cook the potatoes & tea)
BF: Sorry about the funeral...
J: Don’t tell me here, tell me at home...

Last days in vlg at Rosemary’s compound radio was on loudly often.

Auleria did not plant cotton. In Alida’s (2 room) house I did see bag of cotton.
GVH was chopping away cotton plants, even though they still contained cotton here and there, but “tired of it now”.
Son of GVH at J. village ill again.

Thursday June 19 on that radio that on June 24 a Chinese cotton ginnery will open at Balaka and strat buying cotton - “at price in overeenstemming met prijs op wereldmarkt” and will offer employement to many people.

Hazel says that it cannot be that someone would go to college on bike here. Baleke confirms, no way!

Pieter about World Bank: is bank that borrows money to African government (to which commercial banks don’t borrow because of low pay-back/high non-pay back risk) and offer expertise to spend loans
(but also grants) “wisely”. But lot of political games at high level. By replacement of country boss Kenya (previous one fired because of corruption schandal) by new one, who had been in anti-corruption/integrity commission, but was first refused by Kenyan government. WB did not want to step back, so (Nigerian) head flew in to settle issue. Then proposed man was installed and contract for new road was signed, although new road was already there, paid by other agency...

Pieter geeft voorbeeld van 2 studenten die onderzoek deden voor zelfde irrigatie project in Chikwawa. 1 in dorp 3 maanden, ander 20 km verder at Ilovo (supersjieke) compound. Eesret veel meer over lokale implementatieproblemen, sociale factoren. Andere meer toon van: boeren moeten gewoon doen wat ingenieurs zeggen/uitdenken. Laatste is waar geluisterd werd door officiële instanties als WB, want ‘met ingenieurs = experts’.

In diss: rapport 2008 over ineffecitveit NLse overheidshulp aan Afrika. In Europa, aan t einde vd jaren 40 vorige eeuw, had Marshall hulp gewerkt, en in Afrika, en elders, is het effect van hulp al 60 jaar lang nihil of gering. Soms is hulp zelfs bewijsbaar contraproductief. ... In NL tussen 1998-2006 +/- 10 miljard (= 10.000 x 1 miljoen) aan hulp verstrekt: 6 miljard overheid, 4 miljard particulier. In absolute bedragen geven grote landen nog veel meer + hulp al halve eeuw voor 1998 begonnen.

A Chikondi A 1

2. kudzera mu ulimi: through farming

Gertrude komanso azimai mesa amathanso kulima : ee but women also do farming.

3. ee koma nanga kunoko kumbali ya azibambo ambiri ndi amene akutulukawa : but here according to men they are those who are going to South Africa.

4. basi timasiyana banja: we just divorce

5. amamusiyanso: he also leave the wife. Koma siambiri ayi nanga kwathu kuno kwa Mudzi A siambiri: not many but not many, here at Mudzi A not many.

6. kungoti mitima ndiyosiyaneta eti ena amatha kukhala kuti mtima wawo ndiwabwino eya amati ine ndekha ndidzipilirabe koma munthu kumuwuza kuti ine ndikupha, ndiye munthu ungapilire? Sungapilire umaganiza kuti basi ndingosiyaneta naye. Kusiyana ndikuti akuphe: the heart is different others bad. Others they say I will just accept, but if he is saying that I will kill you, can you accept it, you can’t, you think.

7. chifukwa cha nkhanza amunawo: because of abuse this men.
8. ayi sungafune: no you can’t need a husband.

A  2-3 Mrs Ntawanga

2. pa azimai amasiyana kuti uyu wammuna uyu wamkazi, nanga azimai timakalima kumunda kubera kutunga madzi, kuphika, timatsuka mbale kuchapa koma pali ena m’habanja amathandizana kuchapa koma ena samathandizana, amuna akapita kumunda timalima limodzi, akabwera ngati palibe ntchito ina amakhala pansi, ngati pali ina kumanga nyumba, chimbudzi, bafa amamanga mwamunayo, kitchen, ukakhala udzu ena amathandizana kumweta;

In women it is different that this is a man and this is a woman - women we go to the field, when coming back, we fetch some water, cooking, washing plates, washing clothes. But they are some in the family they help each other wasahing while others not. We work together in the field but when we go back home if there is nothing to do we just stay, others building houses, toilet, bathroom kitchen, others help each other in fetching some grasses.

3. pali ndi makhalidwe ake, ngati mwamuna uja sakuonetsa nkhanza sakukumenya, koma chisamaliro chikuperewera ndiye umati nanga ndizingokwatirakwatira, Pamela bamboo wina ndiye umangokhala, kundimenya, kutulutsa mpeni umaopa kuti ndingafe ndiye timasiyana: it depends according to the behaviour if the husband is not mistreating you, not fighting but failing to take care then you say it’s not good to be changing husband often. Having children from different husbands, then you just stay being beaten, taking out the knife you used to be afraid of death then we divorce.

Why bad: mwina ukhoza kutenga matenda komanso sumalemekezeka anthu amati awa ndi choncho amangoti mwamuna uyu wabwera winanso wabwera: may be you can get a disease and you are not respected. They say this is the way she is, men coming and going, then another man.

Ndiye wina kuti abwere amati amene uja amakonda amuna: then if some one comes they say she likes men.

Gertrude chifukwa cha kusagwirizana ndi mwamunayo, khalidwe limenelo mukamakhala konkuno mumakawona kuti anthu akagulitsa mbewu zawo ena amakhala akumenyana ena ndalama osaziwona, ndiye amati ndibwino ndikhale ndekha ndizilima ndiye amasiyana,
Because of some disagreements with the husband, that behaviour if you will stay here you will see, after selling cotton and other crops others used to fight, others don’t show money to his wife and they say its good to stay alone and work in the field then they divorce. And because of abuse if you see the husband moving around a lot, then they say that according to the way you are moving around its good to divorce, may be we can not get a disease, because you have got a lot of children then you got a disease who is going to take care of your children?

7. mwina chilakolako: may be desire, ayi samadandaula: they don’t get worried, kuno kupeza ndalama ndikovuta: here it is difficult to find money, ndiye ukamupeza wolimbikira amati ndiye bwino: when they find someone who works hard they say its nice.

A 3, 4, 5 Hamra

2. zintchito za banja timagwirira limodzi, zilipo zimachitika, nyumba akumanga mwamuna yekha, kulima timalima tonse, tikakolola, ena azibambo samakolola amakolola mkazi yekha: in the family we work hard together, that's what happens, a man builds a house alone but in the field we work together. After harvesting other men they don’t help harvesting only a wife used to harvest alone.

Tasks: ena zimatheka amalima mkazi yekha mwamunanso amalima kwao, ena amalima limodzi mkazi ndi mwamuna: others is possible only a woman works in the field, a man works in his village, other men and women work together in the field.

Behaviour: timagwirizana m’mabanja mwathumo kakhalidwe: they discuss in the family how to behave.

In general: ayi sindimaona: no! I don’t see.

3. akalima zaulimi mwamunayo ndalama amatenga yekha: after growing crops the husband used to take the money himself.

Talking to her son (husband angry): ee nimbi tusisefe (yao) akusaleka wakongwe wangali likobili: ee do you want me to hide. They leave women without some money.
Why accept (husband said) can’t you see that they are writing what you are saying there? (Hamra laughed).

Amavomereza amaopa kuti tsiku silinakwane likadzkakwana zoipa zija zimatuluka ndiye ukwati umathera pomwepo: they accept, they used to be afraid that the day has not come, when it will come, all the bad things will come out then the marriage will end there.

4. amathetsa ukwati amamuza kuti ndikukusiyi: they end the marriage - they tell you that I will leave you.

5. kupilira - kuti nanga ndimuthamangitse iyeyu palibe chomwe ndingapange, choncho ndidzikhala naye: just accept saying that if I will chase him there is nothing that I can do, then I will just stay with him.

Amuna akusowa (laughed) dziko lino akazi tilipo ambiri koma amuna ndi ochepa, basi nthawi, ee kale amuna analipo, akazi analipo iii kaya: difficult to find men. In this world we are a lot of women than men. It’s time, yes in the past there were a lot of men - iii I don’t know.

6. kusagwilizana zochita: they don’t agree what to do.

7. ii kukhala awiri, kukhala ndi mwamuna kumacheza naye olo osakupanga chilichonse bola ukulankhula ndi mwamuna (mafunso enawa mukufuna tiziyambana): iii to stay two, staying with a man and chat with him although he is not doing anything, at least you are able to chat with each other (other questions you want me to quarrel with him)

8. ee amasangalala: yes they are happy, nanga si akungodya: because he is just eating.

Azimayi apano bola kale timakhala ndi nsalu imodzi yomweyi kokagona tifunde ndi mwamuna, kukacha ndivale. Ikatha kumupatsa mwana. Ndiye kuti pachaka amakhala ndi nsalu imodzi. Malaya amodzi koma nyumbamo mopanda blanket, ife ndikumabadwa bedi munalibe. Koma mphasa kugona osapinda, ana mbali ina makolo mbali ina basi kufunda chitenje, koma pano ndili ndi blanket pachaka ndimapeza nsalu 3 koma makolo athu anali osauka:

At least now because in the past we just had 1 piece of chitenje we used it when going to sleep with the husband. In the morning putting on the same chitenje, if torn we were giving the child that means after a year our parents used 1 chitenje, husband only 1 short, 1 blouse and in the house no blanket and we were born, without a bed but on the mat.
Sleeping without fording it, children the other side, parents the other side using chitenje. But as of now I have got a blanket, after a year I found 3 zitenje but our parents were poor.

Kusauka, ena molima moperewera kuti ukamakhala ndi malo akulu utha kumalima kwina thonje, chimanga, mtedza, tikagulitsa umphawi umakhala ochepa, ena malo alinawo koma m’mafupa mulibe chilichonse mphamvu mulibe: poverty, others no enough land to grow crops, but if we had a lot of place to cultivate, we could have grown cotton, maize, g/nuts after selling at least there is less poverty. Others have got enough land to cultivate but in their bones there are not strong.

A 6 Naima

2. mwam,una ndi mkazi ndiwosiyana mkazi amavala nsalu ndi dilesi, mwamuna thalauza. Likakhala banja, amakhala makhalidwe osiyanasiyana, ineoyo sindingathe kudziwa kuti mabanja ena amakhala bwanji: a man and a woman are different, a woman put on chitenje and dress while a husband, trouser, but in family they have different behaviour, I cannot know how in other families stay.

Sindingathe kudziwa: I cannot know.

3. komabe azimai ena amatha kupeza ndalama kuposa abambo kamba ka geni: but some women find money than men because of business.

4. ena amakadandaula kwa ankhoswe kuti awone zomwe zikuvuta koma ena amathetsa banja, mwamuna: amachita chimodzimodzi: they go and complain to a nkhoswe to see what is wrong but others end marriage. husband they do the same.

5. basi mwina kupilira: may be they just accept.

6. akazi ena amakana mabanja akuti amafuna mwamuna olemera, ndiye ena amalola amati kupeza bwino mumayamba limodzi: other women they refuse to get married because they want men who are rich, while others accept saying that you start getting rich when you are together.

7. chilengedwe: it’s nature.

8. sizingatheke koma mkazi ndi amene amasamalidwa ndi mwamuna. Koma amuna ena mwina amasangalala, basi ngati akugwirizana popanda vuto amakhala: it is impossible a woman is the one who is taken care of a man, but other men may be they used to be
happy, but if they are staying without any problem they stay.

2973 A 7 Aisha

2974 2. (children making noise) m’banja kapena chain? Sindimaona kusiyana: ijn the family or what? I don’t see the difference.

2975 3. malingana ndi zomwe amachita komanso azimai ena amatha kupikisana ndi azibambo koma ndiwochepa mwachisanzo abambo amachoka kupita kukapikula chinagwa panjinga, nzimayi sangathe, kupita kunyanja ife timapanga geni yogulitsa masamba basi chifukwa tili ndi ana pakhomo: according to what they do but other women are able to do competition with men but they are few. For example a man goes to buy cassava for sale on the bike, a woman can not manage going to the lake, but we just do business of selling leaves because we have got children at house.

2976 3. banja limatha - limathanso (child crying: we divorce - they also divorce.

2977 4. umaganiza mavuto omwe sungakwanitse wekha. Chakudya, ena chakudya ali nacho koma ndalama yogulira sopo, mchere, basi ndiye kuti kumunda supita: you think of the problems that you can not manage to solve yourself. Food, others have got food but they don’t have money to buy soap, salt, doing BS that means you will fail to go and work in the field.

2978 6. (laughing) basi anthu amadana, khalidwe mkazi kapena mamuna, mwina mwamuna kuyendayenda mkazi amati m’mene kunja kulili amati ndisiyeni ndikhale ndekha: they don’t like the behaviour of each other between men and women, may be husband just moving around, then the wife says that according to how the world is! Just leave me and I will stay alone.

2979 7. azimai amatha kuphika nsima, kupita kumadzi yekha, koma ngati alibe zophika azipeza bwanji, banja limapatsa ulemu. Munthu ukakhala wekha amati ndiwe woyendayenda pomwe iwe sumachita: a woman is able to cook nsima, going to fetch some water, but if she don’t have anything to cook, how is she going to find. You are respected when you are married if someone is staying alone they say that you just move around while you don’t do it.

2980 9. mwina kusapeza: may be because of poverty, kapena kusagwira ntchito molimbikira: not working hard in everything.
A 8 Balakasi

2. Azimayi timagwira ntchito zambiri kumunda timapita tonse tikabwera iwowo amangokhala, nthawi yokolola amamanga nkhowe: they work together in the field but women do a lot of things after coming back from the field men just stay. Time for harvesting they make amaize storage.

Azibambo kuyendayenda kwambiri, azimayi kukhala pakhomo, kufunafuna kuti akabwera adya chiyani why: klufuna kupeza ganyu akabwera azikupatsa ndalama: men just moving around while women staying at home, searching what he will eat when he comes back, wants to find ganyu, when coming back he should be giving you some money.

3. ee azibambo amapeza ndalama komanso azimai olimbikira amatha kupeza ndalama koma ena amangokhala ndiye sangapeze, ee kudalira abambo, maganizo kusiyana, makamaka ukakhala ndi ana: yes! Men find money but even women who works hard, they find money, but others they just stay and they cannot find some money yes depending on a husband, we think differently especially when you have got children.

4. limatha - limathanso: they all end marriage.

5. kupilira, basi kufuna banja mwina zina amapanga zabwino ngakhale zina walakwitsa: they just accept, because they want marriage, may be there is something that he used to do to please the wife although he makes some mistakes.

6. banja limakhala koma ngati pali zoipa limatha. Ifetu takhala 29 yrs kupilira, chilichonse ndimapanga ndekha, geni ku Balaka, kusenza kuno mpaka ku BK tsiku lililonse, olo nthawi ya njala amangokhala. Chifukwa sibwino lero kukwatira uyu latha mawa uyu latha: marriage is there but if there are bad things you divorce we have stayed 29 yrs, just accepting, I was doing everything alone, doing business at Balaka, carrying on my head up to Balaka everyday, even in hunger season he was just staying. Because its not good to get married to this man and divorce, then the other one, same.

Chifukwa ana ndimasamala ndekha, school kulipira ndekha, amai ang pano anamwalira koma ndimawasamala ndekha: because at that time I was able to take care of children, paying school fees and even my mother was staying here and I was taking care of her.

Ndimaganiza kuti ndisamakwatiare pafupipafupi, enafe timaopa azibambo (laughed): I didn’t want to be getting married often, some of us we used to be afraid of men.
Amangokhala basi kumangodya: just staying and eat.

Comparison: chimodzimodzi, chifukwa nthawiyo ndimasamala banja ndekha, ana kuveka ndekha, kudyetsa: it’s just the same because at that time I was able to take care of family, buying clothes for my children and feeding.

Kuipa kulipo nanga sikukhala wekha palibe olankhulana naye: there is disadvantage, staying alone that means no-one to talk to, I don’t have anyone else to talk to.

Poor; mabanja ambiri amadalira mamuna pomwe ena amapanga geni, zimatengera khalidwe la mkazi kapena mwamuna, ine sindimakhala pansi ndimasungu ndalama pang’ono pomwe ena ndili pabanja anakati taonani ngati Sali pabanja, akungofuna azinyengana, ineyo sindimafuna kuwaumiliza amuna anga, chifukwa ndimaona mavuto a ana ndi amai anga: in the family a lot of women depends on the husband, others they do business, it depends according to the behaviour of the woman or man. I don’t sit down but keep some money while others when I was married they pointed at me and said that have you see her! As if she is not married. She just want to have sex. But I didn’t want to force my husband because I had problems to take care of my mother and my children.

A 9, 10 Magda

2. limakhala chimodzimodzi malingana ndi momwe anabadwira, abambo ena alesi, amayi ena alesi, koma ena amalimbikira, kulima ayi, sikwenikweni:

It’s just the same according to the way they were born. Some men are lazy, women lazy, but others they work hard, even farming, others not really.

3. ena amapeza kuchokera mu ulimi, koma amaononga (misuse) kwathu kuno amuna ambiri amaononga kumanga nyumba, carpenter, kagwiritsidwe ka ndalama kamakhala kosiyana ena mowa:

others they find through farming but they misuse. Here in our village a lot of men misuse, others building houses, carpenter, they use their money in different ways others just drinking beer.

4. ena banja limatha - amasiyana ena kupilira, makamaka ngati wabereka ana ambiri banja likatha umavutika ndiye bola kupilira, inuyo mvakhala kuno nthawi yayitali mukuona ena tili pa banja, koma ambiri pabanjapo akuvutika chifukwa akagulitsa mbewu,
Others they end their marriage, divorce while others just accept, especially if you gave birth to a lot of children, if your marriage ended you have a lot of problems, then it’s good just to accept, you have stayed here for a long period of time and you see that others are married but a lot of them in their families they have got a lot of problems, because after selling their crops they don’t agree with their wife but 1 week out, no money when coming back.

5. ndanena kale kuti wabeleka ana ambiri mwamuna wina aopa kusamala ana aja:

I have alresdy said that if you gave birth to a lot of children the other husband will be afraid to take care of those kids.

6. kuyamba kwa banja sakumakonzeka, monga panopa munabwera koma ena mabanja atha, kumangotola mwamuna ngati tomato pamsika:

They don’t get prepared when they want to get married, for example since you came here, other marriages ended, just finding husbands like tomatoes at the market.

7. ee amafuna mamuna chifukwa ndi chilengedwe:

ee they want a husband because it’s nature.

8. ife ku Malawi kuno sitimadandaula (laughing):

here in Malawi we don’t get worried.

Azimayi ena amatha kuthetsa ukwati: other women they end the marriage.

Azimayi akale anali aumphawi: women in the past were very poor.

Pano amayi ambiri ndi ophunzira, ena akumapanga ma BS ang’onoang’ono: nowadays a lot of women are educated, others are doing small businesses.

Kale kunalibe malonda, tikalima mbewu zathu kudya basi osagulitsa:
In the past we were not doing business after growing our crops we were just eating.

Zinayamba kusinthu pomwe tinayamba ulamuliro wa chikuda, kuchoka ku colonial government: things started changing when Malawi became independent from colonial government.

Chifukwa si onse amene amapeza chuma kuti atukule kuno ku mudzi ndikulimbikira kulima. Kulima kuli njira zingapo. Kulima wekha ndi bamboo, ulibe ndalama ya ganyu ndiye kuti ulima kumangodya, koma ngati uli ndi ana akuthandiza kenako mbewu zina mugulitsa:

Because not everybody finds money here in the village for some one to improve, that means you must work extra hard in farming. There are many ways of farming working alone in the field with the husband and you don’t have money to hire ganyu. That means you will just grow crops for food, but if you have got children who are helping you in terms of money that means you will grow other crops for sell.

A 11 Suset

Ayi sanabwere amati abwera lachitatu: no! he didn’t come he said he will come on Wednesday.

Ee tikufuna timalize tinayamba lachiwiri week yatha amati tachedwa, atiphunzitsa 3 days pa 23 abwera akuluaku kudzatifunsu mafunso, kenako kutenga ngongole, anatiphunzitsa kuti pagulu tidzidziwana komanso momwe tingayendetsere BS kuti chimachitika ndi chain kuti munthu aluze kapena uwine:

- ee we want to finish, we started on Tuesday last week, they said we are late, he will teach us only 3 days but on 23 this month, the supervisor will come to ask us questions, then we will be able to take loan. Eee we already know a lot of things, that’s why he said that he will not teach us a lot because we were taking other loans in the past. They taught us how to know each other, how to run a BS, what happens for someone to make profit in business or not.

Ndidzabwino chifukwa amatipatsa ma example kuti tidzimvetsetsa kusiyana ndi kwakukulu chifukwa a CUMO akapereka pa 14 ikatha 2 weeks tiyambe kubweza pamene Rural akuti tikhala mwezi umodzi osapereka tidzayamba kubweza wachiwiri, tidzibweza pa mwezi:
- its good because they gave us some examples inorder to understand properly, there is a big different because CUMO if they gave us on 14 that means after 2 weeks we started paying back, while Rural they said we will stay a month without paying back and we will start the second month we will be paying after a month.

Ine ndinamva kwa abambo ena ake amatengako ngongole koma ali m’gulu la kwa [nearest tradingcenter] :

- I heard from a certain man, who is also taking loan but at [nearest tradingcenter] group. Ineyo ndi volunteer wa zaumoyo anachita

kundisankha anthu am’mudzi:

- I am a volunteer about health, I was chosen by the people in the village.

_Za May 2005, 6 July 2008_

2. Azimayio ambiri amapanga geni azimuna ayi, amuna ambiri mowa, ambiri ndi mawaona chifukwa ndimakhala nawo pafupi ndiye ndimaona khalidwe lawo, mwina ndi chikhalidwe chawo. Ayi sizoona, eee azimai ambiri amaziyimira pawokha:

- A lot of women are doing BS while men are not, a lot of men likes drinking beer, I saw a lot of them because I stay near by then am able to see their behaviour, may be it’s their culture. No! its not true, a lot of women are independent.

Zimakhala kuti zimayambika pachiyambi kuti apange chinthu chimakanika, ndiye mkazi uja amavomera kuti mamuna adzingokhala, mwina amawona mavuto omwe akukumana nawi, amuna akapeza ndalama mowa, lamulo amatha anthu amakambirana:

- it started from the past for them to do something they fail, when the wife used to agree that the husband should just stay, may be she can see some of the problems that she face, when the husband find money he spent on beer, a law, fear, some of them they discuss.

Ndichifukwa chake kuno kuli mbeta zambiri, mabanja ambiri amatha chifukwa cha nkhani ngati zomwezi:

- that’s why here a lot of women are not married, a lot of marriages used to end because of the same stories.
Amachoka chifukwa ena amatha kumumenya mkazi uja kapena kumwa mowa kuti zimupweteke mkazi uja achoke:

- They move because others used to beat the wife or drinking a lot of beer so that the wife must feel pain and go.

4. Ena mankhwala: some use traditional medicine

5. chikhalidwe cha kuno ndi chovuta anthu samabisirana nkhani. Akamva nkhani m’malo moti asunge amakauza mwini wake, ena chifukwa cha chamba, mowa akafika kunyumba banja latha:

- The culture of here it’s difficult because people don’t hide stories. When they heard a story they don’t hide but they go and tell the owner of the story, others because of chamba, beer, when they come home they end the marriage.

**Single:** ineyo kukhala ndekha ndimapanga zinthu zaphindu kusiyana ndi omwe ali pa banja: when I am staying alone am able to do something very important more than those who are married.

**Adv:** ubwino ulipo koma chifukwa cha mavuto ena amene amapezeka, mumathandizana zinthu zina.

**Prob:** umamangika ukamapanga zinthu, ntchito ndimagwira ndekha, monga kumunda kudula mitengo, kunenedwa ndiokumuza munthu wapabanja kuti andimangire denga, amati ndalama ndikuzitenga kuti ndiye kuti ukupanga uhule: there are some advantages but because of other problems that are found. You used to help each other in other things you are not free when doing something I do everything alone like farming, cutting down trees, being gossiped. When I tell a married man to make a new roof, they ask where I found money that means am a prostitute.

basi ndimangokhala, ndimati nthawi yawo imeneyo, ine ndimangopitiliza zomwe ndikuchita: I just stay and said that it’s their time, but I just continue doing what I always do.

**Palibe - nothing.**

Mwamuna zimamutsangalatsa uchitsiru chifukwa mwina amamupatsa ndalama: most men
used to be happy, just foolish, may be because they gave them money.

Chifukwa sitimatha kudziyimira patokha: because we don’t manage to depend on our own.

Ena umbuli, sitimaona zomwe anzathu akuchita, monga ngati geni timadikira wina abwere kuti atiuzo chochita ife ndikumatsatira, tinazolowera: others because of ignorance, we don’t see what our friends are doing, for example BS we want for someone to come to tell us what to do, so that we can follow, we are just used.

Ndikuona kuti akamaona Madera ena momwe akuchitira bwenzi tikusinthika pang’ono pang’ono: I think if they could have seen other countries the way they do, we could have changed little by little.

Ineyo ndimalimbikira chifukwa ndimadziwa kuti ndikapanda kuchita ichi palibe yemwe angandipangire: I work hard because I know that if I cannot do it that means there is no-one else who can do it for me.

A 12 Teleza

2. pabanja magawo amasiyana, mkazi amatenga gawo losamala ana chifukwa mwamuna amatha kuchoka mam’mawa kubwera usiku ana atagona, ntchito abambo amagwira ntchito yambiri kemundu kusiyana ndi mayi, kusiyana kwina ndi mbali ya kudya - women take care of the children because men they leave in the morning come back at night when the children are sleeping. Men work harder in the field then women.

3. mabanja ambiri zimasiyana, upeza kuti abambo akudya mitanda 5, amayi itatu. Mabanja ena amapeza ndalama kwambiri ndi mkazi, mabanja ena amuna, nthawi zina zimakhala zoona koma mabanja ena ayi, mabanja ena mkazi amapanga geni koma mwamuna kungokhala, mkazi kumasamala banja: in many marriages there is a different, you will see that the husband is eating 5 portions, a wife 3. In other families a lot of women find money, sometimes it’s true but other families not, in other families women do BS while the husband is just staying, a woman taking care of the family.

4. kupempha kusiyana - nayenso chimodzimodzi, nthawi zina zimasiyana, ena amakadandaula kwa ankhoswe, ngati sakusintha mwina kambiri. Ambiri amati bola tingsosiyana, akakhala pa chipembezo amapita ku tchalitchi akalephera amati iii tinglebalalikapo: begging is different, the same as that one, sometimes there is a different, others go to complain to ankhoswe, if he is not changing for several times a lot of them say
it’s good to divorce others go to complain to church elders.

5. mantha; amuna ena amati ndidzakuloza ndiye ena amapilira amati ndikamuthamangitsa andilodza, koma samakhala kuti akusangalala pabanjapo ayi, amakhala ndi mantha amaopa kuwapha: they are afraid other men say that I will bewitch you then others they just accept saying that if I will chase him that means he will bewitch me.

6. zochita zawo, monga kwathu kuno akazi ofuna banja alipo koma amuna ena chamba - ena anangokwatira chifukwa choti wina wakwatira, popanda program, akalowa m’banja akaona kuti mulibe sopo amati iii ndapita. Miyezi iwiri basi banja latha, ena amakwatirira kuonerana: because of there doings, here in our village there are some women who wants marriage but some men like smoking chamba. Others they got married after seeing that someone is married without program. When they are in marriage and see that they don’t have soap, they say that I am going, after 2 months they divorce, others get married just copying from their friends.

Mavuto apakhomo.

6. sangafune mwamuna ngati zones akuzipeza koma vuto kwathu kuno ine nditha kumapanga geni anthunso kumaona kuti uyu akupeza chisamaliro yekha, akakuona kuti ukucheza ndi munthu amati iii akunyengana ndi uyo ndiye ambiri amazikakamiza kukhala pabanja kuti angochotsa paint imeneyo yoti ndi hule: they cannot need a husband if they are able to find anything, but the problem in our village is that; I can start a BS and everybody can know that am able to take care of of myself if they can see you chatting with someone else they say that you are in relationship with you and most of the women they force themselves to get married.

Kusowa chochita: they don’t have some thing to do.

Chifukwa munthu kukhala ndi chochita olo BS umakhala uli kumsika mamawa mpaka madzulo, utha kukhalanso ndi nthawi yamabodza? Dzuwa lonse pakhomo kenako umati ndikacheze wina akadutsa mumayamba mabodza

7. amuna akuno alibe manyazi (laughing) amati ndatola nkhwangwa ndi mpini womwe: here they are not ashamed.

Zimamupweteka chifukwa amaona kuti udindo uli m’manja mwake komanso amamva ngati iyeyo ndi mwamuna: It pains her because she used to see that she is the head of the family and she feels like she is a husband.
Ifeyo mwachibadwa timadzitenga kuti ndife ovutika zoti titha kupanga chinthu china chake ndi kutukuka timaona ngati sitingathe: we think that we were born poor and we don’t know that if we can do something definitely we can improve we just see that we cannot manage.

Mabungwe poyamba pobwera paja amatha kubwera ndi mfundo zabwino zoti anthu akapeleke. Tiyerekeze ngati a CUMO amene anabwera kuno kudzapereka ngoingole nthawi yomwe amawaphunzitsa anthu amawauza kuti ngoingole yawo ndiyosavuta, ndiye ambiri anatengeka, anatenga ngoingole anthu pomaliza anapezeka alibe chilichonse, zomwe anawaphunzitsa sizimafanana zinali zosiyana: At the beginning projects came with a good idea to attract people, for example CUMO who came here to give loan, when teaching people they told them that their loan is not difficult to pay back and many people got loan. When they found that they didn’t have anything. It was much different with what they taught them.

Amawauza kuti ngati yobweza yavuta, timavomera kuti udzabweze mulungu wina, koma anthu atatenga akanena kuti ndilibe amanena kuti sindichoka ndigona pompano pokhapokha ukafune ndalama utipatse ndiye anthu amagulitsa nkhuku kuti abweze, momwe anthu amamaliza ngoingole alibe chiweto: they were telling them that: if you don’t have money to pay back, we accept that you will pay the other week that you will pay the other week, but when people got loan, when they say that I don’t have, they were saying that I will not go and I will sleep here unless you go and find the money then people were selling chickens in order to pay back loan, at the end of the loan - no livestock.

Ee nditenga, tidzawona kutsogolo, chifukwa nawonso akuti yathuyi muzibweza pa mwezi kamodzi komanso tikupatsani mwezi uomodzi osabwenza, mudzayamba winawo ndiye ife tinawapempha kuti tisayinilane komanso pakhale mboni monga SubT/A, zones zomwe alonjeza alembe pa pepala:

- we will see in future because they are saying that you will be paying after a month, and we will also give you a month without paying back, we will start the second month and we begged them that they should sign what they said and there should be a witness like SubT/A [small crossroads market] they must write everything that they promised on the paper.

A 13 Thokozani

2. kuno anthu amakhala bwino, azimai timachita zomwe azimai akuchita mwina kutunga madzi, kuphika, kusamala ana, azibambo manyumba, kupita kunkhuni, azibambo kupita kuntchito timathandizira pakhomo. Manyumba, carpenter (laughing):
- people are staying properly here, women do what other women are doing, may be fetching water, cooking, taking care of children, men building houses, going to fetch firewood, men going to work somewhere and find everything that we want, carpenter.

3. kuno azimai ambiri ndi a geni ndiye ali nazo: here a lot of women used to do business and they have got money.

4. ena akatopa amapita kwa ankhoswe kuti absinthe, ena ku court, akazi ena akalephera limatha, ababonso amapita kwa ankhoswe koma ambiri amasiyana: others when they are tired they go to ankhoswe to make him change, others at court, other women when they fail all of these they end marriage - others go to ankhoswe, others divorce.

5. chifukwa cha umphawi, olo ndimuthamangitse mwamunayu zina amachita zambiri zabwino ndiye amapilira:

- because of poverty, and if I can chase this husband they are a lot of things that is good to me, then she just accept.

6. azimai a kuno samafuna kuti mwamuna avutike, okonda ndalama ndimomwe ndawonera, mwamuna akakhala kuti alibe kanthu amamuthamangitsa:

- most of the women here they don’t want a husband to be poor, they just like money, if the husband does not have money they used to chase him.

7. amatsata chilengedwe ena samatha kungokhala ku-------- (laughed): they follow nature, others they don’t manage to (without sex) (not completed).

8. mwina amagwirizana kuti azipanga geni mwina amapeza mkazi akupanga kalegeni ndiye zimawavuta kuti asiye ndiye amapitiliza:

- may be they discuss to start BS or else he found her already doing BS and it’s difficult to stop her and she used to continue.

9. sindinaganizepo koma mwina kusowa ndalama kuti agule feteleza kuti akhale ndi zakudya zokwanira kapena kusowa minda kuti a;lime zogulitsa:

- I have never thought about it but may be no money to but fertilizer inorder to have a lot
of food or no enough field to grow crops for sale.

3080 Anthu sindinawaonepo kuno: I have never seen them here.

3081 Mabungwe amabwera koma sizimawonetsa mphamvu ndikumapita: some of them they came and go but without benefit.

3082 Mabungwe ndi ambiri akabwera akapita basi: a lot of projects but when they come they just go.

3083 A 14 Rosemary (yao)

3084 2. Asumusye litonji basi kumwa mkologo basi pelepa wangali: the husband already harvested cotton and spent the money in drinking beer.

3085 Msagule chile chitenje chenu apa basi kaneko kusigale kulemba: you must choose your chitenje here then she will come to register you.

3086 (Rosemary telling Dora) kwana yejinji kunyumba: there are a lot at home.

3087 (Gertrude telling Dora) ngwala ngasose mbonga: I am going to fetch some relish.

3088 Litonji wasyumisye pangali anta limo ata likobili nganamba, nalimire tomato nambo ata mbiya:

3089 - he already sold his cotton and he didn’t give me his money, I helped him growing tomatoes but he sold himself.

3090 Ngati wandesile ulombele ngakuwusaka jaje kumangwenu: he left me alone, he said I should go back home.

3091 Akusaka alyeje jikape induyo: his aim was to eat alone what they harvested.

3092 Pelepa akusaka awujire nimatesile kuti iyayi manya: he came and said that he wants to come back but I told him that I don’t want.

3093 Apano asumisye iliyonse yakwete imanga: as of now he has already sold everything
including maize.

Yakuwala ya mbweteyi mpwanga juli ku Balaka ni wambere skirt ni malaja nambo une walombere walime: even these clothes I received from my sister at Balaka, I have failed to buy myself, but I have a husband and we grow some.

Une ngangusang’anda niwandu, basi gambaga kupeleka moni m’jimwiche basi pangali mayi: I don’t have some friends here but we just greet each other, nothing!

3. Achalume wakwe wapi, akuno kwangali achalume mwine wali ku SA une ngagwawonatu achalume akuno: here we don’t have men some of them are in SA and may be they have got money there.

4. Wane ma BS (others BS) akuti akala apiti alidiwapaya wandu mbiya tambala wajigalanga concern wee ngani tuyiche: they say in the past Amila was giving loan to some women from concern universal before I came (not clear).

Basi kulekangana mpela une: they divorce just like what I did.

Kwali ni pelepo: I don’t know.

5. Ipali yakusayiwona ikusasalalira, pana yine yambone: there are some of the things that husband do to please the wife.

6. kwalini asyene: I don’t know.

7. Mama kulaga, kuti mwine yine chawombole we niwanjawo: because of poor thinking that he will help her. Angamusye nyumba, kupala kulwala nobola kuloTradingcenter: in order to build a house, in hunger season helping each other and if you are ill you need someone to help taking care.

8. Nguwona ikusanonyela kwalini: they are used to be happy - I don’t know, une BS nganindende: I have never done BS, ngusagamba kulima: I just work in the field. [Rosemary]

Makolo gawune gawile kalakala nakusile nimama wanondi, nombo welewo mabosa nakalaga nayiche akuno, kutila mabosa: my parents died some yrs ago, and I was staying with my young mother but she liked gossiping that’s why I runned from there coming to this village.
Yineyi ngulepela kwanga: some of the things am failing to answer.

9. ee ngusatama nili mkuliusya kuti ana kulagakuuli: yes I used to ask myself why we are poor.

Ngati ngakupata kupataka kulaga basi: we are poor or she is poor then where can she go.

Ku Malawi kuno kuti ngalima nibasi tumonga, litonji kusumisyamo basi kukusapata utendere m’majumba mbale, kuwala, akuno kwawona nijamanja:

- in Malawi if you are not working in the field like maize, cotton and sale that means we don’t find peace but if you grow crops and sale, that means you will buy plates, clothes.

A 15 Emra

2. kuumba zidina: making bricks

3. Ayi azimayi amapanga geni: No women do BS.

4. kutha banja - amanyamuka: end marriage - and leave.

Iweyo umalephera umayesetsa kuti absinthe koma amakana, akamapanga zimenezo umawauza kuti asiye: we fail, we try to make them change but they refuse, when they are doing that, we tell them to stop.

4. Basi umphawi omwewu umati anthu adziti uli pa banja: because of poverty, they say that people should say that she is married.

5. Tsoka la kwa Mudzi B, mavuto am’mabanja kusiyana mwina ena kumabereka ana aja kumamwalira, mwamuna uja amachoka amati ndikawone zina: unlucky of Mudzi B, we have got different problems in our marriage, others give birth to children and they don’t stay alive, then the husband used to say that I am going to another wife to see some changes

6. Enaamasangalala ena samasangalala: others used to be happy while others not.

Amawawona kupusa amunawo: they see that you are foolish.
Sindikudziwa kuti kuno ndi chani. Kuno samathandiza: I don’t know why, but here they don’t help.

A 16-17 GVH

2. Azimayi ambiri amalimbikira kumadzi, kusesa, kuyang’ana ndiwo, kuganiza kuti pabanja Pamela adya chain, mwamuna amangoganiza zoti apite kemunda alime, abwere akhale kuyembekezerakazi atenge madzi ampatse mwamuna asambe, ampatse chakudy adye aziyendayenda, mkazi kukumbukira chakudy cha madzulo, mwamuna akabwera adya chain:

- most of the women work hard in fetching water, sweeping, fetching some relish, thinking what the children will eat, a husband think of going to the field to cultivate, when they come back home they just stay waiting for the wife to give him some water to wash his body, give him some food to eat to be moving around. A wife thinking what to eat in the evening, what will the husband eat.

3. Abambo amapeza ndalama, amalima ena amapanga BS yoyenda kutali kutali. Ena nsomba, koma mkazi amatanganidwa pa khomo ndi ana. Sangathe kupita kunyanja mpaka ku Lilongwe, makolo ena amafa ndikukhala ana okha ndikumabereka ana, apanga BS:

- men find money through farming, others BS in different places, others fish, but a woman used to be busy at home taking care of children. She cannot go to the lake up to Lilongwe, other parents die and live their children to take care of themselves. Can they do BS?

4. limatha banja - amamusiya mkazi: they divorce - they leave the wife.

5. Ena amakhalira kupilira chifukwa cha ana sangathe kusamala wokha: others they just accept what the husband is saying because they cannot manage to take care of children.

6. (phone ringing) amuna ambiri akazi ochepa. Mavuto ku Malawi uwu utendewu wanachewa wa achibaba wawo, chiwererewere chikutupa ligongo lyangalombera, akusatenda kuti apate njete alye wanache ugali. Nanga ukwati amafunsira mkazi:

- A lot of women and few men, a lot of problems in Malawi, even these children here (kids surrounded) they don’t have their fathers, a lot of prostitutes because a lot of women are not married, they do this inorder to find salt to feed the children, can a woman propose?
7. Ayi, ndinayitanidwa kwa a SubT/A kuti azungu amene aja akupopani magazi, pano talandira chovala amafuna kuti tikhale aumphawi, ameneyu ndi mulungu, andiitana kawiri, zikanakhala zitenje ziwiiri ndikanawapatsa chimodzi, mtsikanayo akanabisa chifukwa ndi bwana wake nditenga chithunzi ndikawaonetse:

- No! I was called by SubT/A [small crossroads market] that; the white woman who came in your village wants to take blood, as of now we have received cloths, he wanted us to be still poor, this is God who have done this, he called me twice, if I had 2 pieces of zitenje, I could have given him 1 piece, that girl can hide because she is her boss, I will take the picture to show him.

Kale anthu amapeza bwino chifukwa zolimazi pabanja paliponse zimakwanila, pakali pano anthu atha kumwalira panopa azimayi akupeza bwino chifukwa akulima chimanga cha hybrid, kuthira fertilizer, kenako akugulitsa ndikuyambira BS:

- In the past people were getting better because every family were growing enough food, nowadays women are better off because they are growing hybrid maize, applying fertilizer, then they sell and start BS.

Anthu samalimbirana kulima malo olima alibe okwanira: they don’t work hard in farming because they don’t have enough place to cultivate.

A 18-19 Amila

2. Banja la ine sizikusiyana ndi kukhala mbeta chifukwa chilichonse chikuyang’ana ine, kuntchini, njala ndimafuna ndekha, chakudy, chimbudzi ndekha, mchere panopa ndikumagula chimanga ndikumadya ndi ana kuti ndisiyanitse sindikudziwa koma amai amushe chifukwa choti anapereka dzina kwa mwana wanga basi anampatsa blanket. Poyamba timangogona mphasa ndapangitsa panopa:

- In my family there is no different with the one who is marred, because am doing everything on my own, maizemill, in hunger season I found food myself, toilet myself, salt, as of now I am buying maize for food and eat with children. To make a different I don’t know, but Blessings because she gave my daughter a name, then she took a blanket and gave it to her, at first we were just sleeping on the floor as of now I bought a mat.

Poyamba ndimapanga geni yachinangwa, kenako zitumbuwa kuti mwana avinidwe pano ndikumapanga geni yamizimbe, ndinakongola 200 ndikuyamba geni: At first I was doing a BS of selling cassava, later on zitumbuwa, in order to initiate my son, as of now am doing
a BS of selling sugarcane, I went to borrow 200mk to start a business [Amila].

3. Kulimbikira ganyu, kulima mumsewu, ena ku John, amuna anga amandipemppha makobili a fodya: working hard in ganyu, working at masaf others going to SA, my husband was begging me some money for tobacco.

Ena amakana kuchita geni akuti anthu wokwatira asamachite geni ife anthu ambiri amatisika, tsono pokana chilichonse ganyu ndi chifukwa chake ndikumaoda mizimbe, kubwera kuno madzulo, leronso ndipita ndikagulitsa ndikudikira inuyo. Ndimagulitsa ku grocery ndimapita lolemba mpaka lamulungu:

- others they refuse to do a BS, they say those who are married are not supposed to do BS. A lot of them laugh at me because I don’t want to depend on ganyu that’s why am buying sugarcane and sell, coming back in the evening. Even today I will go and sell, I am waiting for you to finish, I sell at the grocery I used to go from Monday to Sunday.

4. limatha - munthu uja akamukhazika pansi ngati sakusintha limatha, ena amapita kwa a mfumu, ndinakanena kwawo ndiye anawauza kuti absinthe, pano sakukhala pakhomo akuchita manyazi:

- They divorce - they sit down and discuss with him but if he is not changing they divorce, others they went to the chief, like my husband he went to the chief. I told his relatives and he was told to change, as of now he is not staying at home he is ashamed.

Ndikulephera kupita ku tchalitchi chifukwa chosowa zovala: Am failing to go to church because I don’t have enough clothes [Amila].

5. Amawayitanira a kwawo - ena kukambirana, ena ukwati umatha: they call his relative, some of them they discuss while others end marriage.

6. Kumakhala kupilira, ine ndakhala zaka 17 kumaona mavuto koma chaka chino ndiye zawonjeza, njerwa ndimaumba ndekha, madzi ndekha, kumanga waganyu, denga ndinawauza anthu, ndalama zake za chinangwa. Panopa kumaliro sindipita sindinachape:

- They just accept anything, I have stayed for 17 years, facing some problems but this year it’s too much, I was making bricks alone, I hired someone to build a house even the roof, the money from selling cassava. As of now I don’t want, up to 20 yrs, and [I will not go to attend a funeral because I didn’t wash my clothes – there is a funeral today].
Mavuto kuti uchite chibwenzi umatenga matenda ndiye ana amazunzika: because of problems, to have a boyfriend you will get diseases, then kids will get troubles.

7. Ayi, ena akakhala ndi chinyerenyere amafuna amuna koma opanda chinyerenyere amangokhala: No! when others have got a desire they want men, but those who don’t have a desire they just stay.

8. Gertrude ambiri amakhala mahule, akawona kuti munyumba mulibe mchere olo ndiwo ndiye amachita chibwenzi kumakagona ndi amuna ena, ena samatha kudyera mbale yobooka: most of them are prostitutes, when they see that they don’t have relish, they have a boyfriend, and have sex with other men, others don’t manage to eat using a licking plate:

Amuna ake omwewa amalandanalandana: The same men in the village they just exchange door to door and doing sex.

Amachita kufunsiridwa amakhala akuyesa akawona kuti ndi hule osakana amuna amabwerabwera kenako agone nawe. Akupita ku maliro (Fissa) koma ndawagaila nandolo akuti adzandibwezerwa:

- They used to proposed, they tempt you and when they see that you are a prostitute they come often, later on they have sex with you. She is going to the funeral (Fissa) but I gave her pigeon pea she said she will give me back.

Kwathu kuno kopangira geni ndi kutali komanso ukachita geni anthu amakuseka, kungokhala sibwino. Anthu amafuna udziwapempha mchere, kuntchini, koma ine sindikusiya. Panopa amandiseka geni ya mizimbe:

- in our village we go very far to do Bsand if you are doing BS most of the people laugh, just staying it’s not good they want you to beg them salt, maizemill but am not stopping. As of now they laugh at me for the BS of sugarcane.

Ukamachita geni samasangalala, makamaka ndikagula matemba amaseka amafuna kuti udzipanga ganyu: when you are doing BS they are not happy, they want you to be doing ganyu.

A 20 Hilda
2. Timapita kumadzi, kusesa mnyumba, ndiwo, kuphika madzi amuna, kulima. Amuna amakafuna ndalama, kulima, kumanga nyumba, bafa, chimbudzi:

- We fetch water, sweeping in the house, relish, boiling water for the husband, working in the field, men go to fetch money, farming, building house, bathroom, toilet.

3. Amalima maganyu: they go for casual labour.

Amalima koma kusiyana, amuna ndi amphamvu: they work in the field but in different way because men are strong.

4. Ena amakambirana, ngati alephera banja limatha: they used to discuss and if they have failed they divorce. Amayenera kumusiya: he is supposed to divorce.

5. Ena amakhala kuti munthuyu wachoka naye kutali, mwakhala zaka zambiri ndiye olo ndimuthamangitse alowera kuti: others stayed together for a long period of time then they think that if I will chase him! Where is he going to stay.

6. Osagwirizana (because of some disagreements) kwamakhalidwe, ena amuna amalephera kusamala pakhomo, ndiye mkazi uyu amati bola banja lithe: according to behaviour, some men fail to take care of the family and most of the women used to say that it’s good to end marriage.

7. Palibe umakhala mbeta: nothing you stay alone without getting married. Chifukwa chithandizo chonse chikupezeka: because you are able to find everything.

Banja umakwatira chifukwa cha mavuto: you get married because of problems.

Ayi chifukwa amazipangira payekha: no because she depends on her own.

Enaamasangalala koma ena ayi amati chisamaliro akundipatsa: others used to be happy while others not they say that at list she is providing what I want.

Kaya amaona ngati zikuchochera kwa amuna ena: I don’t know! May be they think that the money is coming from another man.

8. Masiku ano azimayi akupanga geni kale kunalibe koma kutibula basi: nowadays
women are doing BS while in the past they were just pounding by hand.

Panopa basi kukongoza ndalama kale kunalibe: as of now at least people are taking loan while in the past not.

Mwina ifeyo sitikulimbikira ndi chifukwa chake tili osauka, mwina kulima: may be we are not working hard that’s why we are poor, may be farming.

**A 21 Pamela**

2. Kunoko umphawwi wachuluka, azibambo amapeza ganyu ndikumagwila, pomwe ifeyo kuti tikalime munda wa munthu ndikovuta, chifukwa azimayi timakwanitsa kupalira: here there is a lot of poverty and men used to find ganyu while women it’s difficult to go and work in someone’s field because we just manage weeding.

Zomwe zimachitika mzimayi amakhala pakhomo, kenako kubwera mzibambo amai ndikukufunani, ndikuwalola mawa mtondo mwina wakusiyi uli pa mavuto akulu - mwina kupita kwina kukafunsira iwe kukusiyi: what happens is that a woman stay at home then a man comes to propose you, then you accept, later on may be they leave you and get married to another one.

Azimayi sitingakwanitse chifukwa timadikira kufunsiridwa pomwe azibambo akamupeza munthu pa msewu amamufunsira: we can not manage because we just want to be proposed while men when they found someone on the way they propose.

Zimezemo ndizimene zimachitika kunoko, ifeyo tilibe mbali yofunsira, kuti tiochke pano tikafunsire mamuna amati hule: that is what happens here, we don’t have part to propose, if we can go and propose a man, people say that you are a prostitute.

3. Ambiri amalimbikira ulimi, azimayi ndichinthu chovuta kupanga mpikisano ndi azibambo, geni ya tomato: a lot of women it’s difficult to compete with men. BS of tomatoes.

Pali abambo kumapanga geni mzimayi geni zimayenda bwino, koma azibambo ena amati geni usamachite, zomwe zisali zabwino: in other families all of them do BS and it’s good while other men they don’t accept a wife to do BS which is not good.

Azibambo ena amaganiza kuti mkazi akapita ku geni akapeza amuna ena amakayikirana: others don’t trust each other they think that if a woman will go to BS that means she will
meet with some men.

Ena alipo azimayi olimbikira koma chimachitika, mpamba ndiwosowa: they are other women who work hard but what happens is that it’s difficult to find capital.

Kusowa kotenga ndalama, pakanakhala kuti pali ngongole zomwe anamwe poyamba, bwenzi akuyamba geni: nowhere to take money but if it was possible to take loan like what others did in the past they could have start BS.

Ndanena kale kuti mzikambo atha kukafunsira ganyu, kulima kaya njerwa pomwe ife njerwa sitingaumbe: as I have already said that men find money through ganyu farming or making bricks, but we cannot manage.

4. Umamumasula chifukwa tsiku lina uzapeza mavuto. Ndibwino kukhala wekha: we divorce because one day you will find some problems and it’s good to stay alone.

Pali ndi anthu ake amuna ena ngati sakutsangalatsidwa ndi khalidwe la mkazi, ena amauzana koma ena amangonyamuka kumapita: it depend other men if they are not happy with others they discuss while others they just go.

Mwamuna ndiyemwe amafulumira kuthetsa banja, komanso mkazi ngati zikumupwetteka amathetsa: especially men they are quicker to end the marriage but even women if they feel pain they end marriage.

Iweyo ulibe udindo/mphamvu yaikulu kuposa mzikambo: because we don’t have responsibility/power more than men.

5. Mkaziyo anazolowera zochita za mwamunayo: a woman is used to the behaviour of a man.

6. Chifukwa cha zochitika ndi khalidwe lathu pali ena makhalidwe awo amati tinasayinirana mpaka kufa, koma kunoko khalidwe lake sizingachitike, monga ifeyo atsikana takwatirana, tsiku lina pamapezeka chinthu chakunyasa ndiye umati lonjezo lija silingathetheke: because of our behaviour others in their behaviour they said that we signed till death but here it can not happen for example we girls we are married and in the family there is something bad that makes you not happy, then you say the promise cannot be fulfilled.

7. Ayi pamenepa chomwe ukufuna chikukwanilitsidwa sungakwatile, ngakhale
kunalembedwa kuti tidzikhala awiriawiri ngati akuwona kuti geni ikuyenda sungafune banja umangokhala. Koma ndi ana omwe amakuzolowera, kenako anthu amati amene uja ndi ana omwe akupanga nawo zibwenzi, kuyambira 15, ana amasiku ano sakuopa akulu olo wapabanja amati bola ndikanakhala ine:

- No! at that time you are able to find what you want. You cannot get married, it was written that we should stay 2, two (in the bible) if you can see that, in BS you get everything, you can’t need a husband, you just stay, but even young children they get used to you (no respect) then some people say that: she is even in relationship with young from 15 yrs, young boys of today they are not afraid of elders even if you are married they say that (if it was me (meaning that he can do more than your husband).

8. Ngati muli mwamuna mnyumba amakusiyitsa zomwe ukupanga amati zones ndizichita ena 2-3 days amalephera lamulo liposa mphamvu mwamuna ndi mutu wa banja: if you have got a husband they stop you what you are doing, they say that I will provide everything, after 2-3 days they fail, a law - a husband is the head of the family.

9. Timayendera kuti uyo akapanga chakuti andigayira, tikanakhala kuti timalimbikira zinthu zikanasinthu: we just wait for someone to help us if we work hard, things could have changed.

Malingan ndi khalidwe kubwera wina kuti ndili ndi ganyu amati ayi ndikamupangire ameneyo, timadikira munthu abwere atiuze: according to our behaviour if someone comes to ask if you can do ganyu we say I cannot go there and work in her house. We wait for someone to tell us.

Timaganizira kuti akatiyesa amphawı: we think that people will say that we are poor.

A 22-23 Dora

2. Azibambo amamanga nyumba, kupita ku ntchito kaya Jubeki, mwamuna akatalikira timapanga geni, kumathandiza ana pakhomo soap, kumunda kumalima, zimbudzi denga mkazi sangakwanitse mulungu momwe analengera kuti kuhale amuna komanso akazi kuti zina azipanga amuna zina akazi:

- Men build houses, going to work somewhere like in SA, if the husband is very far we do BS and help our children e.g soap, men working in the field, making toilet roof, a woman cannot manage. It’s the way how God created that men should do this and a woman should do this.
3. Amaposa! Koma azimayi ena ndiwolimbikira, chifukwa amuna ena amakhala aulesi, osadziwa kusamala pakhomo: it’s true but other women works very hard because other men are lazy. They don’t know how to take care of the family.

4. Timapita kwa ankhoswe kukawauza kuti sitikugwirizana pakhomo kaya waulesi, sagula chakudya, njala ikabwera akalephera timakadula samani kwa a mfumu- zimakhala chimodzimodzi mwamuna amapita kukafunsira mkazi kwina kuti ndikaone khalidwe lina: - we go to ankhoswe to tell him what is going on in the family, if he is lazy not buying food in hunger season, if they have failed we go to the chief to ask a letter to divorce - it’s just the same but men go to propose another wife inorder to see another behaviour.

5. Mwina ena amasangalala ndi zomwe mwamuna akuchita, ena amakhala otola zakuba ndiye akazi ena zimawasangalatsa, koma mkazi woti sakudiwa zakubazo umamuthamangitsa kuti ayi ndikhala mbeta ena amabwera kudzakukwatira:

- May be others used to be happy with the behaviour that the husband is doing, others (husband) are thieves and other wives used to be happy when the husband is coming with something at home. But for the wife who don’t know how to steal, you can chase him and stay alone not getting married.

Chifukwa ndi mwamuna anackoka kwa amayi awo kudzakukwatira ndikubereka ana amafuna atulutse mphatso. Nanga amayi awo angatulutse ana? Basi chilengedwe momwe mulungu analengera kuti mkazi akhale ndi mwamuna:

- because he is a man who moved from his parents, to marry me, and give birth to children, they want to produce gifts (meaning children) his mother can produce children from him? It’s just nature, according to how God created a woman should have a husband.

Mwamuna sangamve kanthu, chifukwa mwina ukumpatsa madzi, kumuphikira nsima, koma amene akupanga zimenezo umamva kuwawa kuti mwamunayu ndidzingomuphukira, anachoka kwao kwa amayi ake, kuti adzindithandiza vuto lapakhomo, kusamala Pamela, kundisamala ine:

- A man can just accept [you doing BS] because may be you give him some water, cooking for him (nsima) but the one who is providing everything feels pain, that the husband is just staying, just cooking for him, he moved from his parents to help me in all my needs taking care of children and me.
(First laughed) maganizo kusiyana ena amamuthamangitsa mwamuna uja ena amati bolani akundipatsa Pamela: we think differently others chase the husband while others say that at least he is giving me children.

(Why children) mulungu ndi amene amapereka m'hatso, ife timangozipeza kuchokera kwa makolo athu: God is the one who gives these gift.

Ambiri timazolowera, makolo athu anazolowera, akuti kalelo makolo athu amavala kaya chain? Ukapolole zdzatha chifukwa tikalima ulimi sizikuyenda, pano thonje lili mnuyumba, pomwe ena amaganiza kuti apite kwina kukapanga geni koma akulephera:

- we are just used, our parents got used, in the past our parents were putting on what! What? Our slavery will not end because although we are farming but it is not helping, as of now we are just keeping our cotton, while others were thinking that they will go somewhere else to do BS but they have failed.

Ena amabwera kudzatilemba maina a ana, amagonama kuti chithandizo chibwera koma osabwera. Timangolembetsa chifukwa amachokera kutali, timaganiza kuti atithandiza: others come inorder to register our children, they just cheat that they will come or send a support but they don’t come. We just register because they come from far, we think that they will help.

A 24-25-26-27 Alma

2. Azibambo ena alipo abwino, ena alipo ankhanza amayinso alipo abwino ena ankhanza chifukwa aliyense ali ndi mtima wakwakwe, inu mungadziwe zomwe zili mumtima mwanga?

- They are other men who are good, others abuse and other women are also good others abuse, because we have got different hearts. Can you know what is in my heart?


- when others arrive at a certain place they show interest being happy with everybody whom they find. Chatting with children and we say that she/he is a good person not a dog no! but others act like dogs you can’t like them. After asking them a question they
Men do their own things and women do their own things. Building a house, making a maize storage, digging a toilet, farming. Other women are lazy they just stay without doing anything staying alone without a husband they cheat that they are ill when people are working in the field, but when a man comes to marry her she starts getting better inorder to be helped working in the field. But other women like me (name Alma) I do everything on my own like farming, asking someone to build a house for me, when you are just staying! Can problems be solved?

Others like growing a lot of cotton after selling they have a lot of money, others grow a lot of crops like g/nuts, maize after selling they get better. For example this house the iron sheets came from farming only.

Azimayi ena amalima kuposa azibambo koma ena aulesi ali pa umbeta amati ndikudwala anzake akulima, akabwera mamuna wachila, amafuna mamunayo kuti amuthandize (laughing).

Other women work hard in the field than men, but others are lazy, when they are not married they say am ill while their friends are working in the field, when the man comes to propose they get better, she wants him to help her in the field.

Kutha ukwati - chimodzimodzi banja limapasuka, chifukwa banja ndi chikondi, palibe mankhwala basi kutha. Olo kukambirana zimakanika akafika pakhomo amasinthu ndiye timati kafikeni bwino bamboo. Basi njira yake ndi yomweyo yolekana chifukwa m’banja ngati mulibe ntendere, chikondi, limatha sungamukakamize mwamuna mwina ngati zumuwawa mwamuna amathetsa, ngati zumuwawa mkazi amathetsa ukwati:
They end marriage - just the same marriage end, because marriage is love, there is no
medicine, they just end marriage, even after discussing you fail, when he comes at
home he used to change his mind and we tell them to have a nice journey. The only
way is to divorce, because if there is no peace in marriage, no love, the marriage end,
you can’t force the husband, sometimes if the husband feels pain he ends the
marriage. Even if the wife feels pain, she ends the marriage.

5. kuwopa kuti ndikamuthamangitsa ndivutika, kapena muli china chimene
chikumutsangalatsa, ena amakhala ankhanza koma mwina amatha kusamala ana, banja
kulismamala, akayenda pobwera kuwatsangalatsa ana pakhomo, ndiye umapilira
chifukwa pali zina zabwino:

- we used to be afraid that if I will chase him it will be difficult to take care of myself, or
else there is something that please you and you can’t chase him, others abuse but they
are able to take care of children and the family, after moving around he comes back and
chat with the children and you just accept.

6. kusagwirizana, ena kumangomwa mowa, kulima osathandizana mkazi osamuveka,
ntchito pakhomo osagwira:

- because of some disagreement, just drinking beer, not even helping in farming, not
buying clothes for the wife. At home just staying without helping in other things.

7. Ayi sangafune, une ukwati unatha kalekale mpaka pano ndikukalamba ndikukhala
ndekha ndimangidzilamulira, ndiye chain, sindidya, nanga alipo woti angandifunse?:

- No she can’t need marriage my marriage ended and now am just staying getting old
now. When I am staying alone I just decide what to eat, either I will not eat, is there
anyone else who can ask me?

Single- ee timakumana ndi mavuto monga nyumba yagwa umafuna mamuna ngati ulibe
ndalama ndiye kuti ukhala ndi nyumba, alipo, koma siambiri panali mayi dimba amamanga
nyumba koma anamwalira, amathanso kufolera denga nkholwe, ena alipo. Sindikudziwa
komwe anaphunzira, koma chifukwa cha mavuto amaona ena m’mene amapangira ayi
sitimaseka koma timati ali ndi mwayi, umphamvu kusiyana ena ndi aulesi:

- Yes we face some problems for example; if the house collapsed you will need a
husband, but if you don’t have money can you have a house. They are some but not
many, there was mother of Mr Dauda she was able to build a house, but she died, she
was also able to make a roof, maize storage, there are some who knows how to do this. I don’t know where she learned, but because of problems, she saw how other people were doing, no we were not laughing but we were saying that she was lucky, we were different others weak while others just lazy.

8. Ee zimamutsangalatsa chifukwa akulephera: ndaneana kale kuti pamakhala zina zomutsangalatsa mkaziyo, amapanga zina zoipa koma zina zabwino kungopilira basi:

- Yes he is happy because he is failing, I have already said that there is something that please the wife, and others bad, we just accept.

Madzi timatunga kutali, komanso kumsika ndikutali, mafumu akuno ndi oipa, monga ine ndiwamkulu amatilemba koma zinthu zija zikabwera amagawana wokha ndikumadya, monga ngati zomwe mwatengazi mukanawapatsa amfumu kuti atipatse sakanatipatsa. Othandiza akufuna kuthandiza koma mafumu:

- We fetch some water very far, even the market is very far, chiefs of this village are bad, for example am the elder one, they used to write down our names but if they receive something to give some people, they just share among themselves and eat. Even what you have brought here, if you thought of giving to the chief to give us, we could have not received, those who help wants to help but the problem is chiefs.

9. Singing; mway mwayi wanzama ofukura ndi manja khasu lilipo (clapping hands) nazitele nazitele bwenzi zikoma mwaona mwaona ku Malawi mwaona kunyada mwaona:

- We are lucky and lucky like digging nuts with our hands while a hoe is there (clapping hands). She said these words because she was happy with what she received.

A 28 Christina

2. Azibambo amagwira pa denga, mwina nyumba, azimayi timatunga madzi kapena kuphika, kwinako sinditha kuyankha:

- Men are able to make a roof, may be a house, women we fetch some water, sometimes cooking, others will not manage to answer.

3. Ee ndi zoona! Mzibambo amapanga ganyu pomwe ife timanyozera timati sitingapite kuganyu:
- Yes it’s true because some men used to move around finding ganyu while women we
don’t do it we say we cannot go for ganyu.

Basi mphwayi koma munthu akakhala kuti ndiwolumbikira umatha kuima pawekha:
because of laziness but if we can work hard, that means you can do things independently.

4. Amapita kwa ankhoswe kukakambirana nkhani koma ngati sizikutheka amasiyana:
They go to ankhoswe to complain and discuss, but if he is not changing they divorce.

Amapanga chimodzimodzi kupita kwa ankhoswe ngati sakusintha amapita kukakwatira
mkazi wina: They do the same going to ankhoswe if she is not changing they and marry
another wife.

Ambiri ndi azibambo, nanga si mzimayi amayendala lamulo la mamuna, pomwe
mwamuna chomwe amaganiza chimakhala chomwecho:

- A lot of them [who divorce] are men, because the wife used to follow what the
husband is saying, while most of the husband he don’t change his mind.

Chifukwa chilengedwe mamuna ndi mutu wa banja ndiye timvera: Because it’s nature and
the husband is the head of the family then we listen to them.

Azimayi akakhala m’banja amadalira mzibambo kaya wasowa mchere umatha kumuuza
mzibambo. Olo nthawi yanjala umamuusa kuti ufa watha: When a woman is married we
take the husband as the head of the family- we depend on him. If you don’t have salt, you
tell the husband even in hunger season you tell him that we have finished ufa.

5. Nanga olo ndimuthamangitse ndipanga chain, umavutioka ndiye umati bola
ndidzikhala nayebe, umati olo ulakwitse pali zina amapanga zabwino: Even if I will
chase him what am I going to do, you find some problems, then you say that it’s good
just to stay with him you say that, although he is doing some mistakes, other things are
good.

6. Masiku ano amuna akuthamanga kwambiri ndi akazi: Nowadays a lot of men are
moving around a lot with women.

Mwina chilipo chomwe amaona kwa azimayi, mwina amatHamra umve sakukwanitsa
zomwe ndikufuna: May be there is something that he saw from women, may be they run
away from their dirtness, she is not able to do what he likes.

7. Azimayi tili mitundu iwiri ena amati sindingathe kugona ndekha popanda mamuna, koma kwa ine sivuto kumakhala ndekha. Palibe chomwe chingandipangitse kufuna banja - mwina ali ndi mavuto omwe ine sindingadziwe:

- We are two different kinds of women some of them say that I cannot manage to sleep alone without a husband, but to me, there is no problem to stay alone. there is nothing else that can make me to get married, may be they have got problems that I cannot know.

8. Amakhala ndi manyazi, chifukwa anthu amati m’nyumba muja abambo akungokhala: they used to be ashamed [when wife does BS] because some people say that in such a house a husband is just staying.

9. Sindikudziwa chifukwa chake: I don’t know the reason.

A 29

2. kumanga nkhwokwe, khola, bafa, chimbudzi mzimayi kuphika, kutungwa madzi, kuyang’ Pamela nkuni komanso kusamala ana kwaphikira, kuwachapila, mwina ndi momwe mulungu analengera:

- Making maize storage, kraal, bathroom, toilet a woman cooking, fetching water, fetching firewood and taking care of children, washing their clothes, may be is the way how God created.

3. Azimayi tilibe ntchito yogwira, timangosamala ana pakhomo, sitimapita kukafuna ntchito mwamuna ndi amene amapita kukagwira ganyu, ndikumapeza ndalama:

- Women we don’t have job to do but we just take care of children we don’t go to find job, only men go to ganyu and find money.

You go to ankhoswe - just the same if he likes you he also go to ankhoswe, most of them are men who end marriage. At that time it means to saw another woman somewhere may be because women we just accept. We just follow the rules from our parents that; no! don’t do that, this is your first marriage, then you just stay in order to leave you himself, may be they believe that changing husband is not good but to have one husband only - nowadays there is a disease, and also giving birth to a lot of children with different husbands is not good because if another new husband comes he always abuse your children.

5. mwina chifukwa choti wabereka naye ana ambiri kodi anawo ndiwasamala bwanji ndekha?: May be because you gave birth to a lot of children with him, how can I take care of them alone?

6. Mwina chifukwa tilibe lamulo lotsatira - eya analipo - zamadera ena kaya boma - kaya makolo malingana ndi mtundu wa anthu ndi umene umapangitsa:

May be because we don’t have a law to follow - yes there are some in other districts - may be parents according to the tribes of people that’s what makes a marriegew to end.

7. Ayi sungafune banja - ena amafuna chilengedwe kuti adzikhala ndi mamunayo (laughing) mwina kukhalira pamodzi: No she can’t need a husband its nature in order to be staying with the husband, may be staying [/sleeping] together (meaning sex).

8. Amamva bwino - mtima kusiyana koma ena ayi - kufuna kwa iweyo: He feels good - different hearts but others not - its your opwn wish.

9. Sindicayambe ndaganiza : - I have never thought of it.

Single women: amanenedwa - amati sakukwatira kukupatsa dzina loti sakwata - ntchito umavutika monga kumanga bafa, - ngati uli ndi mwana wam’muna umamuza, ngati uli ndi khobili umauza wa ganyu - sungakwanitse:

She used to be gossiped - they say that you are not getting married and they give you a name called unmarried - you find some problems like making a bathroom, if you have got a son you can tell him and if you have got money you ask someone to do it. You
cannot manage to make yourself.

A 30 Kasongo (dotta-in-law of Dora)

1. Ndinkwatiwa mu 2006, woyamba anabadwa mu Novembala chaka cha 2007, uyu anabadwa October 2008: I was married in 2006, first child was born in November 2007, this one was born in October 2008.

2. Akayimba kwathu kwa Mpoka kumowa anali ndi choimba (radio) cha Amidu anthu akamamwa mowa, tinkacheza ndithu ndiye ndipamene anandifunsira ayi nanga si amaimba, ndiye kwa 1 week ndipamene anandifunsira - anafunsira kaye chibwenzi - ndiye tinakhala pa chibwenzi chaka chimodzi kenako tinakwatiwana:

- He has a radio that was used when there is beer in our village Mpoka. The radio was for Amidu, when people were drinking beer we were chatting that’s where he proposed me, he proposed me after chatting for a week, we started with chibwenzi for a year after that we got married.

Nanga sinthawi imeneyo ndinali wamng’ono sindikanatha kukhala m’banja ayi, nanga sindinkamuona momwe ankachitira pachibwenzi ndiye ndinkaona kuti kutsogolo atha kuputiliza zomwezo, zomwe ndinkafuna pamoyo wanga ankandipatsa, amachita kundipatsa yekha, koma pena nanga simunthu samalota kuti alibe chakuti, pena amandipatsa wokha pena ndimapempha ndalama pena amandigulira nsalu, nadlama nthawi yomwe ndinali ku school amandigulira makope, ball-point amadzera moyimbamo amati akayimba, ndiye akawagaila ndalama, amadzandipatsa ineyo:

- At that time I was very young, I couldn’t manage to stay in marriage, I saw him the way he was doing when we were in relationship and I knew that he will continue in future, he was providing what I wanted in my life, I was not begging money, sometimes he was buying chitenje, when I was at school he was buying some notebooks, ball-point, through the radio after singing somewhere else the owner of the radio was giving him some money then he was coming to give me.

Ali ndi zaka 24 - ee loyamba: he is 24 years old - first marriage.

Amuna ena pano ali koomba njerwa nanga mkazi angakwanitse, ife timapita kumadzi, kumaphika, amuna amaphika koma sikwenikweni: Some men are making bricks but a woman cannot manage, we fetch some water, cooking, men can cook but not really.

Amuna amamanga nyumba pomwe akazi sam, atha - titha kumphunzira koma povuta nanga
si mamuna anampatsa nzeru kuposa mkazi: Men build houses while women cannot manage - we can learn but it is difficult because men were given more intelligent than women.

They used to go to ankhoswe to explain what a husband is doing then the ankhoswe used to tell the husband to change his behaviour - they also go to ankhoswe or the one who is related to a wife in order to change.

Amangokumana ankhoswe, anatilangiza kuti akazi asamachite mwano azimvera zomwe akunena amuna mudzikachita zomwe akufuna akaziwo: The nkhoswe met, they advised that women should not be rude but listening to what a husband is saying, even your husband do what your wife wants you to do.

Amatsogola ndi amuna, nanga si zochita za mkazi zimasiyana ndi mamuna m’banja zomwe wanena mamuna wamkazi amamvera - amamvera komano nambala 1 ndi wam’mana zimasiyana: The husband used to be in fore front because what women do is different with men, in mareige what a husband say the wife used to obey. Men obey but number 1 is a man, it is different.

Women used to tell the husband that; as of now I don’t have safuliya (a pot), plates, I don’t have chitenje and the husband goes to buy, sometimes they refuse may be they don’t have money they say that I must go and fetch some money - he is making bricks, then if we don’t have soap he used to go and take some money where he is making bricks.

Ayi wailesi alibe anatenga akazi awo a bambo momwe ankapita kwao. Iwowo anangobwereka: No he don’t have a radio, the wife of the owner of the radio took it when she was going to her village he was just borrowing.

Ine pena ndimapita kunyumbako kuphika mowa, pena ndimawoda mizimbe - kumudzi kwathu ndi kwa M. village - kuno ndinabwera mwezi wa disemba chaka chatha kwathuko timasowa munda olima pomwe kuno minda ndiyambiri ndiye amuna anga ananena kuti
Sometimes I go in my village to make beer, sometimes buying sugarcane for sale, my home village is M. village, I came in this village in December last year, in my village we were lacking a field to cultivate while here there are a lot of fields then my husband told me that lets go home.

Iwowo - chifukwa Iwowo ndi amene amapeza ndalama, komanso ndi amene amadziwa mavuto a m’banja: My husband - because he is the one who finds money and he is the one who knows some of the problems in our family.

Mwina amangofuna kuti adzikhala ndi dzina lokha kuti awo ndi akazi a ujeni - amafuna ulemu - komanso amunawo ngati akugwira ntchito adziwapatsa ndalama: May be they just want to have the name that they are the wife of someone - they want to be respected - and if the husband is working they should be able to give them money.

7. Akazi ena akakhala kuti akupanga uhule ndiye amunawo zimawanyasa ndiye amati bola kuwasiya ee zimachitika (talking to the child) basi ntima wawo samakhutitsidwa zomwe akupanga amuna awo:

- If some women are doing prostitution most of the men get bored and they say its good to leave them yes it happens they are not satisfied with what their husband are doing.

8. Ee ena amakhala mavuto, ndiye amati bola akhale ndi mamuna woti adziwathandiza - monga ngati nyumba ulibe mwana wamkuwo woti angakumangire ndiye umati bola ndikwatiire kuti adzindimangira nyumba kaya bafa, toilet, kitchen, wokha atha kupanga koma amati ndalamayi ndipangire zina ndiye bola ndikwatiwe chifukwa mamuna adzindipangira ulere:

- Yes, its because of other problems, and they say that at least they must have a husband who can help her - if you don’t have a house, and you don’t have an eldest son who can build it for you and you say that its good for me to get married so that he can build a house for me even bathroom, toilet, kitchen, they can do it on their own but they say that with my money I can use it in other things and its good for me toget married because a man will be able to do it freely.

9. Amamusiya ndikukwatira mkazi woti abereke. Palibe chomwe amachita nanga si akuphikilidwa ndiye amati bola akundiphikira:

- They leave her and get married to another woman who can bear children, there is
nothing else that he can, and they say that no problem because she is cooking for me.

Amakawauza abale ake kuti mamunayo azitakataka kuti mkaziyo amulandire watopa: They tell his relatives to tell him to find something to do in order to take care of the family because the wife is tired.

10. Nanga si maiko akunja ndi kuno ndi wosiyana, ife timalima basi mwina amagwira ntchito kuti apeze ndalama - ayi sakuthandiza chifukwa ena amangolemba maina basi kumapita:

- Because our country is different from other countries, we do farming only, may others find job inorder to get money, no! they are not helping because others they just come and write down our names and go.

A 31

2. Azibambo amavala trouser ife nsalu mwamuna amalowa ntchire kukadula mitengo, nyumba kupachikira mwina kumanga nyumba, mzimayi zakukitcheni pamtondo, ngati mukukhala bwinobwino ndiye kuti palibe chovuta:

- Men put on trouses and we put on chitenje. A man goes in the bush to cut down trees, making a roof may be building houses, a woman thinks of cooking and pounding, if you are staying properly that means there is no problem.

3. Azibambo amalimbikira kukafuna ganyu yolima ena kupanga geni ndi kumapeza ndalama - mzimayi atha kupanga. Komanso pali ndi azimayi ake. Ena azimayi olo apeze ndalama sangakwanitse kupanga geni mwina azibambo amatenga zochulukirapo kuposa amayi, chifukwa abambo amakhala ndi ndalama zambiri zoti zomwe akufuna kuwoda zimakwanira ndi ndalama zomwe ali nazo pomwe mzimayi sangakwanitse:

- Men work hard to find ganyu, especially farming, others doing BS and find their own money. A woman can do BS but they are some women who can manage BS. But other women although they find money they cannot manage to do BS, may be some men take a lot of money than women because men have a lot of money that they can go and buy what they want to sell, it is enough money that they can buy what they want while women cannot manage.

Azibambo amalima ndiye akalima amapeza ndalama zambiri ndikuyambira bizinesi. Azibambo ena woti alime nawo mwina amakupatsa zochepe iwowo amatenga zambiri (laughing) amapanga zimenezo kuti akhale ndi ndalama zambiri kuposa azimayi akakhala
Other men do farming, after farming they find money and start business, other men if you can grow crops with them they give you less money, and he takes a lot of money. They do that inorder for them to have a lot of money more than women, but if a woman stayed with that husband for along period of time and he comes from somewhere but very far they say that antway because I gave birth to a lot of children with him and I will still stay with him although she can face a lot of problems she says that what can I do according to the families of today, they just accept inorder for some people to say that she is married.

Nanga si kunalembedwa kuti munthu aliyense azikhala awiriawiri mzimayi samaima kogulitsa koma kogulitsa kuja amaima ndi azibambo sikawirikawiri kukhala pomwe akulandira ndalama monga ngati ulimi wathonje amalima ndi azibambo akagulitsa ndikulandira ndalama, ndiye pali azibambo ena woti akafika kunyumba amatenga ndalama ija ndikuwapatsa amayi yochepa koma zambiri ndikutenga abambo. Ndiye amayi amati ndiwone receipt ndiye amakaniza iwowo amawona kuti ndi mzibambo ndikamayenda ndikhale ndikenakake [tiny crossroads market], pena mwina koyendako nanga si mzibambo, mwina amapeza kamseli ndiye amatenga kamene kaja ndikupereka:

Because it was written that (bible) everybody should have a life partner when they are selling cotton, most of the men go to receive the money but women not really to be at the place where they receive money. For example after selling cotton they are some men, when they reach home they give less money to their wives and themselves they take a lot of money, when the wife ask for a receipt they don’t show her. They saw that they are men, and when moving around I should have something in my pocket may be when they are moving around because they are men they find a girlfriend somewhere and they keep that money to give her.

Azimayi ambiri amapita kwa ankhoswe kuti basi mukamutenge wanu zomwe akuchita ndatopa nazo koma ambiri ayi amati ndidzikhala nawo olo awone mavuto:

Most of women they go to ankhoswe to tell them to take his relative, ‘am tired with what he is doing’ but most of the women they don’t do this, they say that I will stay with him although they face some problems.

Kaya azimayiwo chimawachititsa ndi chain kaya. Amangokhalabe choncho mwina mkazi uja amalephera kumuthamangitsa koma mamuna uja samapita kwawo ena amafuna mitengo kuti mamuna akhazikike ndiye olo awathamangitse amakana. Zimatheka koma
I don’t know what makes these women to accept this, they just stay like that, may be a woman has tried to chase him but failed he is not going back to his village others they find traditional medicine to make him stay, so if they can chase him he cannot go it is possible to chase him but others fail.

Ena amakhala mwamuna uja osamuphikira madzi, kapena kumangokhala osalankhulitsana kuti mwina zikamupweteka achoke koma samachoka (laughed) ayi sizimatheka nsima timamupatsa olo mukangane mumayenera kuphika ndikumupatsa koma adzikana yekha:

Others stay without boiling some water for him or else they just stay without talking to each other thinking that when he will feel pain he will go back to his village but they don’t go. No! it is not possible we give him some nsima, although you have quarrelled but you must cook and give him and he must refuse himself.

It is not good to eat alone, but cook and give him, either he will eat or not its up to him. Its good that you give him food - yes she always being afraid that her friends will say that you are not giving him nsima “why can’t you cook for him”, yes! They can say that you are not doing good, up to the stage of not giving him nsima? No! it is not allowed to beat a wife yes its bad! We think that if I will not give him nsima, he will die, he can cook but if you told him not to take maize flour in your house, how can he cook?

Because of some discouragements and most of the families here end very shortly may be they can stay only a month or 2-3 months, may be she is a hard working woman while a husband not, then its difficult for a woman to work hard alone while a husband is weak, you always think of chasing him and stay alone, so that what I want to do I
should be doing on my own.

6. Ayi akhoza kumupilikitsa chifukwa monga ngati ineyo ndilibe mamuna ndikukhala ndekha, kumazisamala ndekha ndiye abwere mamuna ndiye zomwe ndimapangazo ndili ndekha, ndi mamunayo sakupanga zimenezo ndi bwino mnyumbamo kungomuthamangitsa basi mnyumbamo bola akundipatsa boyi olo asandithandize kusamala ana:

- No she can chase him, because for example I am staying alone and I don’t have a husband, taking care of myself, then if a husband can come and she is not doing what I was doing when I was alone (not taking care of the family) its good just to chase him, others say at least he is giving me sex although he is not taking care of children.

Single; Mavuto omwe timakumana nawo monga kunkhani ya ndalama imavuta kuipeza, nyumba ngati ulibe ndalama limakhala vuto, komano amene ali ndi abambo woti ndi wolumbikira akhoza kuyang’ana kuti nyumbayi pamenepe yatani ndikukonza, kodi pakhomo pano chasowa ndi chani kugula - utapeza ndalama utha kumuza kuti undipangire olo uduzumauza waganyu, njala, kusamala ana ndikovuta, nanga si amuna akusowa banja loyamba ngati linatha ndiye chitheleni ena osabwera kudzakufunsira ndiye umangokhala:

- The problems that we face are that; it is difficult to find money, if you don’t have money in your house, it’s a big problem, but those who have got husband who works hard he can be able to see that the the house needs to be maintained, and he can see what is needed in the family and buy - if you find money you can hire someone to build it, even grasses for the roof, hunger season buying food, taking care of children, it is difficult due to lack of men, imagine if you divorced and no-one comes to propose you, then you just stay.

Ayi samafuna! Mukuganiza kuti munthu angafune kuti azikhala yekha? Atapezeka wokhulupilika utha kukhala naye. Koma utamuona kuti uyu ayi basi utha kumakhala wekha:

- No! it is not their wish! Do you think that someone can decide to stay alone without getting married? If you can find a faithfull husband you can stay with him. But if you can’t like him! You can stay alone.

7. Basi mamuna amangokhala - kenako mkazi amakhala ngati mamuna chifukwa ndi amene akupeza ndalama. Ayi chimene wanena mkazi samamvera koma amangokhala. Basi mkaziyo amayetsa kuti achoke koma mamuna samackoka:
The husband just stay - then a wife stays like a husband in the family because she is the one who find money, no he doesn’t accept what the wife is saying but he just stay. A wife can try her best to chase the husband but they don’t go and they just stay.

8. Amalawi basi ndi ovutika ndimomwe mwawonera - mwina kuberekaku kumatipangitsa kukhala ovutika - komanso kusowa ndalama, kapezedwe kake ndiye kuti ulime, koma ukalima m’ mene zavutira chaka chino basi mavuto:

Malawians are poor as you have seen may be because we give birth to a lot of children that’s why we are poor and also due to lack of money, inorder to find money it is just through farming, but even you grow a lot of crops according to this year, there are still problems.

Basi anthu akumalera, ndipo zinthu zikusintha - anthu amasangalala akamatenga kulera chifukwa m’ malo mokhala ndi ana 5 amatha kukhala ndi atatu:

People are doing family planning and things are changing now, people are happy when they are doing family planning, because instead of giving birth to 5 children,.. They they are able to have 3.

Basi anthu akumalera, ndipo zinthu zikusintha - anthu amasangalala akamatenga kulera chifukwa m’ malo mokhala ndi ana 5 amatha kukhala ndi atatu:

Its true they are not helping - no I don’t know - may be it can be possible if we can talk to them but where can we find them.

The only way is through ganyu, and a contract, others get employed, when they are tired they change the job, either at Balaka, when women came back from fetching water, or from the field men just stay and rest while you are busy cooking relish for the husband to eat.

A 32 Nyamwale

2. Ntchito zake basi maganyu omwewa ma contract basitu, ena amakalowa ntchito ina akatopa nayo, kaya ku Balaka, azimayi akabwera ku munda, kumadzi, abambonso amapita akabwera kupuma iwe ndikumaphika ndiwo kuti abambo adye:

The only way is through ganyu, and a contract, others get employed, when they are tired they change the job, either at Balaka, when women came back from fetching water, or from the field men just stay and rest while you are busy cooking relish for the husband to eat.

3. Azimayi nanga si amalimbikira mageni, malingana kuti akalimbikira geni yomwe
akupanga azibambo. Amayi amalimbikira geni nanga si ndi ntchito yoti amakhala 1-30
tsiku lililonse ku geni, kaya mbatata, kaya mandasi (husbands idea) = azibambo amapeza
ndalama makamaka kuiti aa magwilidwe antchito, komanso azimayi ndi amene ali
pat sogolo chifukwa akulimbikira BS, amatha kupikula chimanga, kukhala ku msika ndiye
samatopa ee amaposa azimuna chifukwa ife azibambo amene ali ndi geni yopikula zovala
kulowa mtawuni atha kumapeza bwino (child crying):

- Women work hard in BS when they work hard in BS they find their needs. Women
work hard in business because they stay from first day of the month up to the last day of
the month 1-30 doing BS, either mandasi or potatoes, (husband idea) = men find money
according aa! To their jobs, but women are at the fore front because they are working hard
in BS, they buy maize for sale, staying at the market eee! And they don’t get tired, it is
different with men because men just buy second hand clothes and sell and they can go to
town and get rich.

4. Ngati sakutsangalatsidwa ndi mamuna wake limatha - mamuna amakuthawa
ndiye umati zikomo kwambiri pitani bamboo:

- If she is not happy with her husband they end marriage - but men run away from you
and you say that “thanks a lot my husband, have a nice journey”.

5. Kupilira (laughing) nanga si ukapilira umaona kuti mamuna wasintha khalidwe ndiye
umati mwina ndikhala naye:

- We just accept because at the end you see that the husband has changed his behaviour
and you say that may be I will stay with him for a long period of time.

6. Masiku ano mabanja asiyana ndi kalekale mumazolowerana, koma masiku ano azimayi
mwachuluka kupanga mwa mseri zambiri:

- Marriages of today are different from the past, in the past we were getting used to
someone’s behaviour, but women of nowadays they have extra husbands.

Why- nanga si zakale zinali zakale pano atsikana amangoti uku kulowera uku kulowera :
because in the past were about the past nowadays girls are just moving around with
different men.

Atsikana makolo akati mizikhazikika nanga si amatsata kuti ndalama zambiri zili
moyenda: They don’t listen because they say that if I will stay I will not have money but
left me move around and find money.

8. Pali zifikwa zina zoti mzimayi utha kufotokoza, nanga nyumba ndimanga bwanji, ngati ukukwanitsa zones umasowa chimodzi kuti ichi sindikwanitsa (laughing):

- There are other reasons that a woman can manage to explain, for example how can I build a house, if you are able to manage everything there is one thing that you cannot manage on your own.

9. Amadandaula, kuti chilichonse akuchita yekha, basi ena amati tisiyane, nanga azingokhala, akamuuzu chinthu osachita - makamaka mzimayi chifukwa ndi amene akuchita zonse (in general = ndi amuna) amunawo zimawanyasa, iwe ukalankhula kuti abale tiyeni tizipanga izi, mwamuna uja ngati sakufuna amapita:

- She complains that; she is doing anything alone, others say that lets separate just staying! If you ask him to do something he is not doing - especially women because she is the one who is providing everything (in general, its men) most of the men get bored, if you tell him that lets do this and if he don’t want to do it he moves back to his village.

10. Ndalama kusowa (husband = kuchepa ma company: Lack of money, lack of companies. Ma farm kutali ana ndiosauka, kwathu kuno mavuto ndi ambiri: No farms to get employed, children are poor, in our village there are a lot of problems.

Amathandiza koma ambiri angongole abwera pompano momwe inu mwabwera, kale ukalephera kubweza ngongole amabwera kudzatenga ziweto ndi zina zomwe uli nazo (abambo andithandize) husband; kungoti dziko lathuli zintchito sizikupezeka, kuti tilowenso mtauni kuti mwina koma sitimapeza - dziko la Malawi ndi labwino koma vuto ndi ndalama kluchepa (laughed):

- They help, but a lot of them are those who gave loan and they came while you are here, in the past if you have failed to pay back loan they were coming to take all your livestock and everything that you have (husband can you help me) husband; Here in our country it is difficult to find job, even when we go to tow we fail to find job, our country Malawi is nice but the problem is due to lack of money.

A 33 (nothing) A34 15 seconds nothing A 35 3 seconds nothing.
B 1 old woman (already discussed)

2. umakhala otele kusamala ana.

C 1 Eveles

2. Masiku agano amta kwana achalume nambo achakongwe apano ngasimana msikana wagamba kutama pa m’lango basi yakatayakata, kwenda jenda, kala kwaliji kwangali yeleye ee mwanache jwamkongwe ngatama pa m’lango? Nthawi jimisile amwali ngayikumanyika yakutenda, awanche wamagano wangapikana kala watusaliraga chati chati m’tendeje wee tapikanaga, kogopa nambo lero jino pangali kogopa kuti umsalire mwanache ya watendaya wandu kala iyai ngakukomboleka, nanga ndawi jikwanire kwali ngangumanyilira achalume basi yakatayakata:

- Now adays although they are a lot of men you cannot find a young girl who is just staying at home but moving around with different men in the past we didn’t do this. A young girl not staying at home? Time its over now, children of nowadays, I don’t know what they are doing they don’t listen to elders, in the past we were told that; don’t do this and we were listening because we were afraid and nowadays they are not afraid at all. If we tell them about the past they don’t listen, may be time its over, I don’t know! Men are just moving around with women while women are just moving around with men.

3. Wane wana ngamisyo gakupanganya masengo nambo wane akupata ligongo lyawiyi, kwajiwira achim’jawo, nambo wajinji masengo wane kulima litonje imanga yosope yana mbiya nambo chisiru chalembedwe kuti achi chichiwa chisiru ndi chisiru akuleka sukuulu ulendo kutenda selo, naga ngakupikana yachakulungwa, we watusaliraga kuti kwane chiwele, nambo achalume wata lo [nearest tradingcenter] ga kala, kulekangana kwake kuwa basi, nambo apano iyai kwaleka achalume mnyumba bola kukoposya chipepalacho basi akundile. ana ulombera wachipepala? Magano wandu achalume akusosa kubala, kalakala achinangolo watusaliraga. Sukulu ngakumalisya nambo agamba kuyigala chitumbo:

- Others have got their own ways of findind money while others are just thieves, they steal from their friends, but a lot of cotton and maize after selling they find a lot of money but others are still foolish, they stop going to school and start prostitution, they are not listening from their elders, my parents were telling me that there is a disease in the past we were getting married till death with the same husband but now they leave their husband! In the house going to some one who has a lot of money and it is not difficult to accept marriage nowadays they just want money not marriage, as of now men are going to find a wife at a bar and girls are just getting pregnant.
Nguti wane masengo, wane wiyi achakongwe wamalisise sukulu nikuwa papa sengo akupata likobili. We kala twatwaga, kulimbangana walume nikutamaga pa m’longo, naga apite kumasengo am’simaneje pa m’longo apano wakongwe kumasengo soni walume kumasengo nambo kala kutwa basi ni kulima kuti alye walume ugali apano basi kumchini:

- Am saying that others are working whole others are thieves, some women finished their school and now are working and find their own money. In the past we were just pounding maize while a man was just staying at home, when he has gone to work some where else we were not moving around just waiting for him to come back, nowadays men are working even women in the past just pounding and farming for the husband to eat.

Basi kwapa likobili 100mk basi soni kwapa chilwele. Kwikatu apano nikuti naligosile, makolo gatusaliraga:

- They sleep with them and give them 100mk only and a disease. Am old now because my parents were telling me not to like men [Eveles].

Wajinji soni wane mpakana akusuma ng’ombe, wajaliwe nambo nbiya syakwe kulima basi. Wane kupata makobiri basi kulimisya m’migunda jikape ngakombola, wane wana achimjawo akwapaya mbiya wane wanache akwatumichisya mbiya nikwapa waganyu, mperia Alma:

- A lot of them are now buying cow, they are lucky, but it is just through farming, others find money and ask someone to work on their fields (hire ganyu), you cannot manage alone, others have got children who are working somewhere and they send some money for their parents like Alma.

4. Basi kwatopola kuti ajaje - kwaleka ni kusosa wane: you just chase him to go - men they go to find another wife.

5. Usiru- foolish.

Wane akugona pachiguduli nambo wanache nikuwerekaga, nguwo wangali! Nambo ulo [nearest tradingcenter] wakakala, wane akugona pasi eti ni usiru, wele, mnungu akusalumbikanya chisiru kulombera soni chisiru wanache ndu!:

- Others are sleeping on a sack not mat but they are just giving birth to a lot of children they don’t have chitenje, but they married some years ago still sleeping on the floor.
God makes a foolish man to marry a foolish woman.

M’mene analengera mulungu mulungu ali ndi mbalu yake uku mtundu wina kwinanso mtundu wina, bwanji tonse sanatipatse kuyera, kwawo kuli akuda ayi azungu basi ena alomwe ena ayao - anyanja:

- It is just like the way how God created, god has got his own side, we are of different tribes why we are white people? In your country so you have black people? No! you are just white people others are Yao here, and Nyanja.

6. Ngapikangana basi - akuno magano wajinji basi kumwa ukana - sambano wakongwe akusakana. Pachatande kusumisya litonji ngagona mnyumba, ngapikakanila wamkwawo mpera nganalima impepe. Pacha male mbiya syalitonjipo basi - nambo wane akusuma malata - chisiri wakongwewo, kumangwawo yaya kwangali isiru - akuno akukuya mbiya basi 100mk 1mk basi kupocheramo sukulu alesile - kwaula kusukulu basi kalasi 1-2 kuti amalisye iyayi basi chitumbo:

- Because of some disagreements nowadays a lot of men are just drinking beer and women don’t like this when they will start selling cotton they will not sleep in the house, they don’t listen to their wife as if they didn’t work together in the field. After eating their money they go back to their wives, but others are buying iron sheets, they are just foolish, don’t you have foolish people in your country? They stop school from class 1-2 only they just get pregnant after receiving only 100mk.

7. Iyayi! Ukwati watochele kwa mnlungu une ngusile ngangusosa walume jwangali machili: No! marriage came from God, am old now and I don’t want a husband because I am very weak now.

8. Mbiya kupata wakongwe basi gambaga kuwereka wanache - wakongwe kwala kumasengo - walume kukamulaga gapa m’lango, ngokwe, kulima - chimbudzi:

- Men are happy when they are just staying, women just giving birth to children women going to work something while a man is doing house hold chores working in the field - a toilet.

9. Initiation

Kuperekaga ulemu, kwaona achakulingwa kwapochera naga ajigele indu - achakulongwa kwajogopaga. Kala kwera pa njinga kwaona achakulingwa twatulukaga kuti wakulongwa apite. Kwaona achakulongwa kutindiwalaga, ngajima ajenu yindu, naga ayiche achalendo
You must respect elders, if you see some elder people passing by with something on their heads you must carry for them. In the past when we were on the bicycle we were stopping to allow elder people to pass by. You must kneel down when you see the elder ones, you must share food with your friends, if you have got a visitor you must cook for them even if you have got a chicken give them to eat.

Don’t be rude, if you see elder ones help them to carry what they have carried, you will see them giving you some bananas to show thanks, nowadays children are not listening.

You must respect your husband and listen to everything that he is telling you when a husband has gone somewhere else, just stay at home and wait for him to come back, boiling water for him, if he has carried something you must carry for him, even a bicycle help him to carry, put some water at the bathroom for him, in the past we were listening and men were not getting worried, when he is back home, ask him how was the day then gave him some water or tea and at 12 give him nsima, respect your mother-in-law don’t be selfish, give them food to eat.

Even the husband is told not to mistreat his wife, if you have quarrelled you must forgive each other, you must respect her.

C 2 Sofia

Bambo amamanga nkhokwe, toilet, bafa, ife sittingakwanitse, mbale (laughing) anaa
akadwala amaona ndi abambo, kuntchini timafuna abambo, azimayi ena geni ife sitimapanga kusowa:

- A man is able to make a maize storage, a toilet, a bathroom and we cannot manage plates, and if a child is ill a man is able to take care even at the kitchen we need a husband, other women they do BS and we don’t do because we don’t have capital.

Mpamba umasowa azimayi - it is difficult for a woman to find capital.

3. Azibambo amapanga ganyu, kulima thonje kumagulitsa, ee koma ena sitimakwanitsa, funsani ndikuyankhani, ena amayendayenda kumsika, ena kusiya ndalama ku Bank, ena mphwayi/ulesi sindikwanitsa kuyankha:

- Men go for casual labour, growing cotton and sell, ee but others we can not manage, ask and I will answer you others move around at the market others keep their money at the Bank, others just lazy, I will not manage to answer.

4. Kuthetsa zimenezi ndizosavuta kuyankha chimodzimodzi kusiyana: we just end marriage, this is not difficult to answer its just the same, they divorce.

5. Amazolowerana - they get used to each other.

6. Pali azibambo ena amafunsira banja ali ndi mkazi wawo, ndiye akazi aja akamva amabwera kudzapanga voko ndiye iwe ngati sukufuna umati basi bamboo dzipitani. Basi iyeyo apite kwa mamunayo - kupusa - ena samawuza ana awo - mkazi wake asamubweretse - kumuza kuti zimenezo ayi ine sindinapangeko ndili wango:

- There are some other men who propose while they have got another wife and when that woman knows they come to quarrel and if you don’t want you just tell the husband, foolish - others they don’t tell their children - he must not bring his wife at home - you can tell the child that don’t it because I have never done it when I was young.

7. Ayi sangafune, maganizo kusiyana: No! they can’t need a husband we think differently.

8. (laughing) munthu umati ukayenda umamuona mnzako m’mene wavalira ndiye umaganiza kuti ndikanakhala ndi mamuna bwenzi akundigulira: (laughed) when you have gone somewhere else, you see how your friend has dressed and you think that if I had a husband he could have bought for me.
Kumakhala kugwilizana kuti ine ndizipanga izi iwenso izi - ayi iweyo sunganene kuti ukusamala banja ndi iwe utha kunena kuti mamuna ndi amene akusamala kuti asawonekere kupusa:

They used to agree that; I will be doing this and you must do this- No you can't say say that you are the one who is taking care of the family, you can say that the husband is the one who is taking care of the family so that people should not see his foolishness.

C 3 Livia

Azimayi amapita kumadzi, azibambo amafolera nyumba, azibamboi saphika nsima koma azimayi amaphika nsima komanso azibambo samapita kuchigayo koma ena amapita (laughing) kumbali ya makhalidwe zimafanana koma zina zimasiyana (ndithandizeni):

Women go to fetch water while men make a roof, men don’t cook nsima but women cook nsima, men doesn’t go to the maize mill but others go. According to the behaviour it is the same but others are different (help me to answer).

3. Azibambo ali ndi nzeru zoti iwe sungaganize - geni zina azimayi sangakwanitse - nanga mzimayi angathe kuyendetsa galimoto, kapena kuwedza nsomba?

- Men are intelligent that we cannot think - other businesses women cannot manage - do you think that a woman can manage to drive a car or catching fish?

Chifukwa choti makoka ake sitingakwanitse kukoka chifukwa cha mphamvu: because the nets are heavy and we cannot manage because we are weak.

4. Likakhala banja amapita kwa ankhoswe akakamba nkhani tikawona kuti zatheka amakhala limodzi zikalepherera limaphwasuka banja - limatha amamumasula - amakambirana koma sizimatenga nthawi ngati mkazi chifukwa amati tikambirane kuti banja lisathe kome mamuna amati ndipeza wina - amathetsa chifukwa amaganiza kuti ndipeza mkazi wina (laughed) pali ena amaganiza pomwe ena aiyi:

- If it is marriage they go to ankhoswe, after discussions when we see that it is possible they stay together if they have failed to discuss they end the marriage or they send him back to his village. they also discuss but it doesn’t take long like a wife, because the wife says that lets discuss so that we should not divorce but a man says that I will find another wife (laughed) others think while others not.
5. Banja lija ndiloti wina anachita kuwafunsira ndiye samadziwa kuti mamuna ndiwotani, umangowona akuchita nkhanza basi kupilira, kuti mwina asintha:

- May be there is someone who found a husband for her or a wife for him and they don’t know his or her behaviour they just see that he is abusing her they just accept, thinking that he will change.

6. Pali ena amakondana akakhala ndi ndalama, pomwe ena samakondwera mamuna akakhala ndi ndalama amati akupanga uhule - chifukwa chakusamvetsetsana:

- They are others who love each other when they have got money while others are just happy when the wife has got money they say that she is doing prostitution because of some disagreements.

7. Pena pamaperewera (laughed) mwina amafuna chikondi (laughed) tikanakhala kuseri: They lack something, may be they want love (lets seat behind the house she was not free to talk).

8. Abambo ena amati mkazi wanga sindimafuna kuti uzipanga geni ndiye umasiya koma umafuna - ee anthu ena zimawatsangalatsa chifukwa mwina mamuna amapeza ndalama movutika mwina ganyu - mkazi kuoda tomato:

- Other men say that I don’t want my wife to do BS then you stop while you want because may be the husband find money sometimes through ganyu while the wife is buying tomatoes for sale.

C 4 Jasmine

2. Mzibambo amalimbikira pomwe azimayi ayi, mzibambo amafunsira ukwati mzmayi samafunsira, achalume kutawa nyumba kuwala talauza achalume ilundu:

- A man works hard while a woman not, a man is able to propose while a woman not, men are able to build houses, put on trousers while we put on zitenje.

3. Nanga si kusowa ntchito, azibambo amakafuna contract ganyu kumalima, azimayi koma kupanga geni: Due to lack of job, men go to find a contract of working in the field while women do BS.
4. Basi ukwati watha mamuna amasamuka: They end marriage husband goes back to his village.

5. Chifukwa abambo ena amasamala mkazi - kupilira: Because other men are able to take care of the wife, they just accept.

6. Samagwirizana - chinyengo amuna kuputsitsa mkazi - amanama - kuti ndikukkwatira: Because of some disagreements, most of the men used to cheat the wife that I will marry you.

Kutha masiku pang’ono banja latha - kuchuluka akazi amuna achepa - ayi kale kunalibe - (sinditha kuyankha): After few days they end marriage, they are a lot of women now than men - no in the past not - (I will not manage to answer).

7. Mamuna kusatha kusamala mkazi - kusowa ntchito - mamuna amadandaula basi mwina ndakhala nawo kuyambira kale - koma akakhala wanyuwani umamuthamangitsa - mwina kalelo amagwira ntchito:

- Other men they don’t know how to take care of the wife due to lack of job- a man used to get worried - but because I stayed with him for long period of time, but if he is a new husband we chase him, may be in the past he was working.

Ee kuposa kale pano bola, kale amuna amafunsira ukwati kugula nsalu imodzi yomweyo ngati bulangete mwana pomwepo, koma tsopano ena akupanga geni ena kunchito ulimi - ulimi ukutukula anthu chifukwa akulima kugulitsa - kale akalima osagulitsa kudya basi:

- Yes more than in the past, as of now at least in the past men were proposing for marriage, buying 1 chitenje, using the same chitenje as a blanket with a child, but as of now others are doing BS others are working, farming, through farming people are improving their lives because they farm and sale while in the past we were growing crops for food.

C 5 Chief Mudzi B

2. Abambo ena ali ndi khalidwe ena ayi, abambo amatisamala, kukakhala njala kusamala ana, azimayi kusamala ana, abambo ena nkhanza kwa amayi ena nkhanza kwa Pamela:

- Other men have got good behaviour, while others not, men take care of us and children, even in hunger season, other men they mistreat their wives while others mistreat their
children.

3. Azibambo ena ganyu kumapita mtauni ena business kulima tomato kumawodetsa mtawuni ena makontilatiti. Azimayi ena kulima kulima tomato mdimba kukagulitsa ku Balaka, mphamvu kwambiri mzbambo, mzmayi pena kutanganidwa ndi ana:

- Other men do ganyu, others going to town, others BS, others growing tomatoes and sell in town others grow tomatoes in swampy, others contract, other women grow tomatoes and sell at Balaka, men are strong while women busy taking care of children.

4. Basi kumuthamangitsa mamuna kukhala yekha - basi amakakwatira kwina: You can just chase him and stay alone - he goes to get married to another wife.

5. Mwina kuti akhale naye chifukwa anthu amati ukakhala pa banja umalemekezeka - pena amati ndisinth - akatopa basi amasiyana: In order to stay with him so that people should say that you are married and they respect you, sometimes he says I will change when they are tired they divorce.

6. Kale amagwirizana koma anyamata amasiku ano sindimadziwa kuti kaya amaganiza chani amati akakwatira apa kukakwiranso kwina ndiyen mzmayi amakana amati tikakhala awiri ndiyen kuti nsalu upeza? Zimakhala zogawana ndiyen akazi amati ine ayi panopa zawanjeza - m’modzi atatu:

- In the past there was an agreement but boys of nowadays I don’t know what they think, they get married everywhere, and a woman used to refuse and say that if we are 2 wives can you find chitenje? They used to share, and a woman says that its too much - 1 man 3 wives.

7. Mwina nyumba ulibe, kulima wekha kumakuvuta, kuvala kuvutika, ena zolina mdimba samadziwa, ndichifukwa chake timapeza amuna kuti atithandize. Zimachitika ngati mkaziyo ali ndi ndalama amawauza a ganyu, mwa chimuloko oti ndi chilengedwe:

- May be you don’t have a house, working alone in the field, having problems, difficult to find clothes, others don’t know how to cultivate in swampy that’s why we find a husband and get married, it happens if the woman has got money she can ask someone for ganyu, may be desire because its nature.

8. Sanachuluke - amafunika kuti mamuna azisamala banja - ayi sizimamutsangatsa nanga si akungokhala mkazi ndi amene amafuna chakudya - mitima ndiyosiyana mwina akazi ena
- Not many - a man should be able to take care of the family - no he is not happy, because he is just staying and the wife is the one who finds food - they have different hearts may be other women wants to take care of their husband to sleep in the house and end her desire.

B 1 & 2 Old Woman already discussed

B 3 Alida

2. Kumadzi, nkhuni, kuphika, kusinja azimayi ndiye timasiyanitsa: Water, firewood, cooking, pounding but women we make a different.

3. Azibambo ena amagwila tikiti pa mwezi kumalandira, kulima mzmimayi, kulima kokha azimayi ena amagwira nchito koma ena timangokhala, chaka chino kudandaula timalima chimodzimodzi - mphamvu zimasiyana:

- Other men are working and receive money at the end of the month, women farming, other women are working while others are just staying, this year things are not working, we are of different power.

4. Mamuna amapereka lamulo - amasiyana amasiyananso - ngati mwayambana msumapita kwa ankhoswe, ena amamvera ena ayi, akayambiranso umatopa. Amene amamva kuwawa amathetsa kaya mkazi kaya mamuna - kunoko ena akumenya mkazi - azimayi ena mahule amasiya mamuna kumapita kutchire amuna amakwiya:

- A husband gives a law - they divorce, if we have quarrelled, we go to ankhoswe to complain, if he is still doing the same behaviour we used to be tired and the one who is feeling painfull end the marriage either a woman or a man, here other men beat their wives, other women are prostitutes they leave their husband going to the bush to have sex and most of the men gets angry.

5. Amafuna mtendere - ee kugwirizana ena amakwatirana, mnyamata ndi mtsikana - kuberekwa Pamela mpaka zidzukulu:

- They want peace - yes because of agreement, others get married when they are still young - and give birth to children and grandchildren.
6. Zochita kuchuluka, monga ulimi munthu amalima thonje akalima akagulitsa banja kutha kenako kukwatira wina mkazi ndiye banja limatha:

- A lot of things to do, for example farming, they grow cotton after growing cotton they sell, after divorcing they get married to another wife.

7. Ukwati ndiwofunika - kuthandizana, ndanena kuti mbali yolima, ana kuwasamala azidya mokwanira mkazi azivala - ana apachibwenzi amavutika koma akakwatira sopo sasowa ukadwala mamuna amakuthandiza kupita ku chipatala, kuphika phala ambiri amazikonda:

- Marriage is very important - we help other other, I have already said that in farming taking care of children, eat enough food, buying clothes for the wife, when you have got children from a boyfriend it is difficult to take care but you are married you don’t lack soap, when you are ill a husband sent you to the hospital, making porridge, most of men likes to do it.

8. Panopa anthu akupeza bwino kale kunali mavuto - tinalibe zinthu zambiri, kulima anthu amalima, kugulitsa samagulitsa koma kudya basi ndiye anthu anali ndi chakudya koma ndalama ayi, ndiye ndalama ndizofunika. Chaka chino anthu tivutika kukhala kuba kwambiri chifukwa kulibe ndalama. Pano bola tikulima, tikupeza ndalama ndi kugula zomwe tikufuna:

- As of now people are getting better than the past, we didn’t have a lot of things we were farming, but they were not selling their crops but only eating and a lot of people had a lot of food but money not but money is very important, this year we will have a lot of problems and a lot of people will be stealing because there is no money. At least we are now growing crops and find money to buy what we want.

9. Chifukwa choperewera mphamvu, kupeza ndalama pachaka koma mtawuni akupeza pa mwezi, ena akupanga geni - tikanagulitsa mbewu bwenzi pano ndalama zitatha, m’munda kulima tokha, njala kusowa ndalama yogulira chakudya:

- We are very weak, we find money once a year but in town they find money every month, others are doing BS, we sold our crops we could finished our money, working alone in the field, hunger due to lack of money to buy food.

Ena amapita kukapanga geni koma ena ndi wesaphunzira - sukulu pano bola kopma kale tinalibe ndalama zolipilira - pano ena akulephera kuphunzira chifukwa chovutika - zovala -
Others go to town to do BS but others are not educated, at least nowadays people are going to school in the past we didn’t have money to pay- nowadays people are failing to go to school because of poverty, they don’t have clothes and parents.

Musitafa B 4

2. Ife timatunga madzi abambo ayi, ife timaphika koma azibambo ena samaphika. Akazi sitivala zachimuna. Charity: (amuna nkhoswe ife sitingathe) azimayi kutchola nkhwani kumunda abambo ayi:

- We fetch some water while men not, we cook but other men they don’t, women don’t put clothes for men. Charity: men are able to make a maize storage and we cannot manage. Women fetching pumpkin leaves in the field while men not.

3. Ndalama timapangira limodzi koma mkazi abambo mphamvu kapena udindo abambo ndi omwe ali ndi udindo amaziteteza ngati ndi mutu wabanja chifukwa amagula zones pakhomo:

- We find money together but women don’t have power or responsibility, but men have got responsibility they think that they are the heads of the family because they buy everything that is needed at home.

4. Timakawauza akwao. Charity: nthawi ya ulimi aliyense amapanga zake chifukwa ndalama akazi samaziona ndiye amasiyana) mamuna amakauza akwao kwa mkazi ndiye amakumana ndikukambirana kuti abambo absinthe ngati sizikutheka banja limatha:

We tell his parents. Charity: when farming everybody grow his/her own crops because women don’t see how much the husband sold and they divorce, a man goes to tell the relatives of the woman and they meet to discuss inorder to make the husband change, if it is not possible they end marriage.

5. Amuna amakana kuchoka, ena amamwa tameki, ena amachoka kumusiya mamuna Charity (ena kuthawa) Doris ena amapilira ngati banja akulifuna (all laughed):

- Most of the men refuse to go, others drink poison, others leave the husband alone, Charity: others they run away, Doris: others they just accept if they want marriage (all laughed)
6. Ambiri kuno ndi akumwa mowa ndiye khalidwe limenelo ndiloipa - Doris - ena kusagwilizana mayankhulidwe. Charity: mwina samagona pakhomo basi kupita ku bar 1 week akakhala ndi ndalama - ndiye mkazi amatopa:

- A lot of men here drink beer, that is bad behaviour, Doris: others because of some disagreement in talking. Charity: may be he don’t spent a night at home going to the bar for a week when they have got money. Then the wife gets tired.


- Its nature (Doris laughed) because of problems, who can make a roof for you. Charity: if you give birth to children it is difficult to take care of children. If you hire someone for ganyu he don’t do it properly, they just want money then every year building a house that’s why they want a husband to do it for her. Charity: others they just want children others because of nature they don’t like to get married often because they are afraid of a disease.

Doris: ena samalemekezeka, uyu kukufunsira kuvomera - ndiye amawuzana kuti tapita akalola ine ndagona naye chifukwa ulibe mamuna, koma ukakhala ndi mamuna samabwera amadziwa kuti uli wekha. Florence: akagogoda umakuwa kuti wakuba ngati simunagwirizane:

- Doris: others they don’t respect themselves, after being proposed they just accept and they tell each other that I have already slept with her just go and she will accept they do this because you don’t have a husband but if you have got husband they don’t come they know that you are alone. Florence: if they knck you scream that a thief! If you didn’t agree.

Florence (with a very low voice) he used to be happy because there are some ways of finding money, others bad and others good, other men they don’t work in the field only a woman working alone in the field, even maize after harvesting a husband is always happy. Florence: after selling your crops you can buy a shirt for him, shoes and he can be always happy. Charity you also buy sugar, but if you are doing prostitution most of the men are not happy, it pains him. Florence (low voice) they pretend as if they have got a good behaviour but after staying for along period of time he gets used and change the behaviour, they say that I will stay here and I will not go. You call his parents but imagine you have stayed with him for along time and gave birth to a lot of children, they say that you want to eat alone the money from children.

Charity: ndalama zaku Malawi ndizotsika kusiyana ndi ena, ena akaphunzira sukulu kulima samatha - ngati sanaphunzire kulima amavutika, kumudzi kuno ma company ndi ochepa kuno [large commercial estate] basi - makampani ali mtawuni mocha basi kumudzi ayi. Florence : ine m unditenge ku Malawi timabereka ana ambiri ndiye timalephera kuwasamala. Anthu amakabaisa koma amaberekabe - ena kufa - ena kudwala. Ine ndinabereka ana 10 atatu anamwalira:

Because they are not educated although he/she is educated they face some problems like going for ganyu others are lazy. Charity: the money of Malawi has got a low value different with others, others if they are educated they don’t know how to farm, if they didn’t learn how to work in the field they face some problems, in our village we don’t have enough companies, only [large commercial estate], many companies are in town but not in villages. Florence: I will go with you, in Malawi we give birth to a lot of children and we fail to take care of them, they go for injection but they still give birth and others die or they get ill because of injection. I gave birth to 10 children but 3 of them died.

B 5 Holy

2. Amaphunzira kwambiri ndi azibambo, amai ambiri ayi ndiye ntchito zimavuta, abambo ena amakwatiirakwatisa pomwe azimaiyami amafuna banja. Azibambo amazitenga kuti ali ndi udindo okwanira olo akakwatre samadandaula, nanga si mkazi amadikira kufunsiridwa:

Most of men are educated but women not and it is difficult to find job. Some men get married everywhere (just exchange women) while women wants marriage men think that they have got a big responsibility, they can just get married, because a woman always wait
to be proposed.

3. Azibambo mwina amakhala ndi zipangizo monga geni kumangamanga, ena ntchito malingana ndi maphunzi awo - azimayi timachuluka kuti mwina bajeti ya ndalama imavuta - akanakhala kuti ena amabwera ndi ngongole bola bwenzi azimayi akumatenga ndi kuyamba geni - zoona pali ndi azimayi ake ena akupeza ndalama amangodya koma ena monga ngati chaka chino anapeza chimanga chambiri ena pang’ono, koma amene anapeza chimanga chambiri adya mpaka chaka chamawa, koma ena olo apeze chambiri mabanja amawavuta, samakhala pansi ndi kuganiza. Iwowo amazitenga kuti ali ndi mphamvu, kuti amuwona mzimayi akufunsira zimakhala za chilendo:

- Other men have got BS others are builders, others are working somewhere according to their education level, most of women we don’t know how to make a budget if there was some people who give loan at least most of the women could have borrowed and started a BS. It’s true there are some women who find money and eat the same time but others this year they harvested a lot of maize while others not a lot. And those who harvested a lot of maize will eat till next year but others although they harvested a lot, it is difficult for them to make a budget they don’t sit down and think, they think that they are strong, but if they can see a woman proposing it can be a new thing to us.

4. Azimai ambiri amavomera mamuna wina mwamuna akamva limatha ena amakambirana - abambo amasiya mkazi umamva kuti ali ndi chibwenzi basi kenako kutha banja:

- Most of women accept another husband and when her husband hear the story they end marriage. Others they discuss, a husband leaves a wife, you also hear that he has a girlfriend and the marriage ends.

Ee amavomera kuti nayenso adye nawo nanga si amai achulika abambo kuchepa chifukwa azimai akubadwa ambiri kuchipatala monga ine ndili ndi ana akazi 5 mamuna m’modzi - ee ndicholinga choti ngati thandizo likusowa amati mwina ndikamulola uyu andipatsa zambiri:

- Yes, she used to accept although she is married inorder to eat the money because we are many women than men, because at hospital they are a lot of women who are born for example in my family I have got 5 girls and 1 boy, because it isdifficult to take care of themselves and they say that if I will accept this man that means he will be able to give me enough.

5. Azimayi ena amakhala akupilira kuti olo ndione mavuto bola ndili pa banja chomwe
Other women they just accept what their husband’s are doing they say that although I am facing a lot of problems but am married, they want marriage because there are other things that she can not done by a man, and also that people should respect her because most of the time if you are not married they say that you are a prostitute, you want sex and in order to refuse that word they just stay but not doing prostitution.

Basi chikhaliidwe pomuona munthu m’mene akuwonekera jealousy basi! Ndimomwe akuwonekera: Its their culture, after seeing the way you are looking - its just jealousy, according to her appearance.

Nthawi zina azimai omwe asali pa banja amakhala akuwalankhala abambo omwe ali pa banja, ndiye mamuna akakhala ndi mtima woti ameneyu andidiwe kuti ndine mamuna amafunsira, akufunsira banja simimayenda - monga chitsanzo ine ndimakhala bwino ndi amuna anga kumatukuka koma pali anthu ena samakondwera amafuna kuti bambowa andisiwe awafunsire koma chifukwa chophempha amuna anga amati uyu ndi mkazi yemwe mulungu anandipatsa. Amatha kufika pakhomo pake kumusangalalira - kutenga mphatso kwa mkazi ili yomukopera mamuna. Ngati ali ndi ziweto nthu khukho olo chakudya chilichonse kapena kuwaitana kunyumba kuti ndili ndi mawu akapita kumeneko basi kucheza kenako kuwakopa, amakhala ozungulira nanga si zimene zikuchitika pakhomo panga amakhala akuwona:

Sometimes a woman who is not married used to talk to a man who is married and if a man says that let me show her that I am a man they propose her, and you start facing some problems in your family for example I stay well with my husband and we have improved but some people are not happy with it, they want my husband to leave me alone and propose them, but because we like praying my husband says that am his wife and it's a gift from God. They can go to his house and being proud with him, taking a gift to a wife in order to attract your husband, if she has got livestock e.g chicken or food or anything or else they call him by saying that “come home I have got a word for you” then they chat and attract them, they are neighbours because they are able to see what you do everyday in your daily life.

Mwachitsanzo momwe ine ndinadwalira akanakhala kuti abambowa ofuna kupanga zomwe ena akuchita, kudwala kwa ine nditafufuza anthu ena anandichita chipongwe samasangalala nane, ee anthu ena ndiwoyandikana nawo basi jealousy, kuti amene aja ndi olemera. Kudyta tsiku lililonse, mwa ineyo ndi amuna anga akanakhala ena akanapita kwa
For example according to the way I was ill, if my husband wanted to follow what others do, we could have divorced. After finding out according to the way I was ill some people bewitched me, they are not happy with me - ee they are just neighbours, its jealousy, that am rich - eating everyday, with my husband if it was someone else he could have gone to the traditional doctor, but with my husband we just work hard in praying by fasting and God answered as of now they stopped, we don’t believe in a traditional doctor, because its God who created him.

7. Sangafune ngati mamuna akupeza chilichonse: She cannot need a husband if she is able to find her needs.

8. Mazenera a ndalama sanitseguke chifukwa chaka chino anthu alima koma mpoaka pano sanagulitse ndiye amene alima chimanga chambiri, thonje lambiri sakudandaula akudziwa kuti ndidzingodya, akagulitsa thonje ndalama agula zinthu zina. Koma pali anthu ena oti anangolima thonje lambiri kuti adzagula chimanga ndiye kuti panopa agulitse thonje agule chimanga, sizingakwane akhala ndi njala.

- The doors (ways) of finding money are not open because this year people worked in their fields but up to now they have not sold, then those who grow a lot of maize and a lot of cotton are not getting worried they know that they will be just eating, after selling their cotton they will use their money in other things, but they are others who just grow a lot of cotton thinking that after selling they will buy maize as of now they will sell their cotton and buy maize but it will not be enough they will have hunger.

Monday June 1 2009, Mudzi B

Partly (battery problem) taped quick interview with Ayama:

1. Udindo wa mwamuna ndi wotani pa banja? [What is the responsibility of a man when married?]
   Kubereka ana, ntchito kumagwira kulima mokwanira, kugula zovala za ana ndi akazi anu. [Get/make children, farm, buy clothes for children and wife]
2. **Udindo wa amayi pa banja?** [responsibility of woman in marriage?]

   Ndanena kale kuti kuthandizana kulima, kuveka ana. Mwamuna woyendayend, mkazi kuyendayenda sasamala pa banja. Kale kunaLibe... [Helping each other to farm, dress the children. A man wanders around, a woman wanders around not caring for their marriage. In the past there was not this type of behavior]

3. **Kalekale anthu amakwatisira akazi ambirimbiri, ena kuyendayenda. Zikufunana ndi panopa kapena ayi?** [In the past people did not marry multiple wives, or wander around?]

   Kale mwamuna amakwatisira mkazi m'modzi kapena awiri wokha basi. [In the past a man would marry one woman or two, not more]

4. **Zimene zapangitsa kuti zisinthe ndi chiyani?** [What made these things to change?]

   Zapangiza kusintha monga kale zovala zinali zotchipa, timagula 5 Kwacha, timagula 10 Kwacha, koma pamenepo popanda kusintha [in past eg only had 1 chitenje, putting it on everyday] monga ndanena zinthu zikusintha chifukwa alowa wina, kulamulira zina, alowa wina, kulamulira zina [changing presidents & laws], ndiye zinthu zasintha. Tinalibe ndalama zagula zinthu koma timati kutenga nsalu kumanga apa, mwana wina apa kutenga mwana kumulowetsa mbali yina [didn't have money, eg putting 2 children with just 1 chitenje], koma mtengo pang'ono komanso banja kukhala [but were able to stay without problems/without complaining that they had just one chitenje eg].

5. **Kwenikweni chimene chimapangitsa kuti azimuna aziyendayenda ndi chiyani?** [What makes men to wander around/having casual relationships with many women?]

   Amuna ena mukuona amakhala akumwa mowa, ena osamwa mowa, ndiye wosamwa mowandi amene akusamala, koma akumwa mowa ndi amene sakusamala. [some men drink beer, others no. Those who don’t drink take good care of their family, those who drink do not.]

6. **Kalekale anthu amapanga geni ngati panopa kapena ayi?** [Did people do BS in past like now?]

   Koma zasiyana, kale sitimapanga geni, amuna okha. Koma panopa “genda”, mkazi, mwamuna ayenera kuyenda geni [it changed. In past we did not do BS. But now there is “gender”: both men & women able to do BS].

7. **Panopa mukuona kuti azimayi akupeza bwino kuposa kale, kapena ayi, kale ndi pamene azimayi amapeza bwino?** [Were women better off in past or now?]

   Iyayi, koma pano. No, now]
   Chifukwa akuzichitira wokha geni. [because they can do BS]

9. Moyo wawo wasintha bwanji akamapanga geni? [How does life change through BS?]
   Moyo wawo wasintha monga ena amagulitsa ndikupeza ndalama zogula zofuna zawo. si
   ndagulitsa chakuti ndikufuna chakuti, atenga yekha ndalama ndikugula. [Can buy what
   they want]

10. Ena samafunanso mwamuna kuti awathandize? [They don’t want a HB who can help?]
    Muone pamene pimakhala chonchi amuna sachita geni, akazi ndi kumachita geni
    basi, kumangokhala, kumathandizana. [You see now they live like that the husband
    does not do BS, then it's the wife who does BS. They just stay like that, helping each
    other.]

11. Tiyerekeze [eg] azimayi akupanga geni, eti? Amafunanso azibambo kuti awakwatire?
    [So a woman who does BS, would she want marriage?]
    Eee, chimene chimapangitsa kukwatira [something that makes someone to get
    married], mwina kuti, ujeniyi, “genda” ipita patsogolo tikhale anthu awiri tithandizani,
    eee. [maybe because of this uh, gender, we have to stay two of us, helping each other.]

12. Iwowo amaganiza kuti mwina azimayi akamapanga geni malingana ndi matendawa
    sangaganizenso zokwatira sangapewe kumatenda a Edzi? [Janneke is thinking that
    maybe when women do BS according to the disease they cannot think of getting
    married. What made them to do this?]
    Iyayi, amachita. Ena amakana, eya, ena amati tipange geni, ena ndi matenda amenewa
    amati tikayezetse ku chipatala.[No, they do want to get married. Others refuse, others say
    let’s get our blood tested in the hospital]

13. Inuyu mukuona maganizo mwanu mukuona kuti azimayi atakhala kuti akupanga geni
    ndikumakhala wokha worsakwirira sangapewe kumatenda a Edzi? [In your opinion, do you
    think that when a woman is doing BS and staying alone without marriage, she cannot
    prevent AIDS?]
    Kupewa zitha kutheka athakuchepa matendawa atazisamala kupanda kukwatira
    chiwerewere osachita. [If they can prevent it can be possible the disease can be less, if they
    can take care of themselves without getting married.]

    makes women to be dating men?]
    Kusauka.[Poverty]

15. Nanga ali ndi geni, akupeza ndalama amafunanso kukwatira chifukwa
    chiyani? [If they do BS and find money, why do they want to get married?]
    Chiwerewere.. [adultry/sex]
16. Komanso zithakutheka kuti ngati akufuna chiwerewere adzigwiritsa nchito kondomu, kapena kusankha m’modzi amene ali wokhulupirika... [But if they want (a lot of) sex, they could use a condom, or choose a man who is faithful...]

Ena akutenga makondomu, makamaka atsikana.[some use condoms, especially girls]

17. Monga ngati panopa ndiye kuti aliyense akudziwa za matenda a Edzi? [People know about AIDS?]

Aliyense akudziwa.[Everybody knows]

18. Ndi chifukwa chiyani matenda awa akupitirirabe [Then why does it continue to spread?]

Akupitirira akudziwa kumachita chiwerewere, akudziwa kuti kuli matenda...[it continues to spread, they know having sex, they know there are diseases.]

19. Iwowo amapangilanji zimenezo akudziwa kuti ndi zoipa? [They do it while they know it is dangerous?]

Alibe khalidwe... [They don’t have proper conduct]

20. Ndiye kuti kapena makolo tinene kuti sanawalere bwino ana awo? [We can say that parents did not raise their children properly?]

Ena amalera bwino. Kale kunalibe edzi koma kunali matenda ena monga chindoko, mabomu, chizonono. Akatenga mankhwala amachita kukumba [used to dig traditional medicine] osati kuchipatala. Ena kuchipatala. Koma masiku ano, eee... [Some are raised fine. In the past there was no AIDS but there were other STIs. Then they used to dig traditional medicine, not going to the hospital. Other went to the hospital]

21. Ena sakuopa za matenda, eti? [Some are not afraid?]

Kusaopa eee... Ena kunena kuti “kodi matenda anabwerera mtengo kapena anthu?”[Not afraid indeed... Some say that “did this disease come for trees or people?”]

22. Zikutanthauza chiyani, anthu akumanena kuti matenda sanabwerera mtengo koma anthu? [What does that mean?]

Kufuna zimenezo cha chiwerewerezo, amakonda chiwerewere... They want it because of sex, they love sex

Reflection

Poverty/lacking certainly incites/is important reason/cause of many different/overlapping sexual relationships. But development project/BSs do not have any significant impact: too unstable and too small scale, so insecurity remains. So best is both own income AND whatever extras can be found through relationships... But what about women outside of village? Those with jobs, e.g. nurses at [nearest tradingcenter]?
Zie blauwe bloemen boekje voor aantekeningen over kantoor 5 June + Bridge presentatie
aantekeningen!

June 13, Sunday: Last interviews Mudzi A II

GVD!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Weer voice rec die er mee stoont/microfoon die het opeens niet meer doet... Dus
alleen maar zeer beknopte aantekeningen...

1. Months children born?
2. Differences men vs women
3. Why do men usually have more money?
4. If not happy with behavior husband, what will woman do? And vice versa?
5. What are reasons to stay with husband even if not happy with his behavior?
6. Why do many relationships here not last long?
7. When woman is able to take care of herself and kids, will she still want husband? Why?
8. Will husband be happy or feel threatened?
9. Are women better off now or in past?
10. Did some women have own income in past?
11. As many single women then as now?

1st old women:
husband works on field and takes care of family, but sometimes can be other way around too.
husband and wife should share responsibilities, discuss about who does what. But tasks are different.
Women: fetching water, cooking, kuchapa, sweeping, ulemu kwa abambo. Men: cutting down trees
to build a house, build house, toilet, bafa.

Think differently, are more intelligent (nzeru), just born like that. Can work as carpenter.

Will go to ankoshwe after first having tried to discuss the issue with him. Then the ankoshwe will talk
to him, advise him, tell him to change behavior. But when husband unhappy with wife will just
chase her, always means end of marriage.

Herself, marriage ended because of death. But she would have chased him, even though she had
many children (I think she said this, not sure). Others stay together to be receive respect from others.

Smoking chamba, woman afraid that he may kill her because of chamba.

May remember 1 good thing, eg that he brought food, helped on the field, bought clothes. And
because of that 1 good thing will stay with him.

Happy! And woman has to accept him staying because men often just refuse to leave even after
being told to go.

In past not enough clothes, eg going to school with only blouse and chitenje, no skirt.

Pounding maize & sell, selling bananas/nyemba/maize in town.

Now girls marry younger than in past, but divorce quicker. In past stayed married. Don't know why,
Bible says that this time would come.
Child born in July 2003
Men are able to build houses, women not.
Men can find money easily, women not. Jobs here need strong people = men, eg working in the field, cutting down trees, making bricks, making oven for bricks, making roof... Men and women have been doing different things since the beginning, ever since have just followed behavior of the past.
If woman is unhappy: discuss, if not changing --> end of marriage. But husband will end marriage, no discussion, saying: “You are not the only one, I can find another!” Women won't say that, because a woman can't propose, man has to propose.
Need husband to take care of her children, can't manage alone to feed the child, clothes, maybe schooling. Through death or otherwise disagreements. More now than in past, world is changing...
It's nature (chilengedwe). Gertrude: People cannot stay without sex, many say “can't control nature” = ndi kovuta kudziletsa kuchilengedwe.
husband not worried if woman takes care of the family.

Belita

Women stay at home, take care of kids, are busy fetching water, cooking, cleaning dishes, sweeping. Men just wake up and stay. After building the house they feel they can relax...
True, men usually have more money. Are more intelligent, better at running BS, women could learn a lot from men. Men keep time/do things quickly (changu), while women delay doing first this and that. Men can also go far to find money to start a BS, maybe go to the lake, while women can only do BS's near the house, making mandasi or beer. Women may have a plan for BS but difficult to find money to start. Gertrude later adds: Women do things without really thinking it over, while men do think things through better.

Woman: sit down and discuss. Man too - if he likes her.
Thinking “who will marry me?” Ignorance, not educated.
Not married women will be suspected of sleeping with husband of married women. When her husband is out, a wife may think he is with the single woman.
Wife challenges, quickly suspects her husband to be in relationship with another woman while he may just be chatting with her, and chases him without asking what is the matter. Men quickly propose to many other women...
Happy, because he can just stay and eat. Will even deliberately look for richer women, with iron sheet roof, so he can just be eating. Woman will accept his proposal, because needs to see his behavior first. Wants marriage to be respected, whether he is poor or not.

Mother Belita (slightly drunk...)
nvt
Ah, women are more intelligent! They stay at home, cook and be full/satisfied. Work in their fields, guide husband on what to do. While men they just do things without thinking, are all over the place, moving around, kumowa, only think of drinking beer. When a woman advises him, he just says: “Don’t tell me what to do! I know everything!” That's why so many women in Mudzi A are not married while they are being proposed! Most people here are Muslims, uneducated. In past we were encouraged to go far in school, and education changes behavior, one knows about future and past. When not, just like a mad man, without direction...
A couple may work together in their cotton field, but after selling the husband will put all the money in his pocket, not sharing with his wife. Wife will accept, afraid that otherwise their banja will end, that he may get angry.
Chase him. Chase her and find another wife.
Some husbands use traditional medicine not to be chased, to keep the women quiet, just accepting, make
her think: Ah whatever... (Kaya, kaya... which Gertrude translated as 'anyway, anyway...').

People don't sit down to discuss, just want to go and sleep with another wife. Mowa, chamba...

Desire (chilakolako)... It has been written by God in the Bible, demanding that a man should not stay alone, needs to be with a wife. Rib-story.

Amasangalala! [They are happy/like it!]"She is working hard while I am eating!" Women are weak, can't do much but accept.

Again referring to biblical rib-story, in which God created women from man's rib.

In past had only 1 chitenje. These days it is easier to find clothes for oneself and children. In past very low prices for produce, 2 bags of maize for 1 coin, 1 Tambala. After selling a full nkholwe of maize you could buy 1 thing only, now much more,

Woman with husband in SA = Zara, daughter-in-law of Meriam June 1995,


Man: making house, roof. Is strong while woman is weak.

Men are able to find jobs, can move around looking for jobs.

Sit down and discuss, both.

Women just want jobs, can move around looking for jobs.

To build a bafa, toilet. Thinking that she will not manage alone.

Happy that he can just stay while she finds what they want! Woman accepts this because of love (chikondi), just wants to be married.

Meriam


Men are strong & like beer; women weak.

Women just follow their husband's therefore don't find more money themselves. Unless she in independent (kuima pa yehka).

Discuss so that each can do what they want. Some think of divorcing. Same for men and women.

Stay with the same husband because another may be just the same, but may not be taking care of her children from the other man...

Kusapilira = don't think, just act (zie woordenboek!)

Can not happen, that a woman is able to take care of herself and kids and then still wants a husband!

If she is strong and is doing good BS, nothing will bother her (when I suggest finding problems in community as single woman).

Happy, most are used to that. Just sit back and eat. If he wouldn't be happy with it he would tell the wife to stop BS and take the responsibility of running BS himself. Woman will just accept because she wants banja, it's nature...

Sandala


After coming back from the field together women still have to fetch water, find ndiwo, cook, while men just stay and wait to eat. Men are stronger in finding money than women, because they think of looking for ganyu while women don't wish to go for ganyu, thinking they have a husband for that - that's how it is in village life.

See 2

Can go to organizations these days, called 'Nkhanza za banja', will take the case to court. husband may do the same, or just leave and find another wife.
Comparing hid good and bad behavior, remembering the good things and stay for that reason, especially if one has kids: will another man take care of them?

Many girls these days have children without being married. When a man is married for some time, he may think of going to these girls, especially if his wife has been rude, and check out these girls. With children, because those are more likely to accept easily.

Seeing friends be married, jealous, want that too, eg working in field together. Thinking: what if I get ill?

Happy, although wife will not be happy, because she is just busy will the husband just staying. May accept it just out of desire for the husband. Or thinking that although this one is just staying, at least he is able to use the money properly while another one may misuse it.

Has not started her mandasi BS again. Told me last time she wanted to take loan from CUMO (10,000, paying back 10,700 MK, in 4 months, first pay back after 2 weeks: 1550, but first must pay a deposit of 1500MK), but not all members were able to come up with the deposits, so never got loan... husband still working at Mpaweni Lodge at Liwonde.

Alinafe (grandmother still at church) June


Women: cook, fetching water, chat with other women. Men: go to work, make bafa & toilet, cutting down trees, chatting with other men.

Men have jobs, work hard on their own. Find jobs because work harder in school, while girls get pregnant and stay at home.

Tell him it's good to divorce because you are mistreating me. husband: discuss, and if she is not changing her behavior, find other wife.

Friends & parents may advise you to accept his behavior & stay. But when they sit down with you and hear what is the problem, may encourage you to indeed divorce, eg when current husband is mistreating child of previous man. Or one of the couple may be a witch, trying to convince the other to kill one of the children, may lead to quarrels and divorce.

By if husband is lazy, when woman is just working on the field alone, she may decide to send him away. Or if he likes women, wife not happy about that and divorce.

Because of nature: chilengedwe, ndi chovuta, con't control...

Not happy, otherwise would have helped each other, will divorce.

Mother Victoria = Yona (V at church)

Nvt

Men: kumanga manyumba [build houses], cutting down trees, finding jobs, work in field, make law in the house, is head of family, wife has to listen (he won't accept what wife says, but wife will accept what he says). Men have better jobs (although women can have good jobs too these days). Are more intelligent and strong. I think I heard her say something like “nzeru zawo amaona tsogolo” - looking ahead.

Eg when he beats her, she may go to ankhoswe time and again to complain. While husband will just think of divorcing. He may go to work, fearing that his wife is moving around with other men, bringing home diseases, or that he'll encounter one of her boyfriends on his way back home and will have to fight - better divorce.

Thinking that “maybe he will change, maybe he will change...” Kupilira (many women used this word): just accepting without complaining or refusing.

Many (men) are not satisfied with what they have, kukomedwa, easily attracted. And thus not faithful...

Nature... God says it in the Bible, it is important to have a husband. What reasons may a woman have to
stay single? Mavuto, maybe he was mistreating her... But why not looking for other husband? Maybe she will be unlucky again, better to stay alone...

If the couple decides together on the expenditure it is ok. But some husbands just demand the money, threatening to beat woman and will use it to drink beer. Husband may then later say that he will do whatever the woman had wanted to use the money for, eg build a toilet, and she will accept. Now women can find better jobs. In past women had better behavior, now if they have money want to show off to others. In past not educated, now better educated.

Answers make more sense when knowing background of respondent!

Aug 3, Baweanstraat, Amsterdam

Jan advises me to read: The worldly philosophers.

School girls from Gertrude’s secondary school class: wanted hair extensions and nice clothes to show off to fellow girls that men were interested in them rather than to attract men.

Project staff anecdotes:

- baas van [organization]: stomme, domme boeren dat ze de nieuwe technologieen maar niet overnemen! Bv ridges blijven maken terwijl allang bewezen dat dat slechter is.
- Overleg voor ICRISAT profilerings document: “Vulnerability” moet op eerste pagina staan, anders kunnen we het zowiezo wel vergeten. Bewust van spelregels...
- Artikel Day over FINCA staff die lol haalt uit confisqueren van leners’ bezittingen.
- CUMO extension worker
- MRFC field staff
- “We try, they fail” mentaliteit

Aug 10 2009, Baweanstraat, Amsterdam

Katoenverkoop begonnen!!

Texts messages Gertrude:

10 Aug: Goodmorning they have started buying cotton today at 42Mk [large commercial estate] [small crossroads market] and B. village. I talked to GVH and Innocent but Molly said that may be this afternoon they will start buying at 75Mk am ready to go on wednesday to make sure that they have indeed started and i will see when to come back.
Hie! husband of Sofia has died by car accident yesterday, GVH told me today, good day! [30 juli 2009]

Good night! I am happy because I talked to the director at school about computer and they arranged a teacher for me and I have started today but my mother called and said that my sister is HIV+ (the one who is on the picture) wishing you all the best. Greet efe friends and parents. [28 juli 2009]

27 juli: Good morning! I talked to Wongani and she said that she will finish typing this week, is it ok to give her what I have been translating to type now and when I will go to Balaka for cotton I will find another notebook to use.

I have started & there is 4 subjects: Sociology, Language communication, Rural and development 1, Health community. Everything is just the same as what we have been doing at Balaka & other lessons are like what Langmwale is doing, and we will be learning 3 days per week with 2 subjects per day Monday, Wednesday and Friday. It's from 8 am to 1 pm about cotton they have started I talked to husb of Jasmine, good luck! [15 juli 2009] - on phone told me she is only girl in class of 8/9 students, 1 boy misbehaving, already expelled for week. And that she already sold all the knittings she made in vlg!

Good morning! I called Livia this morning asking about cotton and she said that up to now it is not known, good day and greet everybody. [July 6 2009]

Yes I managed, but about computer some told me that they just teach once a week and sometimes not. Then I talked to Beston college at A25 for computer only during weekend and they said they will arrange! All the best! [June 29 2009]

Am fine. I listened from the radio on Saturday and they said that they had their discussions at Balaka and the results not announced I called Livia today and she said they have not started, my weekend was nice just watching some films to the landlord. Greet everybody too. Missing! [June 29 2009]

June 24: I called Kingsley & husband of Vanessa Jasmine and they all said that they have not yet started and they don't know anything greetings to you all.

Aug 12

Text message Gertrude: Hie! Am in the village in the house of Sofia, she is still in the same house, she has 3 bags of maize and she will eat up to Dec a bag of maize is at 2000 here and if you can give her 5000 [as I had suggested on phone on 10th] she can buy extra maize, about cotton things are not going well only [large commercial estate] is buying at 42MK but I will go tomorrow and check Mr Ntawanga told me that they are buying secret because Bingu said that they should buy at 75MK, others said buyers will come tomorrow to buy in the vg, but I will move around in the vg to find out. Good night

Aug 13

Text message Gertrude: Hie! [large commercial estate] is indeed buying at 42mk, I went there and I talked to 1 of the buyers and he said that they decided to buy because farmers went to complain and the government is not buying but here in the vg people are failing to sell because its far and at [large commercial estate] they told me
that there car has started moving around in vgs collecting cotton. Rosemary’s family moved to F. village, Livia married for 2wks only. Good day!

Aug 15

Good afternoon! I followed 6 women from Mudzi B who went to sell their cotton at Ch. village since morning and the buyers have come right now, but they are buying at 42mk. Tomorrow I want to see if buyers will come at Mudzi A, but I have already taken the statistics of [clinic] and on Monday I will be back.

Aug 17

Text Gertrude: Hie! 11 people from Mudzi B has sold. But at Mudzi A others told me that they are waiting for the buyers, Venesi & Molly are waiting for the price to be high, a lot of them wants to buy food & clothes. Am on way to Lilongwe now. Talk to you later!

Aug 18

Text Gertrude: Good afternoon! I will sent tomorrow morning to Mr Chamango, I gave 5000mk to Sofia, 2000mk to Jasmine, everybody said thanks a lot to you! The money that you gave me at the airport was 1600mk, and I spent 3.915mk mine. I bought beans, sugar, salt, paraffin, airtime, matches & transport good lucky! [Baleke gemaild 11.000Mk aan Gertrude te geven van geld dat ik eerder naar ICRISAT heb overgemaakt]

Aug 19

Sprak op Wiebe’s verjaardagsfeestje in Vondelpark met XXX, die blij was mij een keer te ontmoeten. Zit zelf ook in dat vakgebied: schoolvakbond maar op internationaal niveau, UNICEF etc. Was ook al paar keer in Malawi, maar alleen Lilongwe en Blantyre, zaten in sjiek hotel, kan zich het Italiaanse restaurant herinneren. Had wel zin er weer eens heen te gaan: “Dan regel ik gewoon een of andere meeting, ja zo gaat dat toch?” Ook zei hij, toen ik vertelde over strategisch antwoorden etc van dorpelings, manipuleren/beraaf zeggen wat er van ze verwacht wordt: “Maar dan doen wij toch net zo goed? Als we een projectvoorstel voor de Wereld Bank oef schrijven…”

Jan 26, 2010

Text Gertrude: Hi For the results, they said that it takes 12 weeks after writing then we are expecting mid feb, many thanks for a good explanation on my assignment [why birth control efforts fail in many developing countries, focus on own country] & you know what! [bericht dat ik zwanger ben?] am just happy when iam receiving & sending mails everything is a miracle, am ready to knit what you want. But an earthquake passed on 13Jan but it didn’t destroy anything, Lilongwe salima and dowa my house checked for 3 min i was afraid after remembering what has happened in chikwawa BYEE!

Feb 6: gesprek met XXX

Deed beetje schimpend over IS-Academy initiatief van BuZa - voor hij wist dat ik daar bij zit. Leuke poging, maar niet erg effectief. Beleid en onderzoek gewoon moeilijk te combineren,
mn vanwege andere tijdsspanne/behoeft: voor beleid snel, maar onderzoek heeft tijd nodig. WRR rapport noemt dat ook als probleem: erg weinig expertise bij BuZa, plus steeds veranderende agenda (maar onvermijdelijk want steeds nieuwe regering en minister, dus al zou Koenders advies van 10 landen volgen, volgende minister zou dat zo weer terug kunnen draaien). XXX: BuZa is echt een apenrots, iedereen gewoon voor zichzelf bezig, weinig expertise. Onderzoekers voor beleid zitten bij KIT, KIT krijgt veel geld van BuZa om beleidsadviezen aan hen uit te brengen. Bij Wageningen Uni krijgen geld van Min van Landbouw, maar moet allemaal snelsnelsnel. Binnen 3 maanden moet advies er liggen dus kan je weinig diepgaand, uitgedacht onderzoek in doen, mag geen wetenschap heten, vindt hij. Dat ik dan nu, volledig onervaren en binnen een maand even de onderlinge verbanden tussen thema’s moet gaan aanwijzen, slaat ook nergens op, weinig zinvol, moet veel structureler, zegt ook WRR. Wel goed, WRR, zegt XXX, er moet echt iets veranderen, moest echt nodig aan de kaak worden gesteld.

Uit Baseline interviews:

**AIDS ed**

- One of the sons of Chenawe (70, 3rd marriage) died last year after being ill for long time, his wife (who also had children with other man) died 2 weeks ago. Chenawe will go to pick up the ones of her son to stay with her, and register these orphans as living at HER HH not there!

9. Magda (63, 2nd marriage) hires young boys to help on field, weeding, for 20/30MK. “Adults need more money, but young boys work cheap.” Have beautiful house that was built for them by son who had gone to Chancellor College and worked in Blantyre, but died. Another son was teacher, died too. The only other working child is a nurse, she has to take of all the orphans now, therefore difficult to take care of parents too...

**Female entrepreneurship**

Agnessi Musitafa (42, married) follows tailor training course in Balaka town, organized by an Indian organization Axa. Came to mosque to tell people about opportunity. Others found it too far to travel 3 days a week to Balaka, she leaves by foot at 5AM to arrive there at 8AM. Training takes 1 yr 5 months, at end all receive a sewing machine. Next month will be a holiday for cultivating the fields. Almost ready with training.

- Charity (20, pregnant & divorced): Had her independent income buying & selling tomatoes, masamba and green maize with which she “bought salt when her husband was not around to take care of her.”

- Sister Florence (23, married) also used to buy and sell veggies, but stopped temporarily now to cultivate her land. Buys at dimba some half hour walk from vlg. Used
Mrs Ntawanga (46, second marriage): “We women try to make business, but it is difficult to find money to start.” E.g. Selling clothes, or fish.

Saibi (25, divorced & with baby from other man): Father (Catholic Ngoni) of last child just passed by and so came to know each other. He comes every now and then, but lives elsewhere with other wife. He doesn’t want to get married with her yet, but she does because “amalima…” [he farms…] Other wife knows about her and baby, Saibi went to his vlg, wife saw her, but didn’t do anything. Has her own (small) income from buying and selling tomatoes & masamba. Business will be better in coming hunger months: people now still have own harvests of nandolo and other ndiwo, but will finish soon and then they will buy.

Woman passed by house, girls & women at our veranda commented: “That one, she is going to sell tomatoes rather than taking care of her husband. And always goes to the same village to sell, where she is seen with a certain man…”

Suset (23, divorced & with baby of other father) brews & sells kachasu at her house, taught by grandmother Kima. All year round BS. Evening before interview 3 costumers, 250 MK. Other women in the vlg are not angry with her for supplying their husbands with beer, for taking in their HH money - “they shout at their husbands, not me, they know it is business…” Profit from BS not enough to survive hunger season, will sometimes spend all income on food and other HH needs, and than has to borrow to buy ingredients for Kachasu (madeya & sugar) - which she then pays back after selling. Did ganyu too.

Grandmother Kima (65, divorced) also brews beer. Started in 1987 when her marriage ended. husband left her in 1984 when he became rich through his work as mechanic at several companies. Learned brewing from mother. With income buys maize for food and ingredients for kachasu. Could buy 2 bags of fert last season [not only BS, sell pigs from club each yr to find money for fertilizer]! But also did ganyu… Says that for non-BS women it is difficult to find things on their own, are afraid to borrow or beg to start a BS. BS women can easily find the things they need, like soap, sugar, salt. But because of BS may not receive handouts: That one has BS, has iron sheets, will not receive…”

Teleza (28, divorced) sometimes makes mandasi, buys & sells bananas/fish at the primary school to school kids. But too small profit to live of, just to buy some soap, salt, ndiwo. Hired & did ganyu. Sold goat to pay for ganyu, will sell another this season to buy maize. Lives in nice house with cement & iron sheets - paid by mother who traded second hand clothes. Says she has no starting capital to start same BS, and wasn’t around when they registered for Concern Universal loans. Would like to be buying and selling maize, but needs more capital for this. Why not sell goat? Too small investment [onzin!].
Would like a MADEF loan, but not Concern Universal because of rigid payback rules. Villagers complained at MADEF that they had to come here, MADEF told them to open an account, which they did, but MADEF never showed up again...

Victoria (38, divorced) would like to start BS, e.g. buy & sell beans or fish, but lacks capital to start, she says (but is building a new house, does have money for that).

Sandalà (28, 1st marriage) started making & selling mandasi last August, to help HH, difficult to depend on husband alone, she decided. Spends 400MK on ingredients (flour, salt, sugar, yeast, ufa, cooking oil), sells about 65 a 10MK = 250MK profit. Started up with money after selling cotton (bought clay pot and basin, ingredients, oil for frying). Sells on Thursdays at [small crossroads market], at Fridays at [nearest trading center] market. Says it now not difficult to satisfy daily needs, if she wants breakfast she can buy some. Uses profit sometimes for HH, sometimes for herself (chitenje, clothes, body lotion). Used to do ganyu, but expects that will not be necessary anymore because of business. [Difference between rural BS women and non-BS women?] For BS woman it is not difficult to find things she needs while others have to do ganyu. [Why do not all women have BS?] Lack capital or are lazy… Stays ok with husband. Went to St 8, benefits in BS knowing whether she makes profit or not [but first answer was that she doesn’t benefit, only when I specifically ask whether also in her BS she notices no benefit…]. Before husband used to decide on expenditure, now she, because it is her business. By she decided to use her mandasi money to buy radio. Living now from maize bought with mandasi BS money.

Maria (22, left behind) lives with her son (2003) at mother, bothers and sisters. Works at a shop in [nearest trading center], selling soap, biscuits, cooking oil etc. Since 3 months, owner sent one of his kids to ask her. Six days/week, making 3500MK/month. Money is used for food and other HH needs, and to pay ganyu labor. The family will not have to do ganyu this year, but can hire. Salary will not be enough to fully feed the HH of 7 though, as her income is the only one. Doesn’t want leave mother and use her salary just for herself and son because people will talk, thinking that they didn’t stay well together.

Belita (46, second marriage) brews kachasu, learned from her mother. Started in 1980 at mother’s place, and started brewing at home after leaving first husband in 1986. Ong 10 costumers per day, 5 bottles sell for 800/1000 MK. Uses profit to buy soap, paraffin, chigayo. Even though she had own income, wanted to marry again, e.g. to build her a house, can’t do that herself. Says she decides on spending, but Radio and bike purchase both decided by husband… Still does ganyu too, BS does not bring enough money. Especially this time of the year, people are mostly at fields. Best selling times from May- Sept, after cotton sales.

Serena (57, married) started her business in 1982, first sold chigumu, but saw everybody at market selling chigumu and therefore switched to kanyenya: small dried fish
in a layer of fried batter. Learned from her sister who also made these, sold both at the primary school - she died now though… Does not sell at market because most people there rather buy mandasi, which is bigger and more filling. Buys the matemba dried fish once a week at Mangochi turn of, buys 5ltr bucket full at 800MK, plus transport 300MK. Fries in morning and sells from Monday to Friday at 2MK/piece, earns about 300/400MK/day these days, but in cotton selling season up to 1000MK (not profit!). Ingredients: matemba, flour, salt, ufa, oil. With profit: soap, chigayo, school fees, salt, lotion, sugar. Decides herself as husband is away working in Mwanza, but for large expenses like bike (after cotton sale), she called husband to discuss (ask advice?). Decided to start BS because husband had no work, they faced problems in their HH, her idea. Now proud of what she had accomplished: can buy school uniforms for her children! Says non-BS women just stay and have to beg for e.g. salt, they find it easier to beg, while for BS women there is no need to beg, can buy all she needs herself… When asked about impact of BS on relationship with husband, says defensively that are still well together.

- Melina (DIL Eveles, 44, 1st marriage) learned how to make a tree nursery and started one herself. Will start selling again in Jan/Feb, that's when people buy to plant (for shade or medicine), a 15 MK. Uses money for HH, large part goes to school fees of kids. Soon they will also have to pay for the ceremony when that son finishes Form 4.

- Ellia (23, left behind) buys firewood in villages around Mudzi A, telling people it is for her own use to keep prices down, than walks all the way to Balaka with a normal size bundle of firewood (100MK), to sell there or exchange for madeya ufa. But does ganyu too.

- Filimona (22, 1st marriage): husband is son of Hamra came from Mudzi A to her vlg selling tomatoes and asked someone where he could find an unmarried girl. The someone was a friend of Filimona and told him to ask for her. Stayed in relationship for 1 month before marriage. Was first proposal. Says she got married in 2002, had 3 children between 2004 and 2008. Chisoni later says the first 2 children are not from her current husband though… Says in interview she has no independent income, but Gertrude sees her selling tomatoes, also MIL Hamra was selling tomatoes on behalf of Filimona and told Gertrude that F has a field at dimba where she grows tomatoes. Her husband decided on expenditure because “anzeru”: he has more wisdom.

- Sweetness (35, 2nd marriage) lived with parents when man came: Ndikukufunani chibwenzi. She agreed and in coming 2 months asked around about his behavior. Friends said he's good because he works in the field and doesn't drink beer. Those 2 months he brought soap, salt, money (which he found through ganyu) - she didn't beg, he just gave. Divorced after 2 yrs because she found he was drinking beer... Then she decided to start mandasi BS. Found money through ganyu, but only did it for few months, then used money to help mother who had problems and couldn't continue. After 2 yrs another man proposed, banja ipv chibwenzi (others also proposed but she was afraid of same behavior as first husband), but she refused so as to first find out about his behavior: ulimi & BS of fish -
is a hard worker. After 2 wks he came to her house with his sister as witness who told her he is good, you will see - then agreed an up to now no problems.

- Christina (34, 3x divorce) [looking ill, chifuwa every month...] was chatting with girl who told her brother was looking for wife, is working in Blantyre: “Are you going to like him? He will come nxt month...” Came indeed, saying “ndikukufunani banja”, she agreed and waited 2 months while he returned to Blantyre. During marriage provided everything. Divorced because he wanted to marry other wife, but she didn’t and decided to divorce. Had one child, after divorce she started working at [large commercial estate]. Met here with second husband who proposed chibwenzi, she just agreed. Was giving me soap, salt, clothes & was loving me. Married after 4 months. At first he was still doing everything like pachibwenzi, but after 2 yrs started proposing other woman. In 1999 told her he was going to marry another, she said “I cannot manage to stay with man with 2 wives” and decided to divorce. Started working at Dwangwa llovo company to find money to feed kids. After parents died she went back to Mudzi B in 2004. Here a man said he wanted banja and she just agreed. After week got married, didn’t ask around about his behavior, but was good husband because provided everything. But now he has just disappeared without saying anything to propose to a woman in Mzuzu and meet her relatives. After cotton sale, husband used all the money for himself.

- Jasmine (56, 1st marriage) has BS of making zigumu and sell at Balaka market, since 1970. Husband wasn’t working, only worked in field (together), she decided to start BS as she saw the problems/needs of the HH, husband gave money to start BS. Goes about once a week, spends 500 MK on ingredients (maize, sugar, oil, soda, salt) and earns about 700 MK = 200 MK profit. Balaka is big market, sometimes she sells all, left overs she takes home for kids. When she wants to start again, goes for ganyu to get money for ingredients. Beginning of Nov: sold a goat for over 4000MK (someone came to her house to buy), and 4 pigs of the pig club were sold (for much less than their value, but nonetheless brought in money). Now making bread (taught by Gertrude), selling in vlg and at [small crossroads market] on Thursday, also zigumu. In Oct traded potatoes. Says while chatting that she also used to trade fish, but now the lake is closed. And rice when it’s in season. Her loan from Concern Universal she used for buying fertilizer and added to her zigumu BS, has paid back by now. Doesn’t take new loan because difficult to pay back. At least with MADEF the first payback is after 2/3 months, while Concern after 2 weeks. MADEF had come to Mudzi B 3 yrs ago, but never came back. Bought a bike after selling their cotton this year (2.5 bale at 24000MK in June to traders passing by) to go to the hospital, chigayo. [Saw her grandsons pass by on Nov 13 with bag of fertilizer on bike, bit later he passes again, with chicken and eggs - to bring to someone who is buying].

- Innocent (19, abandoned, 1 child) is now making mandasi, which she has sold in vlg of sister-in-law, borrowed 2000MK to start + received 1000MK from parents. Ingredients app 500MK, profit 250/300 after 3 days selling. [But stopped again soon after, had spent
money on food, nothing left for reinvestment…]

- Madalitso (45-50, almost divorced 2x) met first husband working a field here in Mudzi B. She thought he’d make a good husband since he was working in the field. After 3 yrs working in field together he wanted to work somewhere else, just disappeared and never returned. She stayed alone for 4 yrs with 3 kids - difficult to manage, did ganyu. Met 2nd husband doing ganyu together. Chatted and found both were unmarried and decided to marry. Again thought he is good, as he was working in the field at that moment. But after about a yr he started drinking beer day in day out, morning to evening. Hoped he would change, advised him to change, to no avail. She now decided to end the marriage, informed ankhoswe, waiting for them to return. Advantage of being married to this man: He helped her build the house, helped pay for new grass roof recently. They do ganyu together, but he uses his share mainly for beer. Couldn’t explain why she continues to feed him. Said she only found money through ganyu, but when we came to give her picture, she had gone to Mangochi to buy fish for BS!

- Lovely (29, 1st marriage) married at 13 when she and husband were both employed at a farm (contract). She knew the guy from vlg, he 5 yrs older. After receiving their salaries, he would give her some as she earned less. Soon her first child was born (possibly married because pregnant thus…). husband left May 2007 to SA, hasn’t seen him since, but they talk 3x/wk over phone (which she owns, charges at [nearest tradingcenter]). He sends her items (screen, phone chargers) and money via others who come back from there to here. He went because of “umphawi”, following younger brother. With money he sends, she can hire ganyu. Will be able to eat till March from harvest, but is cooking with smaller pots already. Before husband left they did not have enough food.

- When husband of Blessings (28, 1st marriage) left for SA he arranged her brother to stay with his wife and kids. Blessings decided on expenditure, as she is “the owner of the family/kids”. She joined him in SA for 2 yrs (cooking, washing etc in HH), wants to go back as it makes her proud to work in SA. Returned when she found herself pregnant, but will return when this one is old enough to be left behind = 3 yrs (also left other kid at 3).

- Kondwani (35, left - sister of chief Mudzi B) trades in cassava. Buys far away (D. vlg) where there is cassava, here not. Walks & carries on head. Started this yr because “kuvutika”. Heard about it from friend who does same. Sells at [small crossroads market], everyday (except Friday: mosque). But today had things to do around the house [not seen her at [small crossroads market], is usually in vlg). Buys at 200, sells at 400. Uses money for HH needs (soap, maize, clothes for kids, chigayo, grass for new roof). After selling works in field.

- Tinenenji (21, 1st marriage) grows (at dimba) and sells tomatoes to buy soap, salt,
chigayo, clothes, paraffin. She decides on expenditure of own income. Husband buys
tomatoes elsewhere at larger scale and sells them at Liwonde every day - his BS brings
most money. Money used for same items as hers - decide together. But husband decided
the purchase of bed, radio, bike. Some money is saved to buy food in coming months.
Early Nov Gertrude saw her go to [tiny crossroads market] (‘grocery’) to sell groundnuts.
Divorced after husband found her at night with ex-husband of Fatima, who later got back
with Fatima again. Pregnant from this man, when Fatima heard, she left husband.

- Thandizo (59, divorced) married at about 15 yrs old. The man proposed to her parents first, who
  asked her, she allowed because afraid of becoming pregnant by an unserious man
  (granddaughter Tinenenji laughs hard), better to get married. Dated 3 months, he had job
  somewhere, brought her sugar, biscuits, clothes. He left her after 22 yrs & 9 kids (5 died). She
  managed because strong, could work the field, and as soon as kids were strong enough, taught
  them to work the field too. Is supported financially by 32 yr old single daughter (with child) who
  stays with her and once a week sells zitumbuwa in other vlg where there is more business
  (malonda), people gathering and buying. Daughter decides on expenditure. Daughter stays with
  mother “because unmarried.”

- Ainessi (23, married) does not have own BS (nor husband - who used to buy zitenje,
  exchange these for chicken en then sell the chicken when still in Mangochi) “because they
  need all their ganyu money to buy ndiwo, which is difficult to get here in Mudzi B.”
  husband had sold all his chicken to pay for the families’ transport from Mangochi district
  to Mudzi B (where her mother Rosemary moved to).

- Dora (42, single, 2 marriages - mother of Dorica) met first husband in Balaka where she
  sold veggies, he clothes. He told her: “I am divorced, looking for wife now, can you
  manage?” Why her? Bcoz of God… Refused for 2 months, he kept coming to her house
  with soap, ndiwo, clothes, salt, saying “I love you therefore bring you this.” She was
  doubtful but after two months decided to agree. After a while however, he started to look
  for other wives, wanted 2 or 3, so she sent him away: “Then it becomes difficult to get
  enough salt, clothes etc, because you have to share everything with the other women.”
  Single with one child, managed by farming alone, growing crops for sale (maize, nandolo,
  khobwe) + kuoda bananas, suger cane.

- Venesi (36, 2 ended marriages) felt she was the husband, providing for family through BSs
  started with loans from Concern Universal. Concern Universal asked chief for people from
  vlg who were free to get loan, in groups of 10 (4 men, 6 women). Went to 3 day seminar to
  learn about running a BS, could afterwards borrow 5000MK max, which she did. Had to
  start repaying after 2 weeks 775 MK. Whenever she was unable to pay back, she
  borrowed from others for this. Bought fish at lake and maize in vlg, in June. Then took a
  new loan of 7000MK, for trading beans. Then another 5000MK loan to trade chicken.
Then a 200MK loan for tomatoes (repaying 310 every 2 weeks, in total 480 MN interest = almost 25%). The businesses she does depend on the season, in cotton season will sell more. Chooses to take new loans all the time (ondanks high interest rates) because it is difficult to gather such amounts by saving: someone gets ill etc. Proudly says that she decided on expenditure since her BSs, while before it was husband. Recently divorced him: Better to be alone than having to take care of him. Says she would also have divorced him without her BS, “could do ganyu.” In Mudzi A Concern Universal started the same microcredit scheme, but there it stopped when some men used the money to buy beer, couldn’t repay, led to quarrels in group. When I ask her about development projects she participates in, she does not mention the Concern loan. When I point this out to her, she says she indeed does not consider these loans a project, she makes proper BS, no charity!

Nola (55, 3th marriage)’s first husband was AEDO, proposed when she was still with parents. She told parents who said: Decide yourself whether you like him. She liked him, and hoped he would help her with her problems: work in the field, have enough clothes. Mother couldn’t provide enough clothes for her. He gave soap, clothes while in relationship, which gave her idea he would provide for her as husband. Married after 1 month, she followed him to his house. Provided indeed, but started having several wives, which made her decide to move back to parents and farm with them. Bcoz it became difficult to get all the things she needed, most things went to the other wives. He copied the behavior of friends, moving around, having multiple wives... She tried to advice him, he promised he would still provide as always, but it was different. She had 2 children to take care of, responsibility, so left him. Managed alone with 2 kids through BS zigumu & zitumbuwa at [large commercial estate] (started with money from selling maize). Proposed by plumber working at [large commercial estate]. Tolf him to first meet her parents, which he did, all then agreed. She hoped he could help her supplement the income she got from BS. But started to drink, and got wife elsewhere. One day just didn’t come back to her after work, went to life with other wife without saying goodbye. Didn’t divorce him herself, hoping he would change. Continued her BS. A man sent his brother to propose for him. By then she had lost parents and decided it was better to get married. Is a very good husband: doesn’t drink beer, work in field together, is not mistreating her kids. Have been together 11 years now, no kids. Also sold fish, but transport too expensive these days, reducing profits to much. Now only zigumu & zitumbuwa from house.

Nyamwale (app 50, 1st marriage) sold zigumu at one point in her life. Started because of problems, borrowed money from her brother, but stopped within a year because she had no money to continue. husband provides income by making mats, and ganyu. Decide on expenditure together.

Olivia (32, 1st marriage) was proposed by a carpenter on the road when buying&selling bananas at Balaka, saying: Ndikukufunani banja. Was staying with mother at that time. First refused for 3 months, finding out about his behavior. Decided to accept
proposal after she was told by his friends that he is a good boy because “other men they go around proposing several wives, but not this boy”. He gave her soap, ndiwo, clothes without her begging for it. “I was now free to marry him, because of these gifts.” Still providing everything, hence is good husband. He is building her a shop now in Balaka to sell soap, salt, rice, sugar, biscuits. She is happy about this because it will allow her to find the things she wants but can't ask her husband --> money. Will share income with husband - he will supply the shop, she will work in it. Now live in very small house.

- Katiya (20, 1st marriage) has never had a BS, because before she married she lived with parents who provided for her (did do ganyu though at that time, that’s where she met husband). HH finds money through ganyu, mostly husband. Would maybe want to sell mandasi, just to find money. Some women do ganyu, others do BS, depending on their problems.

- Malita (62, divorced 2x) brews masese beer. Started 4 yrs ago when her deceased mother told her in a dream to start because it is difficult to find what you need if you just stay. Mother had taught Malifa's elder sister, and told Malifa in that dream to go to this sister and learn. Uses maize from own nkhowe. Now doesn't lack soap, salt anymore, easy to go to maize mill. Oct to Dec are best BS months, because people come to fill their stomachs with masese. Stopped [beer BS] when her daughter in Blantyre died, now waiting for ceremony after which she can start again (just like Charity whose child died and now waits for the ceremony before going to church again. Parents Muslim, but husband Seventh Day Adventist, changed religion for him). Will buy fertilizer when she receives money from Orphan Care. Begged to be registered for MASAF project, but GVH did not register her.

- Fissa (45-50, widow+divorced) has been selling zitumbuwa at [nearby primary] school for 2 years, but stopped last Aug, using all money to buy food.

- Amila (36, 2nd marriage) was one of the women who received a loan from Concern Universal. However, she used it to buy fertilizer, paid back through ganyu & kuoda cassava. Stopped kuoda cassava in June 2007, because buying was very far.

- Molly (27, 2nd marriage, child before ever married) selling tomatoes at 'grocery' beginning of Nov. Tinenenji selling groundnuts there. She had bought them.

- Yona (mother of Victoria, 70, widow) married at 17 with boy in school. Met when both in St3. He said “ndikukufunani banja” but she refused because wanted to continue school. Then man said she could continue school while he got prepared for marriage, then she agreed. Stayed 2 yrs in chibwenzi while he tried to get employed. After those 2 years he joined his father in Bulawayo (mother at Chiradzulo with kids) where he found employment at the railway company and called her to join him, which she did. There he proposed to other women too and when Yona once met them on the road she started fighting. The police came and put her in prison for 6 months. Then uncle came to pick her and kids back to Chiradzulo. Yona then started BS of selling thobwa & zitumbuwa. Uncle gave her money to start. Decided to stop BS when she married second husband. Later also did fish BS, but stopped now because of high
transport costs. Bought clothes, ndiwo, soap, pig, school fees with profit. Last yr her daughter did MASAF to buy her fertilizer. Hired ganyu in kupalira (January) after selling a goat, paying 1000MK. When their maize finishes (1 bag left on Oct 10) will eat phala in morning, skip lunch, nsima for dinner. Has a bike that is used by grandson to go to school which Yona bought with the money she received from Limbe Company when husband died.

Lizzie (19, married, husband in SA) met husband at a chinamwali ceremony. He said “ndikukufunani banja”, but added that he would marry her after 1 yr, to get prepared first. She agreed. During that year he brought her money from his clothes BS. With the money she bought soap, clothes, salt, ndiwo. Married indeed after 1 yr, in Feb 2008. After a month of marriage he left for SA. She knew about this, and was happy about it, is a good thing that he will be there, sending support. Sleeps with some small boys in the house because afraid alone, and eats with younger mother in next house. husband told her to stop school in Form 3. Now that he is in SA she tries to convince him to allow her to go back to school, but he refuses, saying that she wants to find another husband there, jealous... Did fish BS for a while, buying at Liwonde, selling here, but stopped because no profits.

Alma (60?, single, 3x married) has been alone for over 20 years, she says. Managing fine on her own, working hard on field, doing better than some of the married couples. Some of those lack salt, while she does not. Has 1.5 acre, and harvested a full nkhouwa of local maize this year (had two fertilizer coupons, one from daughter) and 3 bags of groundnuts. Sells maize and groundnuts. When we went to buy some Chalimbana groundnuts from her she said they were her husband - through them she can find the things she needs. This year got one coupon, sold maize and groundnuts to pay, but daughter borrowed money and hasn’t paid back yet. Will apply manure in top of ridges before the rains fall when she does not have enough fertilizer.

Gender roles

Charity (20, pregnant & divorced): Had her independent income selling tomatoes, masamba and green maize with which she “bought salt when her husband was not around to take care of her”

Chatting on veranda, some young men and women, one of whom is pregnant. Man asks her how come her men tend to disappear after impregnating her, is second time now… She avoids answering, saying he should come to her house and ask her in private if he really wants to know. The guys joke around saying that maybe both men will come back with cellphones for her, and a bike. “I can take care of myself” the woman answers back, “if I want something I will buy it myself!”
Mrs Ntawanga (46, married) choose to divorce her first husband because “amakonda akazi”, 3 yrs ago the man died. Then Mr Ntawanga proposed and she accepted. No! Had not been friend before. She knew he would be a good husband because she had seen him be loving with his previous wife (who he divorced because she was too talkative).

Hamra (56, married) choose to divorce first husband when he wanted to take her and their kids to his home village, “would be difficult to take care of kids and his parents…” Was then left behind with 7 kids! (did ganyu to feed them).

In past families would stay together in peace, big families: children, parents, grandparents. Mothers and grandmothers could thus advice young girls. Now there is much more quarreling, people only take care of themselves, live separated. Girls act as they please, do not behave well.

[Why do men in general have more money than women?] Some boys do ganyu to find money, others grow cotton, some even steal from parents or beg from their uncles and cousins. Girls have less money than boys because they are lazy and rude (mwano), don’t listen to parents advice.

Saibi (25, divorced & with baby from other man): Father (Catholic Ngoni) of last child just passed by and so came to know each other. He comes every now and then, but lives elsewhere with other wife. He doesn’t want to get married with her yet, but she does because “amalima…” Other wife knows about her and baby, Selina went to his vlg, wife saw her, but didn’t do anything. Has her own (small) income from buying and selling tomatoes & masamba.

Chikondi (28, second marriage) divorced first husband because of “nkhanza” - physical mistreatment. He drank a lot, and fought with her when coming home drunk. When he didn’t drink, they were ok though. After separation husband went back to home in Machinga and Chikondi faced suspicious fellow village women who blamed her for receiving their husbands in her house. At the borehole women warned each other not to talk to her, for she would take your husband. These things happened a lot, Chikondi says. That’s why she agreed to marry her second husband when he proposed to her at market where she was selling veggies. At the very same day they first met, he proposed and she accepted. However, she didn’t know he would only show up every evening to eat and sleep, and during day head back for his home village… He sometimes brings her ndiwo or soap.

[What made you think he would be a good husband for you?] Men give gifts to show they are serious about marrying her. [What gifts did he give you?] Ah, just the gift of love - which was apparently good enough for her. Hoped this one would stay with her for a long time. Went to complain, to him and his parents. These say they have failed to talk to him, she should just leave him at peace, shouldn’t bother him, let him be, wait for him to divorce you.” Indeed, she too feels she can’t/doesn’t want to divorce him: “He should be the one to decide to divorce.”
In First field update about Chikondi: One woman (not a business woman, by the way) told us how she had married a man a few months ago, at the very same day they had met and he had proposed to her. The man disappears during the day to his home village, only shows up in the evening to eat and sleep. He does not support her and her children in any substantial way—maybe sometimes brings a soap or some relish to eat with nsima, the thick maize porridge that is Malawi’s staple food. When I asked her why she had married this guy in the first place then, she explained that other women had stopped talking to her at the borehole after she was left by her first husband, because they suspected her of receiving their husbands in her house. This was the only way for her to stop these gossips. She now has an extra mouth to feed, but at least is accepted again by her fellow village women.

Aisha (28, left behind) ‘s husband (Islamic Yao) married other wife in Feb 2007 and since then divided his time between his two wives in different villages. But since some months hasn’t come at all anymore. Last season did send someone to help Aisha cultivate her field. When she is in need of things like soap or ndiwo, she sends one of her kids to his father and ask for it. But sometimes ex-husband has no money to buy. Never gives money, always the items asked for.

Balakasi (51, divorced) recently sent her second husband away after 28 yrs of marriage because “samalima” [he didn’t farm]. Lazy man, just told him: I cannot live with you anymore.” [Gertrude thinks this coincided with her son going to SA and sending support]

Nosalt (29, married) is the one who decides on expenditure, because husband did not even buy blankets for her when they got married! So he clearly doesn’t know what is needed in the HH…

Sandala (28, married) started making & selling mandasi last August, to help HH, difficult to depend on husband alone, she decided. Before husband used to decide on expenditure, now she, because it is her business. By she decided to use her mandasi money to buy radio.

Belita (46, second marriage) had own income (kachasu), yet still wanted to remarry, for example to build her a house, can’t do that herself… Sometimes he goes to find firewood to sell: they help each other in the family. [But getting married also leads to more mouths to feed?] Still better to be together to be able to help each other… Says she decides on spending, but Radio and bike purchase both decided by husband…

Meriam (56, married) was in school together with future husband & lived near each other in village. After long courtship decided he was good man, because of “chikalidwe” = behavior: escorting her to hospital, gave presents like soap & lotion. Now, however, he married another wife besides her, and spends HH money on beer (e.g. last year she was ill during MASAF project and therefore wasn’t able to buy fertilizer - hence he doesn’t work for such money). Nonetheless stays with him: Because of children, growing
old herself, will not be given respect…

- Melina (44, first marriage) was proposed in 1983 by fellow school student. Married because of love from then up till now = “never abusive behavior”…

- Alinafe (46, widow) says her husband was good --> not abusive, providing what she needed, also helped her relatives as he helped his own (soap, money). After he died she did not want to marry again because “ndili ndi ana ndiye mwamuna wina sadzalola kusungu ana anga.” - another man will not allow her to take care of her kids, will have to send them away. Gertrude’s mother also did not remarry because of kids, Gertrude says. Some men propose to the daughters of their wife, wanting to sleep with them as they are not his children anyway - afraid of that.

- Nelia, aunt and niece later explained to me - asking why Nelia agreed to marry to a man at Balaka market she had never seen before - that women feel they need to hurry (chunga) to accept a proposal, in order to not lose this opportunity, before he proposes someone else.

- Nymwale (app 50, 1st marriage) says she has good husband = she gave birth to 5 children without him marrying another wife, they also work on the field together, he is even the one who does the ganyu [besides making mats for income].

- Olivia (32, 1st marriage) decided to accept proposal after she went around asking about his behavior and was told by his friends that he is a good boy because “other men they go around proposing several wives, but not this boy”. He gave her soap, ndiwo, clothes. “I was now free to marry him, because of these gifts.” Still providing everything, hence is good husband.

- Rebecca (18, 1st marriage) came back from maize mill when boy “amati akufuna chibwenzi ndiye ndinakana because afraid to get pregnant. Then he suggested to talk to her parents which she accepted. Came after wk and then she agreed. Stayed 1 month before marriage because he wanted time to prepare first = getting enough money (has clothes & fish BS). In that month he gave her soap, salt, clothes, lotion and ndiwo. Is good husband, still providing (even have iron sheet house! - not, is Esmart's). Viola stopped school in St 6 because the man proposed marriage.

- Sweetness (35, 2nd marriage) lived with parents when man came: Ndikukufunani chibwenzi. She agreed and in coming 2 months asked around about his behavior. Friends said he’s good because he works in the field and doesn’t drink beer. Those 2 months he brought soap, salt, money (which he found through ganyu) - she didn’t beg, he just gave.
Divorced after 2 yrs because she found he was drinking beer...

- Mwayi (30, widow) came back from working at [large commercial estate] when man asked her “Ndikukufunani banja.” I agreed, then he wanted to wait 2 months so that he could get prepared, find enough money. In those 2 months he bought soap, lotion. Was good husband because provided everything until he died in 2005.

Elube (45, 2nd marriage) got married very young because of “mavuto”: her father had died and when a man came to ask for her her mother allowed. They survived through ganyu. However, 2 days after giving birth to first child, he left to Lilongwe and never even sent soap, so she decided to end the marriage (he has some to see his child, but never brought anything). Moved back with mother and stayed alone 2 yrs. Second husband moved around looking for wife, met each other in street where he proposed about 30 yrs ago. Because of her problems she decided to agree. Asked her whether married, she answered marriage ended, then asked if she had kids, one, he agreed to take care. He was the first to propose after first one left. She had been waiting for someone to propose marriage to her. Was begging soap from her mother, wanted to marry to find soap on her own. But is not good husband, she has to do ganyu to buy clothes for kids, mat etc. He just plays cards, and when he wins uses money for himself (e.g. matemba - dried fish for own snack + maybe 10 MK salt for HH). Has zibwenzi, she heard from others and even himself. Told him to go back to his home vlg, afraid of diseases, but he refuses, saying he gave up trying to have several wives. But she can't be sure, because often he comes home late... She continues to feed him because of chisoni - his mother died so he has no other place to eat.

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but they talk 3x/wk over phone (which she owns, charges at [nearest tradingcenter]). He sends her items (screen, phone chargers) and money via others who come back from there to here. He went because of “umphawi” [poverty], following younger brother. With money he sends, she can hire ganyu. Will be able to eat till March from harvest, but is cooking with smaller pots already. Before husband left they did not have enough food.

Jeneti (37, left) was happily married, tried to develop/progress as a team. However, 5 of her 6 kids died within a few months after birth. People started telling husband he should get other wife. Parents at one time asked him to come over and then showed him the new wife they selected for him, he accepted. A yr later a bike taxi man proposed to her, she explained him about her child bearing problem, he didn’t mind, she accepted to get help in taking care of 1 kid. He had wife in Ulongwe, but quarreled a lot, wanted divorce and needed someone to go to - didn't want to move back to mothers... He took well care of her and kid, but started disappearing when she feel ill, sometimes stayed away for 3 months before coming back. People told her he is proposing to others. He even took maize from her one day, saying he was going to cultivate his mother's field, then ate it with another woman. April 2007 last time he came, now she has ended the marriage. This yr [Jeneti] bought 20 irons sheets, partly with cotton money, partly from selling maize (has 3 acres). Next yr will be able to pay for putting sheets up (trees, nails, labor etc). --> Often ill, she says, and has sores on skin...

When husband of Blessings (28, 1st marriage) left for SA he arranged her brother to stay with his wife and kids. Blessings decided on expenditure, as she is “the owner of the family/kids”. She joined him in SA for 2 yrs (cooking, washing etc in HH), wants to go back as it makes her proud to work in SA. Returned when she found herself pregnant, but will return when this one is old enough to be left behind = 3 yrs (also left other kid at 3).

Fissa (45-50, widow+divorced) was proposed by first husband because he heard she wanted to stop school as her parents couldn’t pay school fees anymore. She refused for 5 months, waiting whether her parents could find money for school fees, but they failed and she allowed. Heard from others he was good: not smoking, drinking, playing cards. Was indeed good husband: enough soap, not sleeping without food (through gangyu).

Chisoni (20, 1st marriage - eating with mother-in-law as they cultivated MILs land together with son/husband, will move to own family as soon as stock has finished here...) was in relationship with husband for 6 yrs during primary school. He would visit her at her parents' house, bring soap, lotion. She would make him rice and bring in a container. When she got to Form 1 and couldn't afford school fees, stopped and married. Husband left for SA June 2008. Sent soap via others coming back. They are in regular contact over phone, encouraging each other to stay faithful, is afraid he may find other wife but trusts him too: okhulupirika (he is a faithful person). Says doing ganyu is her biggest problem, because she is a woman. Women are used to work in HH, cleaning pots etc, men are more used to hard labor in the field...
Amila (36, 2nd marriage) has eelt on top of her head, from carrying so much water, says Gertrude. She didn’t get married until 25. Received proposals before, but was afraid to get gonorrhea which was prevalent at that time. But finally accepted proposal because of problems at home: lack of food & clothes. The parents of the men came to look for a wife for son, choose her because she respected elderly: “ulemu kwa akulu”. Man 5 yrs older, built her a house near her parents. When several of her relatives were dying he got afraid and left. In the same yr another man from other vlg proposed to her. Her uncle & other relatives advised her to allow: “You have no one else to take care of you, best is to get married.” She went to ask in his vlg, was told “good man”. Indeed good man, gave her many children. [but also causes problems, starts to behave strange when the moon appears, misses his home vlg and often disappears to his home village until he is send back by others saying: Go, you are married!] She lives near some women who are relatively well off, because husband’s in SA, but is not helped by them. Ashamed to beg for help, better to ask them for ganyu.

Tinenenji (21, 1st marriage) was proposed by boy from vlg where she went sometimes to visit friend. Had chatted, he proposed her there, she allowed because she liked him. “Problems” says grandmother who is present at interview and with whom Tinenenji stayed at time of proposal, “couldn’t dress herself.” Agogo didn’t know the boy but agreed with marriage too, was glad someone else would take care of granddaughter now, agogo says. He is good husband: buys clothes (kuveka), they eat nice food. She grows (at dimba) and sells tomatoes to buy soap, salt, chigayo, clothes, paraffin. She decides on expenditure of own income. husband buys tomatoes elsewhere at larger scale and sells them at Liwonde every day - his BS brings most money. Money used for same items as hers - decide together. But husband decided the purchase of bed, radio, bike. Some money is saved to buy food in coming months.

Gertrude: Possible reason why men generally have more money than women: can do more ganyu, can do harder labor; and are more serious at running BS.

Josephine (52, 2nd marriage) decides on expenditure at home because she knows best what is lacking in the HH.

Marriage & prostitution comments...

Eveles (old, widow): “these days young girls like money too much, and will therefore not reach my age... [?] Men propose to them, give them some money to sleep with them and then they become infected with the disease [matenda]. Many people already died in mudzi a because of the disease: there are so many orphans these days...”
These days, 4 girls may be waiting for one boy with some money, just to find some money
(maybe need some for school). Get pregnant and therefore don’t get far in school. The same
goes for adults and even old people! Because muslims are used to having several wives - this was
also the case in earlier days, but less (maybe 2 wives ipv 3 or 4).

“Most Yao don’t care for school, just wait to get married.” [Eveles]

Mrs Ntawanga (46, second marriage) stayed 13 yrs in first marriage, but chose to divorce because
“amakonda akazi” - sleeping around. Man died 3 yrs ago. Then Mr Ntawanga proposed, from
Mudzi B. She had already seen how loving he was with his previous wife before he divorced
because she was too talkative. But fiercely denied to me they were friends before marrying.

Ms Ntawanga: “Some boys are from rich families, steal money from their parents and call
a poor girl. Some men go for ganyu, hide the money from their wives so that they can get
zibwenzi. Or single boys, still fed by mother, do MASAF project, and use the money they
find on girls. Both poorer and richer girls may do this, the richer ones may see their poorer
friends do this and want too. The girls may be too tired for ganyu, or have done ganyu with
family and the money was taken for HH needs, or follow the example given by their
mother’s behaviour.”

Chatting on veranda, young girl passes, throwing up a 5MK coin. People sitting on veranda
comment that she has been begging a boy for this money. Asked her where she was going
with that money: to grocery. “Ah, you’re going to buy sweets, you begged money from that
boy!”

Hamra (56, married): In past families would stay together in peace, big families: children,
parents, grandmothers. Mothers and grandmothers could thus advice young girls. Now
there is much more quarreling, people only take care of themselves, live separated. Girls
act as they please, do not behave well.

[Why do men in general have more money than women?] Some boys do ganyu to find money,
others grow cotton, some even steal from parents or beg from their uncles and cousins. Girls
have less money than boys because they are lazy and rude (mwano), don’t listen to parents
advice.

[Hamra] Still works the field alone, does ganyu alone, looks for money alone. [Even though
married again now?] Didn’t know this husband would be lazy... Only has an extra mouth to feed.
“Cannot decide to divorce, only he can.” husband harvested 4,5 bags of maize from own field
last year which he sold, kept the money for himself and now eats from her maize.
Ndimaandaula: I used to stay alone, work on field alone, do ganyu alone, difficult to find food.
But it the same now that she is married...

Came to Mudzi A in 1955 with parents, looking for land. First got married in 1970, giving birth to
7 kids (4 died). She decided to divorce when he wanted to take the family to his home vlg to take
care of his parents. She didn't feel like doing this, would be difficult, so decided to stay behind
with kids. Managed by going for ganyu to find food. Says it is just as hard now as then to take care of kids as single mother. Took care of ill mother and sister for 5 years too. Then got married to current husband 6 yrs ago. Now staying with him and her youngest son of 21 (in house next to theirs, now with wife Fellister). Didn’t go to school, only boys went, girls stayed at home.

[Hamra] Finds money by exchanging chicken for pots or money & selling traditional medicine. [Hamra] Says she received no fert coupon, GVH told her that there are not enough, she will receive maize seeds: “But what is use of maize seeds without fert?” she asks angrily. Is trying to get fields prepared for planting asap because by end Oct her maize will be finished and then she will need to go for ganyu. Has 6 goats which all came from FIDP (3th yr now)

- Talks in village about woman at [small crossroads market] market who was dressed in only a chitenje, opened it and screamed “Who will sleep with me for money??” We asked if she was known to be a mad woman, but women at borehole and girls on our veranda said no, husband moved to South Africa.

- Woman passed by house, girls & women at our veranda commented: “That one, she is going to sell tomatoes rather than taking care of her husband. And always goes to the same village to sell, where she is seen with a certain man…”

Nelia (20, married) met husband on Jan 25 2005 when she was selling lemonade at Balaka market. Within 2 months they married. In 2006 baby was born. When accepting the proposal she didn't know whether boy would be good husband: changu - girl has to hurry making decision, not to miss opportunity, or he may propose someone else. But admits she wouldn't have allowed this one if he were old or ugly. And add that she would also not have allowed a beer drinker or loud talker, because these cannot take well care of a family. She trusted this one would stay with her as he is also an orphan, just like her, both have no one else to go to, hence will stick together.

Chikondi (28, second marriage) met husband at 16 when she came back from selling veggies at market. Accepted right away (father had died so she had no one to pay her school costs anyway), but waited 1 yr before marrying: waiting for her parents to come back to vlg to approve. mother advised her not to accept any gifts from him, because maybe she would decide to continue school and they would have to pay back everything because he would be angry about having wasted his time. She decided to divorce first husband because of “nkhanza” - physical mistreatment. He drank a lot, and fought with her when coming home drunk. When he didn’t drink, they were ok though. After separation husband went back to home in Machinga and Chikondi faced suspicious fellow village women who blamed her for receiving their husbands in her house. At the borehole women warned each other not to talk to her, for she would take your husband. These things happened a lot, Chikondi says. That’s why she agreed to marry her second husband when he proposed to her at market where she was selling veggies. At the very same day they first met, he proposed and she accepted. However, she didn’t know he would only show up every evening to eat and sleep, and during day head back for his home village… He sometimes brings her ndiwo or soap. [What made you
think he would be a good husband for you?" Men give gifts to show they are serious about marrying her. [What gifts did he give you then?] Ah, just the gift of love - which was apparently good enough for her. Hoped this one would stay with her for a long time. Went to complain, to him and his parents. These say they have failed to talk to him, she should just leave him at peace, shouldn’t bother him, let him be, wait for him to divorce you.” Indeed, she too feels she can’t/doesn’t want to divorce him: “He should be the one to decide to divorce.” [Nov 2008: Is clearly pregnant & Chikondi’s husband stopped coming after she told him to work in the field].

In First Field Update about Chikondi: One woman (not a business woman, by the way) told us how she had married a man a few months ago, at the very same day they had met and he had proposed to her. The man disappears during the day to his home village, only shows up in the evening to eat and sleep. He does not support her and her children in any substantial way - maybe sometimes brings a soap or some relish to eat with nsima, the thick maize porridge that is Malawi’s staple food. When I asked her why she had married this guy in the first place then, she explained that other women had stopped talking to her at the borehole after she was left by her first husband, because they suspected her of receiving their husbands in her house. This was the only way for her to stop these gossips. She now has an extra mouth to feed, but at least is accepted again by her fellow village women.

Julia (26, 1st marriage of both) lived with mother when the girl she walked with asked her to marry her brother. First wanted to see him, then allowed, married after 1 week: Because he was looking for marriage & kusangalatsidwa (she was proud of him, he made her happy), chikondi. husband took her first to his vlg to harvest there, then moved back to her vlg, because in Yao tribe don’t allow wife to follow husband: sitimapanga imenze...

But: In g’s notebook on May 14: Livia said that do you know that her [Julia] father-in-law is a traditional doctor? He was staying at the place where my mother built a house. she married to Moses then after giving birth to a first child they divorced I asked why? And she said I don’t know but after few months she married to another man and gave birth to 1 child. Later on they divorced and went back to Moses up to now.

Aisha (28, left behind) got pregnant while still in school. Left school and started BS of buying and selling veggies. Boyfriend didn't provide anything, so she didn't want to stay with him, stayed alone. While moving around with her veggies, man proposed to be zibwenzi. But she said: “Did that before, am done with that now.” He thought for a week, then answered that he didn’t have a wife either, so he agreed to marry her. She didn't know whether this one would provide for her or not. He was poorer than boyfriend, but at least they worked in the field together and did ganyu together. Now he sell fish. In 2007 husband (Islamic Yao) married other wife and then divided his time between his two wives in different villages. But since some months hasn’t come at all anymore. Last season did send someone to help Aisha cultivate her field. When she is in need of things like soap or ndiwo, she sends one of her kids to his father to ask for it. But sometimes ex-husband has no money to buy. Never gives money, always the items asked for. In Oct a new house was
being built for her - by her ex-husband who does not want to be talked about as bad man, leaving her without anything. Had promised this to her while still married - with iron sheet roof! She [Aisha] plans to start BS, because (ex-)husband does not send her enough. By selling fish from the house (cannot move around with small children who need food). But not yet, first work on the field now [Oct 2008].

- Naima (21, 2nd marriage) divorced her first husband (married at 16) because he had several wives. After 1 yr [Naima] was approached by fellow villager who looked for wife for his brother. He knew her behavior: had 2 kids already, but was not doing prostitution, no kuyendayenda, worked hard on field, took care of kids. She told him she first wanted to see the man. So when he visited, brother came to pick, but she still refused: not ready yet. The brother encouraged her, saying the man works hard like you. Which indeed he does. They quarrel sometimes, but then they discuss, and they always work together on the field. [see Gertrude's notes for story on Doris coming to sit on man's lap and afterwards sending Esnart letter to invite for fight.] [Grace told Gertrude that Naima is currently with third husband after she walked by with her first ex].

- Balakasi (51, divorced) recently sent her second husband away after 28 yrs of marriage because “samalima” [he doesn't farm]. Lazy man, just told him: I cannot live with you anymore.” First marriage ended after 2 yrs, he was a fisherman who decided to continue fishing ipv moving to Mudzi A to live with wife.

Follow up: Second husband from Mudzi B, was looking for an unmarried woman and came to her: “Ndikufuna banja” Came 4 times, she refused 3x: first wanted to find out about behavior. People told her his behavior was good. He brought her soap after she allowed. At first he indeed behaved as promised: providing everything. although usually not for kids from her earlier marriage who stayed with her mother nearby. Both him and her had 1 acre of land on which they worked together. However, he stopped working on the field for 3 years, and then left to Mangochic to marry there. Came back one day to take maize. When he came for second time to take maize, she told him never to show up again. Did come back however after he divorced, started staying together again. But when the rains started, again he didn't work on the field - hadn't changed. She told him: We have kids, what are they going to eat?? And sent him away. She heard from others he is now working as a gateman in Balaka.

- Suset (23, divorced & with baby of other father) brews & sells kachasu at her house. Met first boyfriend at a football match when still at school, she form 1, he form 3. He proposed chibwenzi, she allowed after 1 month. Delayed because she didn't know about his behavior. His friends then told her he is a good boy, saying “others drink, smoke, fight - but not him.” She trusted these friends because they were very close to him. In beginning indeed showed good behavior, but eventually married someone else. Then when she escorted her uncle to Balaka, a boy (5 yrs older) proposed marriage to her. “If you are serious, meet my relatives,” which he did. They married after 6 months because advised by relatives to take time to really see his behavior. Came twice per week. She would then cook for him, he brought clothes, soap, lotion without her begging for it. Seeing that he
brought her things made her think that he would provide also in marriage. Thus started to
live together after 6 months, in 2001, no wedding ceremony (= party with many people and
food, couldn't afford). Four years later he left her to marry someone else. Father second
child said he wasn’t married and would marry her, but she later heard from a friend that her
is married to another. Comes sometimes to see his child, but doesn’t support them. She
asks for help, but he says he has nothing to give. His wife knows as Suset went to his vlg,
wife saw but didn’t do anything.

- Teleza (28, divorced) met husband in church (Jehovah's Witness). Liked him because they were
from same church, he was not talkative but quite, good appearance. Church prescribes 6 months
of chibwenzi as period to find out what the other likes and dislikes. She asked him what food he
likes and tried to cook that for him. “Campaign,” joke Gertrude and she. Bcoz they didn't quarrel,
she believed he was a good one for her. She on her turn said that she likes “a man who goes to
church”, which he tried to do. [We asked her this question about how she came to be in
relationship with husband where grandmother Kima was sitting, left to Teleza's own veranda
when she heard question, later saying laughing: "You wanted to ask me this in front of my
grandmother!” Decided to divorce after 6 yrs in 2004, because he was a lazy man, didn't want to
work in the field. Doesn't want to get married again, better alone. Now doing everything freely,
working on the field and running a BS are not difficult, can manage alone, better then with a lazy
man...

- Josephine (52, 2nd marriage) was proposed at 13 when still in Ntcheu by a man who was
working on a field. Without knowing him she allowed because: Boys & girls should marry.
They stayed well together, but after 3 years he just moved back to his home village, without
quarreling oid, just left. Decided to marry again in 1975, after 3 yrs alone, to “help each
other”. Man passed by house where she stayed with her parents and proposed, she agreed
then informed parents who advised her to go to the ankhoswe to arrange. Was her first
proposal after first husband had left her unannounced. She couldn’t know whether he
would be a good husband, would have to find out when living together. Bible says: A
woman should be with a husband, and a man should be with a wife. When not married,
people may say a woman is a bitch [prostitute] or bargirl. Moved with him to Mudzi A who
worked at ADMARC in Balaka. husband is not very good: whenever he finds money he
spends it on beer. She married so they could help each other, but she is only one taking care
of HH... Stays with him because “maybe he will change,” plus stayed together many years,
difficult to divorce him now, will be difficult to find other husband because she has children
of another man. But if I ask whether she would indeed want to remarry, she says no,
because his behavior may be the same. When I ask what the advantages are of staying with
this husband she says there are none, because she farms alone now, gets clothes alone. In
future, she now says, she will leave him... Now doesn't have money to leave yet, for
transport ed, plus already started working on (his) field.
Victoria (38, divorced): marriage ended because husband married to another. Were both singing at church choir, often walked together, were friends when he proposed. “When proposing men pretend to be good men…” E.g. when she asked for something like money for soap, he would give without problems. Only after some years did he start to change, staying away during night, so she knew there was another woman. Tries to talk to him, but didn’t change. Then one day in 2002, after 16 yrs of marriage, he just left… Last born child also from 2002. Managed through farming and selling some crops, and sometimes ganyu when in need of soap. Is not looking for a new husband now, afraid of same behavior. [NB is building a new house with iron sheets! Says she doesn’t receive anything for 4 days/wk 3 hours teaching at Concern Universal adult school], but Venesi says they receive 1000MK/month]. Thieves stole about 2 bags of her (Victoria) cotton from the field.

Ganizani (21, never married, 2 kids) says she will marry the father of her last child (born 2006) when he finishes his secondary education, is now in his last year. Visits her now, brings soap and clothes without her begging. Her oldest child (2002) stays with younger sister of mother in Blantyre, where she was born.

Sandala (28, 1st marriage) stayed with agogo when a man came to propose her at 20 via agogo. Both agogo and herself were happy. She was just staying, stopped school after St 8 bcz lack of school fees. His behavior was good: respected parents, did not propose other girls. Is indeed a good husband. Started making & selling mandasi in Oct.

Maria (22, left behind) married in 2003 (“he was not abusive”), but when husband started to work as policeman in town (2006), he didn’t come back for her and their son. “Maybe because he has money and I am poor.” Never went to look for him, he never comes to see child. Wants to get married again in future, but is now still too hurt by her ex. Does receive proposals from other men, they just come to ask, bring no present oid, she declines, saying “Sindikufuna banja…”

Nosalt (29, married) was working on the road clearing project of MASAF when a man proposed to her. She did not agree msanga, took about a month, then decided she was ready for marriage (at 26). Had been proposed before, but because of head problems (going mad) had felt not ready. Had not been married before, so couldn’t know how to recognize a ‘good’ husband, would just see while being together. He is now in prison (“friends were thieves”, now 2nd of 9 months sentence)… She is the one who decided on expenditure because “he didn’t even buy her blankets when they got married, still uses her old ones, Clearly doesn’t know what is needed in HH…

Belita (46, 2nd marriage) met first husband at school, quickly found herself pregnant and therefore married, was childish… Decided to divorce her first husband (1979-86) because he had many zibwenzi (says she already knew about AIDS in those days and therefore wanted to divorce him). Found it difficult to stay alone, work the field alone, better to be with 1 than have several boyfriends. [Why? Several men may help more than one?]

Because may become infected with matenda… Then this man proposed (makes it sound as if it was very special favor, that one has to be lucky for this to happen, to come across a
man who is prepared to take care of her, and is serious about that), so allowed (another man had also proposed, brought her soap, but when she saw he had another family she refused). This one indeed better. Even though she had own income (kachasu), wanted to marry again, for example to build her a house, can’t do that herself… Sometimes he goes to find firewood to sell: they help each other in the family. [But getting married also leads to more mouths to feed?] Still better to be together to be able to help each other… Radio and bike purchase both decided by husband. Cotton money they shared, she bought clothes for kids and a pig. he says he maintained his bike with the money, but may have used it for beer. She believes this one is faithful, doesn't see him moving around, does go to drink beer but is always home before dark.

Mery (74, widow) was married from app 1950 until app 1988, was good marriage. They met dancing in Lilongwe (Mganda dance, performed at wedding ceremonies), dated for a while before marrying. Didn’t want to remarry, had been happy with husband, afraid of different behaving, disappointing husband. Was difficult, but managed alone: “kupilira” = carry difficulties alone.

Meriam (56, married) was in school together with future husband & lived near each other in village. After long courtship decided he was good man, because of “chikalidwe” (toch?) = behavior: escorting her to hospital, gave presents like soap & lotion. Now, however, he married another wife besides her (since 2000), and spends HH money on beer (e.g. last year she was ill during MASAF project and therefore wasn’t able to buy fertilizer - hence he doesn’t work for such money). Nonetheless stays with him: Because of children, growing old herself, will not be given respect… Knew he had second family elsewhere because some nights he didn't sleep at home, and heard from others that he stayed at a certain house those nights. When she asked him he confirmed. This is what happens when a husband doesn't love his wife... She tried to advise him a bit, but eventually accepted the situation. Loves him, but it seems he doesn't love her, because he doesn't change his behavior. When a man has only 1 wife, he loves her full hearted. But when he takes a second wife, he shares his love. BV yesterday he just left even though she is ill. The maize from his field is for Meriam and kids, but husband does also work on the field of the other woman.

Zara (28, second marriage) got pregnant at 14 by fellow student. Loved him (chikondi), after impregnation parents told them to get married. But soon he started to abuse her (amandizunza = oppressed/maltreated me/was cruel to me). She then took all her clothes and kitchen ware and left for her mother’s place who took her in. Lived with parents 3 years, who helped her to take care of child. Later saw it’s good to get married again. Advantages: husband helps her, when something lacks in HH he provides or they go for ganyu together. This man was looking around for wife, for unmarried girl. Was showed to
her house. When he came he had already heard everything about her. She did not agree right away, first came to Mudzi A, asked around, people said “good man”. Didn’t mind taking care of kids of other man. End Sept 2008 he left for SA, had discussed this together, she is happy about it, because he will send help.

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Serena (57, married) started her business in 1982, first sold chigumu, but saw everybody at market selling chigumu and therefore switched to kanyenya: small dried fish in a layer of fried batter. Decides herself on expenditure as husband is away working in Mwanza, but for large expenses like bike (after cotton sale), she called husband to discuss (ask advice?). Decided to start BS because husband had no work, they faced problems in their HH, her idea. When asked about impact of BS on relationship with husband, says defensively that are still well together. husband had told his friend/relative that he was looking for a wife, and that one brought them together. Through God she knew that this one would be good.

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Ellia (23, left behind) was in 2002 proposed by a man at the market in Balaka where she sold firewood. He asked her where she lived and came to see her in Mudzi A, proposed again. Her parents said she should decide herself, but it is better to marry than become pregnant. Didn’t know whether he would be a good man, or leave after impregnating, as he did… Just departed when she was 7 months pregnant (2005), without saying anything, never sends support or comes to see his son. When still together she was one to decide on expenditure because whenever husband found some money he would give her some and then disappear with rest to his home village. When she confronted him with this he would say: Don’t ask, you can move around too if you want.” (kuyendayenda). Has not had any proposals since and prefers to stay alone anyway: afraid, may get married, get another baby and be left again. It is dangerous nowadays… [Why?] Matenda Edzi. After forgetting what has happened, she may marry again. But to prevent Edzi it is better to do ganyu than to fall in love with boys. - When we come by in Oct for follow up questions and give picture her mother Viola tells us she has gone back to her husband to beg for assistance and has not returned, so maybe they are back together. Often comes after having been in a fight with him, and then goes back to him after a while. Her father went to him, after which his son-in-law said he would come to Mudzi A to explain everything.

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Filimona (22, 1st marriage) (husband = son of Hamra) came from Mudzi A to her vlg selling tomatoes and asked someone where he could find an unmarried girl. The someone was a friend of Filimona and told him to ask for her. Stayed in relationship for 1 month before marriage. Was first proposal. Says she got married in 2002, had 2 children in 2004 and 2008. Chisoni later says these 2 children are not from her current husband though… Also other knitting women commented on her another day, that besides the 2 children she has now, 2 more died. “Marriable girls must be difficult to come by these days,” they joked sarcastically, “since husband had to chose for this one who has already given birth to 4 kids.” Her husband decided on expenditure because “anzeru”: he has
more wisdom. Said in interview she has no independent income, but sells tomatoes that
she grows at dimba field where she comes from. Stays with husband and baby, other child
stays with her grandmother, after probing says this is because her mother had said: It’s
your first time to go live there with husband/at his vlg, you don’t know how people behave there.”

Joyce (24) met husband at school when she was in Form1 and he Form3, were in relationship for
2 yrs before marriage because she was pregnant (left school). She knew he would be a good
husband, because he was loving her. Moved with husband to Lilongwe, but quarreled a lot. She
says in interview that they divorced because her husband married another. Stayed alone for 8
months: “Was easy to stay alone, because I did ganyu (fetching water for making bricks) and
bought whatever I wanted at that time, eg clothes. As of now husband buys for me, but not
enough.” Met at church, he proposed in May 2008, married month later. Both men have the
same behavior though, as this one has also been married before. “Both are not loving me as I
wanted. Am still young, but already in second marriage. Maybe this one will leave me to and then
I will have to find a third husband, is not good for me.” On way to church together, Joyce tells
Gertrude that her ex and his new wife stay very well, even have a screen and big radio, staying in
Kanengo, working at Water Board. They met the ex on the road that day - he had come to collect
money for a screen he sold here. He asked Joyce to come back to him because he has no one to
cook for him, saying that people have been cheating her, that he doesn’t have another wife. By
now she was with another man though, having stayed alone for 8 months (married again “to be
respected by people...”). So she said: You should come to my parents’ house to discuss this, if
people see me talking to you while I am married to another now... When we went back to her for
some follow up questions, we were told she had moved back to Lilongwe. About her ‘biggest
problem’ she said, “Ndimapeza amuna osafuna banja” --> I have the tendency to find men who
are not serious about having a family (both having left their wives to marry others). Her second
husband is preacher at Seventh Day Adventist church, and during mass told his followers that his
wife had left him, that he is looking for a new one and all interested unmarried girls/women
should come to him.

Alinafe (46, widow) was proposed by husband at shop where she was buying soap.
He went to meet her parents, who agreed. Says her husband was good --> not abusive,
providing what she needed, also helped her relatives as he helped his own (soap, money).
After he died she did not want to marry again because “ndili ndi ana ndiye mwamuna wina
sadzalola kusungu ana anga.” - another man will not allow her to take care of her kids, will
have to send them away. Gertrude’s mother also did not remarry because of kids, Gertrude
says. Some men propose to the daughters of their wife, wanting to sleep with them as they
are not his children anyway - afraid of that.

Bonny (28, 1st marriage, twin with Faith) met with husband at wedding ceremony in [small
crossroads market] where he proposed to her, started relationship same day but got married
after 4
months. Is good husband because they go to the field together - but when allowing a relationship she didn't know about this. [Nelia, aunt and niece later explained to me - asking why Nelia agreed to marry to a man at Balaka market she had never seen before - that women feel they need to hurry (chunga) to accept a proposal, in order to not lose this opportunity, before he proposes someone else.] Decide together on HH expenditure as they work together in the field to make the money. Eg radio, discussed together, to know what is happening in other villages.

Rosebill (28, 1st marriage) met husband in school, had relationship 4 yrs. husband had had 2 wives before her already, she heard from others, but decided to marry him anyway. “I love him (chikondi) and will wait for him, even though he is now married to someone else, he will come back for me”... Gave birth to 2 of his children before they got married, one not long after getting married. Married in 2005, within a few days he went to drink and got into a fight. Police came and he was sentenced to prison where he has been for 3 years now. She uses her money to visit him in Ntcheu, give him food & money (but not all, also kept some cotton money to buy fertilizer later on, and bought soap, clothes, salt and sugar for own HH). Hired ganyu (ridges, Sept-Oct), paid through selling maize (cultivates 2 acres of herself and 1.5 of husband). Also sold nandolo, bought chitenje and food.

Nyamwale (app 50, 1st marriage) was staying with parents when man came and said: ndikukufunani banja. She refused but he kept coming, then after a months she agreed. It was childish (chibwana) of her to refuse at first... Says she has good husband = she gave birth to 5 children without him marrying another wife, they also work on the field together, he is even the one who does the ganyu [besides making mats for income].

Olivia (32, 1st marriage) was proposed by a carpenter on the road when buying & selling bananas at Balaka, saying: Ndiikukufunani banja. Was staying with mother at that time. First refused for 3 months, finding out about his behavior. Decided to accept proposal after she was told by his friends that he is a good boy because “other men they go around proposing several wives, but not this boy”. He gave her soap, ndiwo, clothes without her begging for it. “I was now free to marry him, because of these gifts.” Still providing everything, hence is good husband. He decides on expenditure as he is the one who is working for it. He is building her a shop now in Balaka to sell soap, salt, rice, sugar, biscuits. She is happy about this because it will allow her to find the things she wants but can’t ask her husband --> money. Will share income with husband - he will supply the shop, she will work in it. Now live in very small house.

Katiya (20, 1st marriage) met husband doing ganyu when he said he wanted to marry her. Refused for 1 month: Ndinafuza kaye za khalidwa lake kwa amnzake [wanted to find out about his behaviour from friends]. His friends said: Samyendayenda [not moving around with many girls], osamenyana [not fighting], no beer. He did not bring her anything (later says that he did, but she did not accept them because she was not yet ready for marriage), but decided
to accept after hearing about his behavior. Still behaving good. They discuss together about expenditure (Timakambirana).

**Rebecca (18, 1st marriage, husband 21) came back from maize mill when boy “amati akufuna chibwenzi ndiye ndinakana because afraid to get pregnant. Then he suggested to talk to her parents which she accepted. Came after wk and then she agreed. Stayed 1 month before marriage because he wanted time to prepare first = getting enough money (has clothes & fish BS). In that month he gave her soap, salt, clothes, lotion and ndiwo. Is good husband, still providing. Rebecca stopped school in St 6 because the man proposed marriage. Discuss together on expenditure.

**Malita (62, divorced 2x) met first husband on way back from [nearest tradingcenter] to buy ndziwo, he was selling fish. Ndikukufunani banja... [I want marriage – man said]

NdaKana... [I refused]. Refused for a month because he came from far. Asked his friends who told me he is a good man because he doesn't have other wife. In that month he came to bring soap, salt, ndziwo. “Then when I saw those gifts I realized that ndi wabwino ndipo tinakwatirana [it would be good if we married]. However, when children got ill she went to sing'anga who told her her husband was bewitching them, went home together where husband confessed. Hoping he'd change she stayed with him, but when all 8 children had died she divorced him. Stayed alone 10 yrs, finding whatever she wanted through farming & ganyu. Did receive proposals but was afraid they were not hard workers. Last yr a friend came to warn her that there is a certain man looking for a wife, she agreed without finding out about his behavior. Wanted to marry again because of umphawi, wanted a new house, but difficult to build alone. She decided to divorce after 5 months because he refused to come and stay with her. All her income comes from Orphan Care, 3000MK/month for 3 grandsons.

**Sweetness (35, 2nd marriage) lived with parents when man came: Ndikukufunani chibwenzi. She agreed and in coming 2 months asked around about his behavior. Friends said he's good because he works in the field and doesn't drink beer (later says that her problems were so urgent that she didn't even asked or found out about his behavior). Those 2 months he brought soap, salt, money (which he found through ganyu) - she didn't beg, he just gave. Her parents had many daughters, difficult to take care of all, therefore decided to get married. Had received other proposals, but then wasn't ready yet, not her time yet. Divorced after 2 yrs because she found he was drinking beer... Then she decided to start mandasi BS. After 2 yrs another man proposed, banja ipv chibwenzi, but she refused so as to first find out about his behavior. After 2 wks he came to her house with his sister as witness who told her he is good, you will see - then agreed an up to now no problems.

**Mwayi (30, widow) came back from working at [large commercial estate] when man (6 yrs older) asked her “Ndikukufunani banja.” I agreed because she had just stopped working at [large commercial estate] selecting tobacco. Then he wanted to wait 2 months so that he could get prepared, find enough money because he was staying with his parents, so had no HH utensils for
himself. In those 2 months he bought soap, lotion. Was good husband because provided everything until he died in 2005. Sees no reason to get married again, alone is good: grows different crops and after selling no one tells her what to use the money for, can decide herself. Disadvantage of being alone is that it will be difficult to make a new house.

- Christina (34, 3x divorce) [looking ill, chifuwa every month...] was chatting with girl who told her brother was looking for wife, is working in Blantyre: “Are you going to like him? He will come nxt month...” Came indeed, saying “ndikukufunani banja”, she agreed (was just staying, had stopped school) and waited 2 months while he returned to Blantyre. During marriage provided everything. Divorced because he wanted to marry other wife, but she didn’t and decided to divorce. Had one child, after divorce she started working at [large commercial estate]. Met here with second husband who proposed chibwenzi, she just agreed (“kusowa kwa nyumba,” stayed with mother at that time, couldn’t make own house). Was giving me soap, salt, clothes & was loving me. Married after 4 months. At first he was still doing everything like pachibwenzi, but after 2 yrs started proposing other woman. In 1999 told her he was going to marry another, she said “I cannot manage to stay with man with 2 wives”, afraid of becoming enemies, quarrel a lot with other wife, so decided to divorce. Started working at Dwangwa Illovo company to find money to feed kids. After parents died she went back to Mudzi B in 2004. Here a man said he wanted banja and she just agreed (mother had just died and people said it would be good for her to marry, to forget about being an orphan, to have someone to chat with). After week got married, didn’t ask around about his behavior, but was good husband because provided everything. But now he has just disappeared without saying anything to propose to a woman in Mzuzu and meet her relatives. After cotton sale, husband used all the money for himself. This year received a coupon and already bought (beginning of Nov) with advance from ganyu she is doing now: clearing field & making ridges on less than 1 acre --> 1500MK, 800 advance for fertilizer.

- Jasmine (56, 1st marriage): Man asked her parents for marriage when she was 7 yrs, married at 12 (“wochepa kwambiri” --> I was very young! Crying, running away...). Gave first birth several yrs later [how avoided? --> eventually took traditional medicine to become pregnant]. Parents allowed him to marry her because they knew he behaved well = not moving around. Came from other vlg, but was related to fam through grandmother. After first child, when husband couldn't sleep with her, he started to spend the days and nights at another woman's house (Jasmine followed him one day). When she discovered, went to ankhoswe after which the man stopped, leaving the other woman 6 months pregnant (child died). She says some men do this behavior because they have many children at home, are tired of that and go to a woman who has few kids; or his wife has grown old and he is curious to know the difference with a young woman.

- Livia (21, divorced, 2 kids) had only one dress while she was in school, hence difficult to wash that dress, thought it better to get married and leave school (St 7). Was
staying with brother & fam in [nearby tradingcenter] at that time, brother provided for her but couldn't sufficiently (brother sold diesel and had decided to take her in to help her and parents, she helped his wife in HH). Met man at market, he asked where she stayed and whether he could go see her brother. Brother than told her about proposal, she said: “If he is serious, let's go to my parents.” Parents refused for 1 yr, girl should continue school. But man kept coming, continued to see each other. Did not sleep together, she says, because parents were against their union and brother was watching over her, therefore really did not want to get pregnant. Knew that sex can lead to pregnancy, heard from people. After 1 yr parents allowed, still advising her it's better to continue school first, but she wanted to marry. Husband than took her to Nkhata Bay, where they lived good life as he sold handicrafts at tourist market. After yr started quarreling, she left for home vlg several times but came back each time. Until he proposed to sell their 1.5 yr old daughter to find money. Fled to home vlg where quickly she was proposed by man from [nearest tradingcenter], she hoped a fellow villager could be a better match. Was difficult to take care of her child alone, wanted help, couldn't know if he was good. But later found he is married elsewhere, which he then confessed. Left her before she gave birth to his child, can't manage to take care of 2 families, is still young. But did promise to help her pay ganyu for her field this year. She employed them, they finished job (400MK kusosa, 600MK ridges), but he hasn't come with money yet - she flashed him several times, he still promises the money will come. Her ex came one day from Nkhata Bay to take her back with him, but found her pregnant from someone else... She is now making mandasi, which she has sold in vlg of sister-in-law, borrowed 2000MK to start + received 1000MK from parents. Ingredients app 500MK, profit 250/300 after 3 days selling. [But stopped again soon after, had spent money on food, nothing left for reinvestment…]

Fatima (17, 1st marriage) met husband in school (she St7, he St8), got pregnant and decided to leave school & marry. Says she knew sex would lead to pregnancy, and that she wanted it to happen, that she and parents and husband were all happy when she did found herself pregnant. Allowed boy because of his “behavior” and because she wanted banja. Husband decides on expenditure because he is the one doing ganyu. Receive money from hisw brother in SA too. With last cotton harvest money he decided to buy kitchen tools, because up till then they had been borrowing his mother's ziwiya.

Elube (45, 2nd marriage) got married very young because of “mavuto”: her father had died and when a man came to ask for her her mother allowed. They survived through ganyu. However, 2 days after giving birth to first child, he left to Lilongwe and never even sent soap, so she decided to end the marriage (he has some to see his child, but never brought anything). Moved back with mother and stayed alone 2 yrs. Second husband (born 1955) moved around looking for wife, met each other in street where he proposed about 30 yrs ago. Because of her problems she decided to agree. Asked her whether married, she answered marriage ended, then asked if she had kids, one, he agreed to take care. He was the first to propose after first one left. She had been waiting for someone to propose
marriage to her. Was backing soap from her mother, wanted to marry to find soap on her own. But is not good husband, she has to do ganyu to buy clothes for kids, mat etc. He just plays cards, and when he wins uses money for himself (e.g. matemba - dried fish for own snack + maybe 10 MK salt for HH). Has zibwenzi [girlfriends], she heard from others and even himself. Told him to go back to his home vlg, afraid of diseases, but he refuses, saying he gave up trying to have several wives. But she can't be sure, because often he comes home late... She continues to feed him because of chisoni [pity] - his mother died so he has no other place to eat. Says she has 1 son in SA who went there in Feb this year (2008) but has not yet send support. He lived in Mangochi with wife. Lovely is daughter.

Nelia: Both she & husband are orphans, have no one to run to, so trusts that they will stay together.

Rosemary (in notes) - married 5x, brother wanted to sleep with her after sing'anga advised him this as way to become rich, now married to man she knew is a drinker. Chief Mudzi A had also proposed to her, which led Hamra to be angry with her. Now that she married another at least she and Hamra speak again...

Madalitso (45-50, almost divorced 2x) met first husband working a field here in Mudzi B. She thought he'd make a good husband since he was working in the field. After 3 yrs working in field together he wanted to work somewhere else, just disappeared and never returned. She stayed alone for 4 yrs with 3 kids - difficult to manage, did ganyu. Met 2nd husband doing ganyu together. Chatted and found both were unmarried and decided to marry. Again thought he is good, as he was working in the field at that moment. But after about a yr he started drinking beer day in day out, morning to evening. Hoped he would change, advised him to change, to no avail. She now decided to end the marriage, informed ankhoswe, waiting for them to return. Advantage of being married to this man: He helped her build the house, helped pay for new grass roof recently. They do ganyu together, but he uses his share mainly for beer. Couldn't explain why she continues to feed him. Said she only found money through ganyu, but when we came to give her picture, she had gone to Mangochi to buy fish for BS!

Lovely (29, 1st marriage) married at 13 when she and husband were both employed at a farm (contract). She knew the guy from vlg, he 5 yrs older. After receiving their salaries, he would give her some as she earned less. Soon her first child was born (possibly married because pregnant thus...). Husband left May 2007 to SA, hasn't seen him since, but they talk 3x/wk over phone (which she owns, charges at [nearest tradingcenter] ). He sends her items (screen, phone chargers) and money via others who come back from there to here. He went because of "umphawi" [poverty], following younger brother. With money he sends, she can hire ganyu. Will be able to eat till March from harvest, but is cooking with smaller pots already.
Before husband left they did not have enough food.

- Ayama (app 70, 2x abandoned) married first husband ‘when her breasts were still small.’ He asked her parents, who agreed, then she agreed too. Told her that she would find out whether he is good during marriage, no other way to know. He was also very young. After 3 kids together he went somewhere else to work and never came back. Therefore decided to follow her parent who moved from Dedza to Balaka, didn’t want to stay alone. Stayed unmarried for about 12 years with parents who told she was still young, no need to remarry yet, can wait. She also preferred to take care of her children before remarrying. Second husband was related to GVH, gave her 5 kids, stayed together about 20 years, then he left to marry another wife about 10 yrs ago. now she is too old to remarry again. Survives by begging support from children in SA (1 sends clothes, the other one just left last March) and children in vlg (3). Has half an acre of land, from her second husband who ran away. Did small bits of ganyu to find small bits of money (50MK).

- Jeneti (37, left) was happily married (he came to propose from nearby vlg, she knew and liked him, she didn't want to be moving around so decided to accept, had seen him work hard on field, therefore thought he would be good husband, was first marriage for both), tried to develop/progress at a team. However, 5 of her 6 kids died within a few months after birth (Modesta is daughter who survived). People started telling husband he should get other wife. His parents at one time asked him to come over and then showed him the new wife they selected for him, he accepted. A yr later a bike taxi man proposed to her, she explained him about her child bearing problem, he didn't mind, she accepted to get help in taking care of her child. He had wife in Ulongwe, but quarreled a lot, wanted divorce and needed someone to go to - didn't want to move back to mother's... He took well care of her and kid, but started disappearing when she fel ill, sometimes stayed away for 3 months before coming back. People told her he is proposing to others. He even took maize from her one day, saying he was going to cultivate his mother's field, then ate it with another woman. April 2007 last time he came, now she has ended the marriage. Says: Men who do BS see women, tell them about their BS, say “I can take care of you”, copying the behavior of their friends of proposing like this to many women... This yr bought 20 irons sheets, partly with cotton money, partly from selling maize (has 3 acres). Next yr will be able to pay for putting sheets up (trees, nails, labor etc). --> Often ill, she says, and has sores on skin... Both did (kupalira, kubandira in Dec+Jan) and hired ganyu (paying with money, others with maize). Still has 5 bags of maize (end Sept), which could last her till next harvest if she not needed to sell some of it, e.g. to buy ndiwo. and pay daughter Modesta's secondary school fees. Has a bed and radio, both bought through selling maize. The bed was decided by husband in 2003, the radio she decided herself after husband took theirs.

- Tumanene (26, 2nd marriage) First marriage at 19, “to take care of each other.” Lasted 2 years, child was about a yr when she decided to leave him, had come to dislike him she says: nkhanza, talkative. Stayed alone 4 yrs, went to Lilongwe where parents/aunt/uncle were, and found job at a HH in area 47 via relative working at Escom, cooking & nanny.
Earned 4500MK/month, got soap and food where she stayed. Gave part of salary to mother who was taking care of child and kept some herself for clothes and savings. When she returned to Mudzi B (or other vlg in Balaka?) bought maize with this money. Stayed with her parents and worked the field until proposed in 2006. Allowed “to have enough.” Mother supplied everything, but was a big family, better get married so mother can take better care of others. She didn't first ask around about his behavior, because: “people can cheat you, may not want you to marry him, only way is to find out yourself.” At this moment they are staying well together, no nkhanza, work on field together, but doesn't know about future... Since March husband to SA, sent money (3800MK) for first time last month (Aug), used to buy soap, clothes, sick child to hospital, money is finished now. They talk each weekend on phone of Lovely, but doesn't know what job he does. Will wait for new money, otherwise do ganyu, MIL helps too sometimes with ndiwo or soap. Hasn't been growing cotton because didn't see benefit, but now sees there is and will start. Comparing LL to vlg: in town have to buy everything, nkhuni, ndiwo, maize, rent land. Definitely prefers to stay here in vlg.

When husband of Blessings (28, 1st marriage) left for SA he arranged her brother to stay with his wife and kids. Blessings decided on expenditure, as she is “the owner of the family/kids”. She joined him in SA for 2 yrs (cooking, washing etc in HH), wants to go back as it makes her proud to work in SA. Returned to Mudzi B when she found herself pregnant, but will return when this one is old enough to be left behind = 3 yrs (also left other kid at 3 - sending money to mother to take care of them). [Blessings] Got blood test second wk of Nov, she told friends at borehole, but didn’t mention result.

[Blessings] Met husband in primary school, were in relationship for 2 yrs, discussing that they would marry in the future. He sometimes bought her soap and lotion with money that he got from his parents, which he then brought to her parent's house where she stayed. Therefore she liked him, made her hope he'd be good husband, and indeed still is. She left school in Form 1 to marry (not pregnant, mother divorced father, no school fees & 'was just childish to stop'), he finished secondary. He born in Balaka town where they stayed until he left for SA in 2000, then she moved back to Mudzi B. Eats with mother, but sleeps in own house. He sends her money through bank account or with a traveler. When the money finishes she calls him for more. He works in shop in Capetown. Uses the money for things in HH: food, salt, soap, plates, blankets. husband told her to buy beds for the children. Bought screen, DVD player, typewriter, all to sell when husband returns. Hires ganyu, but also works herself in field. Also before husband left to SA they had enough food, because he worked in PTC in Balaka. Difference SA vs vlg: very different, here difficult to find food, also behavior is different: there girls with tight trousers and naked bellies; easier to get employed there; more Indians and azungu there, therefore more developed and richer. He was the one who decided she should come to SA as he sent money for passport and transport.

Fissa (45-50, widow+divorced) was proposed by first husband because he heard she wanted to stop school as her parents couldn't pay school fees anymore. She refused for 5 months, waiting whether her parents could find money for school fees, but they failed and she
allowed. Heard from others he was good: not smoking, drinking, playing cards. Was indeed good husband: enough soap, not sleeping without food (through gangyu). After giving birth to 6 children, husband died. Fissa stayed alone 5 yrs - timangokhala, just staying with kids. Second marriage from 1995-2007. Man came from Zambia and proposed, after 1 yr she allowed because “mavuto”, failing to take care of her 6 kids. Delayed allowing because she first wanted to see his behavior, he helped her with soap, salt, chigayo. They stayed in Zambia, but in 2000, after 2 kids, Fissa wanted to go back to Mudzi B where her 6 children from first marriage stayed. He still came to visit, but not bringing anything because she refused to stay with him. Last visit was Sept 2007... Has at least 2 sons in SA. One gave her bike. Does ganyu: kupalira + kukolola chimanga in Dec, Jan, Feb.

Chisoni (20, 1st marriage - eating with mother-in-law as they cultivated MILs land together with son/husband, will move to own family as soon as stock has finished here, is farming her field there now...) was in relationship with husband for 6 yrs during primary school. He would visit her at her parents' house, bring soap, lotion. She would make him rice and bring in a container. When she got to Form 1 and couldn't afford school fees, stopped and married. husband left for SA June 2008. Sent soap once via others coming back. They are in regular contact over phone, encouraging each other to stay faithful, is afraid he may find other wife but trusts him too: okhulupirika (he is a faithful person). When he comes back, they will hire ganyu with the money he brings. At time of interview she was doing ganyu, making ridges at own home vlg = K. village. Finds it tough though, because she is woman: women are weaker while men are strong. Women are used to working in the house, cleaning plates etc, men are more used to doing hard labor in the field.

Amila (36, 2nd marriage) has eelt on top of her head, from carrying so much water, says Gertrude. She didn't get married until 25. Received proposals before, but was afraid to get gonorrhea which was prevalent at that time. But finally accepted proposal because of problems at home: lack of food & clothes. The parents of the men came to look for a wife for son, choose her because she respected elderly: “ulemu kwa akulu”. Man 5 yrs older, built her a house near her parents. When several of her relatives were dying he got afraid and left. In the same yr another man from other vlg proposed to her. Her uncle & other relatives advised her to allow: “You have no one else to take care of you, best is to get married.” She went to ask in his vlg, was told “good man”. Indeed good man, gave her many children. [but also causes problems, starts to behave strange when the moon appears, misses his home vlg and often disappears to his home village until he is send back by others saying: Go, you are married!] She lives near some women who are relatively well off, because husband's in SA, but is not helped by them. Ashamed to beg for help, better to ask them for ganyu.

Kondwani (35, left - sister of chief Mudzi B) stayed alone when man came to propose her at 19. She allowed right away because it was her age to marry. Most of her friends were married, she was ashamed not to have been proposed yet. She knew man because from same vlg: kufatsa = meek, quiet, polite man. When he left for SA his mother wanted him to divorce, was jealous, afraid that only wife would benefit. husband agreed. Kkondwani made efforts
to change his mind, but to no avail. He returned, married someone else. Used to come to help her kids, but forgets these days. [Kondwani] Only one of her 4 kids go to school (1995-2003), decided so themselves.

Salika (39, abandoned 2x - chief Mudzi B) was proposed by man from same vlg at her parents' house (“Ndikukufunani banja”), she allowed (“Ndalola”) because kuvutika (lacking clothes, soap, food) -- “When a man proposes, it means he is ready to take care of you/serious about taking care of you.” Would find out about his behavior while married. He was tailor, they stayed in Blantyre, he decided on expenditure because he made money). After 4 yrs he married another(Anakwatira kwina), she then decided to end the marriage because he stopped helping her.

Was alone with 4 kids, struggled, doing ganyu, fetching water for bricks. A man proposed but she refused, afraid of same behavior. After 5 yrs, 2004, another came and this time she accepted. Not because this man was very different from earlier proposer, but just because she felt she should get married again. After 3 yrs (and 3 kids) however, left her (pregnant)... Now doesn’t want another man: just brings more problems (more children and then being left again).

Tinenenji (21, 1st marriage) was proposed by boy from vlg where she went sometimes to visit friend. Had chatted, he proposed her there, she allowed because she liked him. “Problems” says grandmother who is present at interview and with whom Tinenenji stayed at time of proposal, “couldn’t dress herself.” Agogo didn’t know the boy but agreed with marriage too, was glad someone else would take care of granddaughter now, agogo says. He is good husband: buys clothes (kuveka), they eat nice food. husband buys tomatoes somewhere and sells them at Liwonde every day, he brings in most of the money. He has field at dimba, where they grow tomatoes which she sells in vlg, also grow maize and masamba, pumpkin, they water together. Her husband was the one to decide to buy a bed, radio, bike. Has not been registered for coupon, “because chief did not invite her to meeting & was afraid to show up uninvited” she claims... And because she [Tinenenji] is angry over this, is not participating in tree project [but tree project started earlier, maybe other way around, or completely bodza].

Thandizo (59, divorced, skinnier each time, sores on face) married at about 15 yrs old. The man proposed to her parents first, who asked her, she allowed because afraid of becoming pregnant by an unserious man (granddaughter Tinenenji laughs hard), better to get married. Dated 3 months, he had job somewhere, brought her sugar, biscuits, clothes. He left her after 22 yrs & 9 kids (5 died). She managed because strong, could work the field, and as soon as kids were strong enough, taught them to work the field too. Is supported financially by 32 yr old single daughter (with child) who stays with her and once a week sells zitumbuwa in other vlg (M.) where there is more business (malonda), people gathering and buying. Daughter decides on expenditure. Daughter stays with mother
“because unmarried.” [Thandizo] Says they only have maize to last until end of Oct (during interview on Sept 25), while daughter she shares house with says until end Dec (during interview beginning of Nov). Beginning of Nov I see her preparing seeds for planting, incl maize, sorghum, pumpkin. Didn’t mention last 2 in interview.

**Ainessi (23, married)** met husband in school (he St7, she St2), met with ankhoswe and decided to marry, but not yet. She went to Blantyre to work 2 yrs cooking in HH, he finished school. She left job when woman suspected her from sleeping with man - because she got nicer clothes. Married when she returned. During relationship he brought her soap etc, which gave the impression he would also provide for her when in a family - which indeed he did. Husband decided on expenditure because he is the akulu in the house. She was the one who decided to move to Mgwire, following mother, he followed. End Oct husband is found in bed with neighbour Emra; Jane complained that he proposed to have sex with her one day when she was bathing and later threatened to beat her for having refused. Led GVH to chase him from village. Ainessi followed him. He still comes back to sleep with Emra some nights.

**Emra (22, first marriage)** met husband at 14 (he 20) when both were doing ganyu. Started relationship with him because: “kuvutika” - lacking clothes, food. Had lost her parents (children stayed alone taking care of themselves, were with many, relatives hesitated taking one in, fearing more would then follow) and hoped marriage would end her problems. Married right away, was first proposal. Has no child of 8, so probably not married because of pregnancy. Lost second child in Sept - just dropped dead like first one. End Oct husband left her, saying he wants a wife that bears children that stay alive. When he came back few nights later, found Emra sleeping with husband of Ainessi, tried to cut her ear but because she ran away slashed her head giving her now many problems carrying water... Emra claims she is not ashamed of being caught: “everybody knows about the business of sex, besides my husband had left me.” Ainessi angry, says husband cheated her saying he went to get some ndiwo, and Emra had been real friend, Ainessi had helped Emra make zigumu, Emra had come over to chat... But others say she has said she told husband to go and sleep with Esnart “to proof the rumors about the two of them having a relationship.”

**Valentine (24, first marriage)**: mother of husband was looking for wife for son and asked her because of her “good behavior respecting elders”. But Valentine didn’t agree right away, first wanted to see him. When he came, she didn’t ask any questions (he could be cheating her/lying, have to live together to really find out what someone is like), accepted right away: “Blood can be the same, make one attracted to the other.” After the agreement he brought her a blanket, chitenje, umbrella, lotion. She hadn’t asked for this, he just decided. He is a good husband, they agree with each other. E.g. when he wanted them to stay with his mother, she followed, and when she wanted to go back to Mudzi B, he followed. He decides about expenditure, as he is the eldest (3 yrs older), gives her money when she needs e.g. to
Hilda (50, first marriage) was proposed at 20 on her way to buy relish at Balaka market. The man asked her where she was from and then whether she wanted to marry him. She refused, saying: "I am still young..." When she went home he followed her and proposed again, after which she said: Well, ok, if you are serious, let's stay together/we will stay together' and told him to go meet her parents. [When & why & how does such a man decide to propose??] How many do they generally propose before one agrees? What are they after??] Parents said: “If she allowed, we will help arrange ceremony, ankhoswe.” Then the ankhoswe met and discussed. He moved in house where she stayed alone (built by uncle who felt she was old enough to live alone with other sisters - at 22, but later build new house as told by ankhoswe. Only after 10 years did they get first child [!] - “because of god.” She is the one to decide on HHS expenditure, as het husband misuses money for beer (they couldn't even buy fertilizer last yr). He started kuyendayenda 4 yrs ago, before that was good husband, used to go to field together. Tells him to go (because of mavuto: no blankets, no mat, no food), but he refuses, saying "I have stayed with you so many years, where can I go?" Ankhoswe say to her: “If you can’t even make him go, what can I do?” Didn’t go to school, but wants her children to be able to read, when traveling she can’t even read the buses destinations...

Grace (21, first marriage, with child from earlier lover; hair extensions) went to Mangochi to sell fish where she was proposed. Man has boats and men fishing for him. She said: If you are serious, you should follow me so I can know that you are serious.” And indeed he came after 1 week, talked to parents & chief, built her a house. She was just staying anyway (with agogo - iron sheets), had stopped school, better to get married. Has child from 2005, boyfriend cheated her saying he’d marry her. But she didn’t want, broke up while pregnant, because he refused going to the chief. People told her no one would help her if he would if he had not formally gone to the chief, she was afraid he may be married somewhere else. She liked this one because he did not propose to other girls. First says the proposal of her current husband was her first proposal, only later do we find out she has a child older than her marriage. Says current husband is good: buys clothes for her and food when there is no. He decides on expenditure as he brings in the money. He doesn’t want her to continue her fish BS. She begs him for money to start any kind of BS except for mandasi, but he says it’s not a good time yet. [prefers to keep her dependent?]. She would like to have her own income because husband sometimes leaves for a week without leaving enough money… husband hasn’t returned from lake since interview end Sept - half Nov now, while lake is closed for fishing this time of year... Grace had left for Mzuzu (where father of first child lives) to receive money from somebody (some say uncle, some boyfriend) to start BS with.

Dora (42, single, 2 marriages - mother of Dorica) met first husband in Balaka where go to chigayo.
she sold veggies, he clothes. He told her: “I am divorced, looking for wife now, can you manage?” Why her? Bcoz of God… Refused for 2 months, he kept coming to her house with soap, ndiwo, clothes, salt, saying “I love you therefore bring you this.” She was doubtful but after two months decided to agree. After a while however, he started to look for other wives, wanted 2 or 3, so she sent him away: “Then it becomes difficult to get enough salt, clothes etc, because you have to share everything with the other women.”

Single with one child, managed by farming alone, growing crops for sale (maize, nandolo, khobwe) + kuoda bananas, suger cane. After 3 years alone wanted a husband to help her build a house. Man from D. vlg had seen her go to bafa and asked people whether she was married. Proposed her when she came back from washing, but she refused because didn’t know him, wanted to find out about behavior first. He started bringing soap, lotion, money for maizemill. Little later met again at a dance in a nearby village, where she accepted. He left last year to run BS in Mangochi (making tins, used to make mitondo in Mudzi B but not satisfied with income, first did same in Mangochi, later changed to tins - borrowed money for this, but never brought back, now people confiscated her goats), comes when he pleases, but less and less. Although he denies, she suspects he has another wife there now, because: “if even those from far away South Africa send money for their wives, and Mangochi is even much nearer by but he doesn’t.” She has no money for transport to check…

Venesi (36, 2 ended marriages)’s first husband from Mudzi B (where she moved at 8 yrs from Lilongwe, back to mother’s home vlg). Met in school, he proposed when she St 6, he St8. She allowed because she liked him: Tinakondana, because of “behavior”, was not talkative. Gave soap, money - sometimes she asked for it, sometimes he just gave. But her Catholic parents wouldn’t allow her to follow to his Islamic religion. Gave birth to 1 child. Parents helped her manage. After 2 yrs mother died and father married other, she used the bricks of mother’s house to built her own (brother built), is house she still lives in, grass roof. When a second man came to propose after few months in own house she allowed, it was difficult to find the things she needed, maybe through marriage she could get them. He was from same vlg, behaved well, loved the child. But now lazy, never does ganyu, says it’s better to invest time in own field, but she disagrees: need money, cash, food. Felt she was the husband, providing for family through BSs started with loans from Concern Universal. Proudly says that she decided on expenditure since her BSs, while before it was husband. Recently divorced him: Better to be alone than having to take care of him. Called ankhoswe, who heard both sides and advised him to come back sometimes to support his children, but she is skeptical about this: He even didn’t do that while he was still around… husband had objected to divorce at first, but she said: I told you many times to do ganyu, but you never did, and you will not change. To which he agreed, went back to Thyolo now. Says she would also have divorced him without her BS, “could do ganyu.”

Molly (27, 2nd marriage, child before ever married) met father of first child at school. She stopped school when she found herself pregnant in St7, he Form 3. She stayed
with her parents, and when he finished school, he married someone else... The following year a man came to Mudzi B to stay with relative and proposed to her. She explained she had a baby, he said he could manage to take care of them. Then she agreed, it was a secret from God whether he would be a good husband. But wasn’t: drank beer and beat her. She went to ankhoswe to complain, but he still didn’t change, so divorced. Had 1 child together. Never comes to see child or help. She stayed with parents again. Mother gave her money to start BS: went to Ntcheu to buy tomatoes and sold these in Mudzi B. Second husband came last year as cotton buyer for company, opened cotton growing clubs, brought seed and later came to buy the produce “contract farming”, temporary job. Told her he was looking for someone to marry. She said: “If you are serious, talk to my parents,” which he did. This one is better. Takes care, helps her. He decides on expenditure as he is the one who brings in money.

Nola (55, 3th marriage)’s first husband was AEDO, proposed when she was still with parents. She told parents who said: Decide yourself whether you like him. She liked him, and hoped he would help her with her problems: work in the field, have enough clothes. Mother couldn’t provide enough clothes for her. He gave soap, clothes while in relationship, which gave her idea he would provide for her as husband. Married after 1 month, she followed him to his house. Provided indeed, but started having several wives, which made her decide to move back to parents and farm with them. Bcoz it became difficult to get all the things she needed, most things went to the other wives. He copied the behavior of friends, moving around, having multiple wives... She tried to advice him, he promised he would still provide as always, but it was different. She had 2 children to take care of, responsibility, so left him. Managed alone with 2 kids through BS zigumu & zitumbuwa at [large commercial estate] (started with money from selling maize). Was proposed by plumber working at [large commercial estate]. Told him to first meet her parents, which he did, all then agreed. She hoped he could help her supplement the income she got from BS. But started to drink, and got wife elsewhere. Told him to stop drinking, because HH money was spent on beer ipv food. Meanwhile continued BS. One day just didn’t come back to her after work, went to life with other wife without saying goodbye. Didn’t divorce him herself, hoping he would change. Continued her BS. A man sent his brother to propose for him. By then she had lost parents and decided it was better to get married. Is a very good husband: doesn’t drink beer, work in field together, is not mistreating her kids. Have been together 11 years now, no kids.

Nola (55, 3th marriage) first got married at 26 with the AEDO. He came to propose her while she still stayed with her parents. When she told her parents about the proposal they said she should decide herself whether she liked him. Decided to agree in order to be helped with her problems: helping in the field, having enough clothes. Her mother could not provide enough clothes for her. He gave her soap and clothes while they were zibwenzi, which gave her the impression he would provide for her as husband too. They married after 1 month, after which she followed him to stay in his house. Says this was her first proposal [not ugly...]. Husband rovid for her indeed, but started
having several wives, coping the behavior of some of his friends. Then she decided to move back to her parents and farm with them. She did not accept sharing her husband because: difficult to find all she needs, most things go to the others. Tried to advise him, he kept assuring her that he would still be providing her everything, but things changed anyhow. She had the responsibility of taking care of (their 2) kids, so couldn't accept this. Started selling zigumu and zitumbuwa at [large commercial estate] to find own income. Second husband was plumber at [large commercial estate], who proposed her while she did her BS there. She told him to first meet her parents, which he did, all agreed. Later he started drinking, and had another wife elsewhere. She didn't divorce him, hoping he would change. One day he just went to that other wife after work, without even saying goodbye. Since 11 years Nola is with current husband, who lived nearby and sent his parents to her brother. She had by then lost her parents and decided it was better to be married. Is a very good husband: doesn't drink beer, work on field together, found kids from other men but is not mistreating them.

Pamela (27, divorced) man from Zomba, visiting relatives in Mudzi B, came to her to propose after he had seen her pass by. She agreed, told him to talk to her parents, who said to her: “If you want...” She lived with younger sister of mother after mother died and therefore decided it was good to marry. His relatives said he was a good man (asked after accepting his proposal). Was indeed good husband: gave her money, buying soap, whenever she asked for anything he would provide. But his mother wanted him to have more wives, even brought them to their HH, where he used to sleep with them, sometimes for a month. “Bringing other women to our house means you don't want me anymore, I better leave,” she told husband. husband told her not to ask about it. She was still young didn't want to suffer from mother-in-law, and she sent him away. He was ok with that, had another wife to go to. [Jane told Gertrude different story about Pamela: was caught by husband sleeping with his brother and sent back to Mudzi B, where she got involved with doctor from Balaka. When husband came to get her back, found her in bed with this doctor. And later doctor found her in bed with other man, after which they both left her. - see Gertrude's October notes for more details.] Had 3 kids together, managed through help of mother-in-law (?). Both she and ex sent money to help her take care of kids. Both kids now stay with father, 1 died. Has baby too, says from man from M. village who cheated her that he wanted to marry her, but stopped coming. Doesn't want to get involved with anymore now, will just lead to more problems, giving birth to more children to take care of. Someone who proposes you saying: “I have maize, I have a job” is just cheating you (too good to be true). [Gertrude wonders where Pamela finds her money, never spoke of doing ganyu, of having a BS, having a man. But can buy fertilizer now that she received coupon, and bought some of Gertrude's knitwork for baby.] Said herself in interview that her uncle sometimes helps her, and that her brother in SA (working at filling station, the one I saw pictures of) promised to help her.

Evelin (27, widow) was proposed at 17 on her way to the hospital by a man she had not seen before, who asked her name and village, whether she was married and had kids, then said “I like you, I want to get married to you.” Three days later however, he
came to Mudzi B and said it would be better to first be chibwenzi, without specifying when they would marry. She agreed to both offers because of “mavuto”: lacking soap, clothes, food (policeman brother in LL sent money, but not enough, and she did ganyu). He told her he was messenger at District Coordinator’s office, 30 yrs, not married. She was proud of him. He helped her, brought her soap, clothes, food, built her a house. She cooked for him. Came once/twice a month - never lived with her in Mudzi B, she never with him in Balaka. When he was sent to Mangochi to work there in 2004, she joined him with their 2 kids. He died in 2006 from cholera, after 1 week illness. Had been a good husband.

Haliday (30, 1st marriage - husband at SA filling station = brother of Pamela & Venesi) met husband in church, started chibenzi for 1.5 yrs. He lived in Lilongwe, she in Mudzi B, wrote each other letters and he visited once a month and brought soap. She loved him, therefore in relationship, she only gave back love... After 1.5 yr he joined her in Mudzi B and they married. Was good husband: amandivetsa [he dressed me], work in field together, helped in HH. Went to SA in 2006, call each other once/twice a day. He sends her money whenever somebody travels from there to here. When that money finishes, he tells her to borrow for time being.

Thokozani (daughter of Rosemary, married to son of Hilda) met her husband in school (he St8, she St6) in Mangochi where he had gone to stay with relatives, were in chibwenzi for 1 yr until they married in 2005. They just loved each other, only met in school, parents didn’t know. He gave her soap, money, lotion (through ganyu and begging from relatives). She didn’t give him anything. When parents found out, they said it is better to marry. During interview husband gets out of bafa, puts on jeans, shirt, sneakers and hat, and gets on bike. Thokozani asks him whether he is leaving. “I’ll be back on Sunday afternoon,” he answers (today Friday), with money for trees to build roof of their new house. She then told him he should not forget to pass by her uncle, looking sad. When I ask her where he is going she says: Visiting my uncle... He is good husband, she says, they have no problems... Says they met and married in Mangochi and only moved to Mudzi B when Thokozani wanted to follow her mother to here, very coincidental that this was also village where husband’s parents live. She does most farming because husband is busy helping constructing houses (carrying bricks, plastering - received phone when plastering Haliday’s house). When maize finished he will do ganyu to find money to buy.

Ada (daughter of Hilda) just gave birth to first child, but father of child had already left her by then. Pamela once said while knitting: “I don’t understand girls of Mudzi B, just have sex in bushes. Do you remember how you cheated your mother, saying you were going to the tailor for a school uniform, but secretly meeting your boyfriend, getting pregnant in the bushes??” Another time, when I asked Ada whether her husband had already showed up again, Pamela filled in: He is married somewhere else, that woman also recently gave birth. On one of our first days, when Ada was still pregnant, boys on our veranda asked what made all her man to leave her while she was still pregnant, this being the second time... Own story: Last year man was partaking in initiation ceremonies in M. village, where she went to bring food to relative. She wanted to be proposed, wanted to be in relationship, had problems finding enough food. He behaved well until he disappeared. If he comes back, will chase him for leaving me like that.
Holy (35, 1st marriage) was proposed at school. She St6, he St8. He knew he couldn’t continue to secondary school because of school fees. She agreed because was her age to marry, was waiting for someone to propose. Had received more proposals earlier, but felt not ready yet then. maybe God guided her in excepting this proposal, because still together without problems. Planned to be chibwenzi for 4 months, after which marriage, so he could gather money for kitchen tools etc (through ganyu & selling pepper which he grew). She made him give her a present in those 4 months, because she was afraid to become pregnant (didn’t know about birth control methods). He gave her a watch, with which she could prove to her parents that he’d marry her if she got pregnant/prove the child was his. They prospered, which led to jealousy. Therefore decided to move to Mudzi B. Hb is pastor at African Continent church, therefore cannot do things on his own, has to discuss everything with her (e.g. expenditure).

Florence (23, 1st marriage) was proposed on way back from [nearest tradingcenter] where she had visited friend, Dec 24. Started as chibwenzi, married in January. Brought her gifts, provided everything for her, even food. She respected him - unlike other girls he had proposed to, e.g. putting water in bafa, kneeled to give a drinking water when he asked for that.

Alida (55, widow) refused proposer from [nearest tradingcenter] for 1 month when she was 15. He was 18 yrs, kept coming, giving money, bringing relish. He encouraged her to marry him. Was indeed a good husband: no beating, no fighting, eating together, worked on field together. Died in 1983 (she 30 yrs, had 4 kids, all died, stays with granddaughter which supplies her with her only income from Orphan Care, 1500 MK). Didn’t want to remarry.

Rashida (45, 3th marriage) was proposed at 18 when she visited a relative in his vlg. She allowed after 1 week, was just staying anyway, wanted to get married. Didn’t know anything about him, would find out during marriage. Says: “In the past it was not good to just move around, asking people about his behavior, samaletsa.” (other people did it though, but she decided just to get married. However, when her mother died and she wanted to move from his to her vlg, husband refused. She was not staying well with his relatives and decided to go back alone (& 2 kids) at 21. Stayed alone for 4 yrs, did ganyu to manage. Second husband was from Mudzi A, proposed and she agreed. Was a good one: took care of the children he found. Stayed together for 5 yrs, got 3 kids but all died. Then both their mothers came to advise them to end marriage, because they were apparently not procreating... His parents took everything with them, incl husband. Stayed alone for 1 yr, working at [large commercial estate]. When another man (from other vlg) proposed in 2003 she allowed after “a long time” (1 month), when her work stopped at [large commercial estate] (women could only plant and weed, men stayed for lifting cotton bales on truck). She was “just staying alone”, would be difficult to feed kids after her work ended, better get married so he can help her. husband has own field which he cultivates, while she works with children on hers. Grow the same crops, which they put together after
harvest.

4013 Daughter of 15 Monya gave birth to baby in Aug, wants to marry baby's father but mother won't allow, wants daughter to go back to school while mother takes care of baby.

4014 Husband left her/divorced. New husband built mud house.

4015 Yona (mother of Victoria, 70, widow) married at 17 with boy in school. Met when both in St3. He said “ndikukufunani banja” but she refused because wanted to continue school. Then men said she could continue school while he got prepared for marriage, then she agreed. Stayed 2 yrs in chibwenzi while by tried to get employed. After those 2 years he joined his father in Bulawayo (mother at Chiradzulo with kids) where he found employment at the railway company and called her to join him, which she did. There he proposed to other women too and when Yona once met them on the road she started fighting. The police came and put her in prison for 6 months. Then uncle came to pick her and kids back to Chiradzulo. Yona then started BS of selling thobwa & zitumbuwa. Uncle gave her money to start. Decided to stop BS when she married second husband.

4016 Second husband worked at Limbe company in Chiradzulo with her brother. When Yona went to see brother, man spotted her and asked brother about her behavior. At home brother told Yona man wants to marry her. Stayed almost 3 months without agreeing, still remembering the past. Asked around about his behavior and was told than he was divorced. In those months man both her soap, salt, clothes. Then she agreed. Stayed together in Limbe, but had place in Mudzi A where they cultivated land for maize. When husband died in 1974 after 6 yrs of marriage she moved to their (iron sheeted) house in Mudzi A II.

4017 Lizzie (19, married, husband in SA) met Hb at chinamwali ceremony. He said “ndikukufunani banja”, but added that he would marry her after 1 yr, to get prepared first. She agreed. During that year he brought her money from his clothes BS. With the money she bought soap, clothes, salt, ndiwo. Married indeed after 1 yr, in Feb 2008. After a month of marriage he left for SA. She knew about this, and was happy about it, is a good thing that he will be there, sending support. Sleeps with some small boys in the house because afraid alone, and eats with little mother in next house. Husband told her to stop school in Form 3. Now that he is in SA she tries to convince him to allow her to go back to school, but he refuses, saying that she wants to find another husband there, jealous... Did fish BS for a while, buying at Liwonde, selling here, but stopped because no profits.

4018 Alma (60?, single, 3x married) first husband from Chkwere vlg, came to propose marriage at her parents house where she was staying. Agreed at that very same time because “was time to get married. God says men should be with a woman and other way around. Only God would know whether this man would be good for her.” Married that same week, in Oct. She chased him in January because he was beating her after drinking beer. Moved back into mother's house who took care of her again. Reported divorce to chief Mudzi B, so that ex-husband would be fined 40 Tambala - “was lot of money in past”, which he paid to her. After 5 months this chief came to propose. He already had 2 wives, she agreed to be third. Kukhala pakhomo alone ndi
vuto + chikhalidwe [Staying alone in the household was difficult + his behavior]. Was good husband: kulima [farming], kuveka [provide clothes], kumanga nyumba [built house], taking care of kids from first husband, eating well. He was providing equally to 3 wives [in her opinion]. But later the other 2 wives decided to end the marriage (says later that husband told her from beginning he had problems with other wives and would divorce them). She stayed as only wife until he died. After death stayed alone with children, the Catholics helped her. Also husband left lots of property, sold his radio e.g.. But then his relatives came and took it all. Stayed 1 year alone, just working hard in the field. A new man came to propose her at home, waited 2 months for him to gather money, during this period he did not provide anything, she just hoped he would be providing in marriage. He said they would be working in field together, so... Stayed together for 1 year after which he disappeared with the money from their cotton harvest to marry another wife. After which she got so angry that she ended the marriage. The man refused to end the marriage, but then she gave him 1 tambala to show that she was serious (?). Still he keeps coming back to propose sometimes, but she doesn’t want because she is growing old now. Men bring problems. Now that she stays alone and works hard in the field alone she is doing better than some of the married couples. Some of those married couples lack salt, but she does not. Just surrender, didn’t want to try marriage again, afraid of same behaviors. But has had enough proposal, up till now. Been alone now for about 20 years. Doesn’t miss anything not having a husband: when she wants oil, buys oil, when she wants to drink thobwa, drinks thobwa. A husband could have been disturbing her, e.g. taking some of her money for his own things. Son built house for her, previous house was built by second husband. Once a woman came to her house when her own husband had not come home, thinking that since this one is single, he may be with her. Putting on nice clothes, Alma added, may lead others to suspect that you sleep around. Gave birth to 8 children, but only 3 are still alive. Lives with her son and 4 granddaughters. Son is working as a teacher. Furthermore, she sells maize and groundnuts (joked: These groundnuts are my husband now!). Has daughter in Blantyre, married to a driver, who built nice white plastered house next to her small compound, where she now seems to store her groundnuts. This daughter gave her coupon to mother last yr, because she had already bought her own fertilizer in Blantyre. Hired ganyu last year: group of young boys who she paid with maize and groundnuts, and 1 man who she paid 1000MK after selling some maize. Now (half Oct) also hired ganyu (oa Mr Ntawanga) to make ridges for 3000MK which she found through selling 1 bag of maize.

Esnart (23, 1st marriage, husband 28 is SA) plans to move to own home vlg when husband temporarily comes back from SA any time soon (half Nov now). Stays in very nice iron sheeted house here, with nicely decorated windowframes, even burglar bars (husband sent money from SA to build), but says that people steal from the money she gets sent by him because she is not from here (have to recheck, in interview says she was born in Mudzi B]. Man from Zomba came to Mudzi B to visit mother, who was Esnart’s neighbor. He saw Esnart when she was 19, he 24 and proposed banja. She doubted for 2 months, unsure whether to continue school or not. Later he came again and told me to stop school and get married. Meanwhile bringing soap, lotion, money which he found through ganyu. He is a good husband, because he “gives me enough money.” Lives on the money that husband sends, she decided how to use it. Works on husband’s field which he got from his mother, together with ganyu. At time of interview (Oct 27) people making ridges, will pay 3000MK with SA money. Last year also hired ganyu with husband’s SA
money, kupalira 1000MK. Bought maize in April, 25 bags she says, of which only 9 are left end Oct. When I ask about this (in HH with 2 young kids and husband's younger brother), says she shared with others (people say that she says more often that money gets stolen, but that she actually sends it to her parents). Has no bed, she says, but has a bike and cellphone, both sent by husband. Bought her 1 goat last year Oct with SA money, decided herself. Talks to husband 2/3 times a day, but doesn't know what job he does. Maybe just sweeping oid, and afraid that she will tell people in the village, so he prefers to keep it hidden. Said at time of interview that she has fever/malaria about 3 times a month, went to hospital but to no avail. But I haven't heard that she has indeed often been ill lately (half Nov).

Vanessa (1987, first marriage, 2 kids): Tinakumana ku mpira. Was not my first time to go there to watch football & netball match. He was staying in Blantyre with mother (elder sister of chief Mudzi B). He proposed her me saying: Ndikukunani chibwenzi & we stayed almost a month before I accepted. I wanted him to know my parents first, to show that he was serious. At this time he was giving soap, money, lotion - but I was not begging for it. After 5 weeks he went to my parents to explain that he wanted to marry me. Then after a week my relatives & his relatives met where I was staying and discussed about marriage and everybody was happy. We married 2004. At that time I went to stay with him where he was staying. He is a good husband because he provides what I want like buying ndiwo, sopo, clothes, lotion. He is from Mudzi B, Yao, Islam - she from L. village (Blantyre district), Ngoni, Islam (was CCAP but followed husband). I followed husband (to stay in his home vlg) because he is from this vlg. Parents told me to follow, "lowoka" like what other tribes do, following the husband. My parents discussed with the parents of my husband that after staying here for some years I will go back with him to stay in my home vlg and we will not come back here. Gertrude asked when this will be, but Vanessa answered she doesn't know.

Jasmine (56, 1st marriage): Man asked her parents for marriage when she was 7 yrs, married at 12 ("wochepa kwambiri" --> I was very young! Crying, running away...). Gave first birth several yrs later [how avoided? --> eventually took traditional medicine to become pregnant]. Parents allowed him to marry her because they knew he behaved well = not moving around. Came from other vlg, but was related to fam through grandmother. After first child, when husband couldn't sleep with her, he started to spend the days and nights at another woman's house (Jasmine followed him one day). When she discovered, went to ankhoswe after which the man stopped, leaving the other woman 6 months pregnant (child died). She says some men do this behavior because they have many children at home, are tired of that and go to a woman who has few kids; or his wife has grown old and he is curious to know the difference with a young woman.

Past vs now

Esther (88, widow) says that nowadays children don't listen to their parents. Even the bible days
that there would come a time when children stop listening to parents - maybe that time has come now. Kids just do what they want nowadays, no matter what people say. With the end result: more children (“ana”). Eg her granddaughter has 2 kids without being married. At least women in the past waited until they had big breasts, now girls get pregnant when their breasts are still small.

1. Ayama (app 70, 2x left) says in past there were no projects. Also people got married when they were adult, now they get married and pregnant at young age [NB she got married herself “when her breasts were still small”!]. Maybe projects led to this change in behavior --> boys find money, they meet at project activities, girls are attracted to the project leaders... r maybe the different behaviors of the past presidents led to changed behavior. Maybe because of poverty, girls need soap, to get what they need. Although there was more poverty in the past, no work then, now at least some can get employed.

Project activities

- Jasmine (56, 1st marriage) has been told to stop participating in the FIDP activities in Mudzi A because of my arrival, only people from village itself are now allowed...

  - Hamra (2nd marriage) says she received no fert coupon, GVH told her that there are not enough, she will receive maize seeds: “But what is use of maize seeds without fert?” she asks angrily. In trying to get fields prepared for planting asap because by end Oct her maize will be finished and then she will need to go for ganyu. Has 6 goats which all came from FIDP (3th yr now). Was told to choose, goats were indeed received but chicken club did not receive anything yet. Participated in mushroom activity too, but stopped because madzi. Joined tree planting because told so by chairman of club, but sees no benefit yet. Plans to sell some goats until she has 10.

10. Tumanene (26, 2nd marriage) or husband attended seminar about teaching the lame/blind with which they paid (partly, also sold goat) for his trip to SA (passport, transport).

11. Blessings (28, 1st marriage) registered for “CBO” - doesn’t know which activities it will undertake, people came from Balaka, they promised to come again later to explain about the activities but haven’t showed up yet.

12. Molly (27, 2nd marriage, child before ever married) participated in Concern Universal tree planting project “to develop village” and because they “were told that after this they could come to give out loans.” She wants to join, but hasn’t thought about type of BS yet as money is not really there yet.

13. Venesi (36, 2 ended marriages) felt she was the husband, providing for family through
BSs started with loans from Concern Universal. Concern Universal asked chief for people from vlg who were free to get loan, in groups of 10 (4 men, 6 women). Went to 3 day seminar to learn about running a BS, could afterwards borrow 5000MK max, which she did. Had to start repaying after 2 weeks 775 MK. Whenever she was unable to pay back, she borrowed from others for this. Bought fish at lake and maize in vlg, in June. Then took a new loan of 7000MK, for trading beans. Then another 5000MK loan to trade chicken. Then a 200MK loan for tomatoes (repaying 310 every 2 weeks, in total 480 MN interest = almost 25%). The businesses she does depend on the season, in cotton season will sell more. Chooses to take new loans all the time (ondanks high interest rates) because it is difficult to gather such amounts by saving: someone gets ill etc. Proudly says that she decided on expenditure since her BSs, while before it was husband. Recently divorced him: Better to be alone than having to take care of him. Says she would also have divorced him without her BS, “could do ganyu.” In Mudzi A Concern Universal started the same microcredit scheme, but there it stopped when some men used the money to buy beer, couldn’t repay, led to quarrels in group. When I ask her about development projects she participates in, she does not mention the Concern loan. When I point this out to her, she says she indeed does not consider these loans a project, she makes proper BS, no charity!

1. **Wealth vs poor**

   Eveles (old, widow): “These days young girls like money too much, and will therefore not reach my age… [?] Men propose to them, give them some money to sleep with them and then they become infected with the disease [matenda]. Many people already died in Mudzi A because...
of the disease: there are so many orphans these days… “

These days, 4 girls may be waiting for one boy with some money, just to find some money (maybe need some for school). Get pregnant and therefore don’t get far in school. The same goes for adults and even old people! Because muslims are used to having several wives - this was also the case in earlier days, but less (maybe 2 wives ipv 3 or 4).

“Most Yao don’t care for school, just wait to get married.”

Holy (35, married): Moved from previous village where she had joined her husband because they did well, prospered and people became jealous. Both she and husband have poor parents, but themselves iron sheeted roof, harvested 35 bags of maize and 7 bales of cotton. Never went hungry after they started cultivating. If they harvest too little, they buy maize while prices are still low. [Why parents poor and you prospered?] husband’s parents don’t take well care, they eat all they harvest; the woman’s family does not have enough land to cultivate.

Received one fert coupon, bought another.

Gertrude was impressed, said she respected this woman for being hard working.

Hamra (56, married): [Why do men in general have more money than women?] Some boys do ganyu to find money, others grow cotton, some even steal from parents or beg from their uncles and cousins. Girls have less money than boys because they are lazy and rude (mwano), don’t listen to parents advice.

Mrs Ntawanga (46, second marriage): Some boys are from rich families, steal money from their parents and call a poor girl. Some men go for ganyu, hide the money from their wives so that they can get zibwenzi. Or single boys, still fed by mother, do MASAF project, and use the money they find on girls. Both poorer and richer girls may do this, the richer ones may see their poorer friends do this and want too. The girls may be too tired for ganyu, or have done ganyu with family and the money was taken for HH needs, or follow the example given by their mother’s behavior.

Alida (55, widow) is clearly amongst the poorest in this community: very small 1 room house, no kitchen, cooking on veranda, harvested only 2 bags of maize. Takes care of one of her orphaned granddaughters and receives money for this from an Orphan Care project, 1500/month. Because she doesn’t have enough power herself she uses part of this money to hire ganyu laborers to help her cultivate her field.

Hired & did ganyu last season: Balakasi (51, divorced); Teleza (28, divorced); Victoria (38, divorced)

Ainessi (23, married) left school in St 2 “because her father died and she had no one else to buy clothes for her.”

Emra (22, first marriage) has bike (given to husband for ganyu - cooking at a HH in Balaka) which they don't sell even though they go without food some days: if they would sell, can buy food but would only last short period of time, if they keep it, husband can go around finding ganyu
even far if there is none to be found nearby.

Valentine (24, first marriage) and husband give her grandmother money after cotton sale to keep for them, she is good at safeguarding money [uitleen van geld ook vorm van sparen by the way!]. Will be able to eat as usual = nsima twice a day. However, breakfast may be a problem because just difficult to find here: potato, cassava, tea, bread...

Nola (55, 3th marriage) is relatively prosperous iron sheet roof, pots etc. She says this is because she applies manure before making ridges, learned from first husband who was AEDO. Later also applies fertilizer and so gets more harvest. Chief does notice that she works hard, but others don’t even come to ask how she does it. While she is willing to share her knowledge.

Holy (35, 1st marriage) and husband prospered, which led to jealousy. Therefore decided to move to Mudzi B. Parents of both are poor. Why have they themselves been able to prosper and parents not? Man’s parents eat all they harvest, and wife’s parents do not own enough land. They share their maize (35 bags hybrid maize) with them though in times of need. Since they have been married they have never gone hungry, when they harvest too little they buy maize when prices are still low. Last year received one coupon and bought the other. This year received 2 coupons, will go to buy as soon as she finds boys with bikes to transport the bags. Received 4 goats from FIDP, 2 for husband, 2 for wife.

Alida (55, widow) husband died when she 30 yrs, had 4 kids, all died, stays with granddaughter which supplies her with her only income from Orphan Care, 1500 MK. Didn’t want to remarry. Was so smart to buy maize early with cotton money (4 bags a 1500MK ipv 3000). Sometimes hires ganyu, because to weak to work field herself, with money from Orphan Care. Hired people to burn bricks for her last year, but found no money to build bigger house. Now goats are destroying the bricks, she thinks of selling them...

Gertrude: Possible reason why men generally have more money than women: can do more ganyu, can do harder labor; and are more serious at running BS.

Rashida (45, 3th marriage) says her biggest problem is njala (+lack of blankets, difficult to take care of children). They do have a bike though: for son who is in Form 3 to go to school. If they would sell, he can’t continue school. Son pays his own school fees with money from Orphan Care - hence is not her own son, but of deceased sister. Boy is brother to Doris.

One of the sons of Chenawe (70, 3rd marriage) died last year after being ill for long time, his wife (who also had children with other man) died 2 weeks ago. Esnart will go to pick up the ones of her son to stay with her, and register these orphans as living at HER HH not there!

Aisha (28, left behind) got pregnant while still in school. Left school and started BS of buying and selling veggies. Boyfriend didn’t provide anything, so she didn’t want to stay with him, stayed alone. While moving around with her veggies, man proposed to be zibwenzi. But she said: “Did that before, am done with that now.” He thought for a week, then answered that he didn’t have a wife either, so he agreed to marry her. She didn’t know whether this one would provide for her or not. He was poorer than boyfriend, but at least they worked in the
field together and did ganyu together. Now he sell fish. In 2007 husband (Islamic Yao) married other wife and then divided his time between his two wives in different villages. But since some months hasn’t come at all anymore. Last season did send someone to help Aisha cultivate her field. When she is in need of things like soap or ndiwo, she sends one of her kids to his father to ask for it. But sometimes ex-husband has no money to buy. Never gives money, always the items asked for. In Oct a new house was being built for her - by her ex-husband who does not want to be talked about as bad man, leaving her without anything. Had promised this to her while still married - with iron sheet roof! She plans to start BS, because husband does not send her enough. By selling fish from the house (cannot move around with small children who need food). But not yet, first work on the field now [Oct 2008].

Naima (21, 2st marriage) complains about not having enough kitchen tools: only 7 plates, 2 pots and 1 tin bucket. Gertrude later laughs, “only?? And they eat together from the same plates!”

Magda (63, 2nd marriage) hires young boys to help on field, weeding, for 20/30MK. “Adults need more money, but young boys work cheap.” Have beautiful house that was built for them by son who had gone to Chancellor College and worked in Blantyre, but died. Another son was teacher, died too. The only other working child is a nurse, she has to take of all the orphans now, therefore difficult to take care of parents too... Son who was teacher had bought parents pigs, for manure and as source of money.

Teleza (28, divorced) hired ganyu for weeding (“can't manage on my own”), sold a goat to find money. Also did ganyu herself.

Josephine (52, 2nd marriage) sometimes sell maize because of problems. Preferably not, but when forced by circumstances. Sold last June at [nearest trading center] 1 bag at 1500 MK to get clothes for granddaughter to go to school and a chitenje for herself. Husband uses all incoming money for beer. Sleep under chitenje. But did apply fertilizer last yr, with coupon and MASAF. Income sources: selling their nandolo and maize, ganyu. Has no working children who can help her.

Faith (27, 1st marriage, husband been in SA) does not want her grass roof to show on her picture. She will start cooking smaller portions of nsima when the mango’s are ripe to fill stomach with. While doing the interview a bike taxi is there with a woman to pick up some of the blankets that Maria's husband brought from woman's husband in SA for her. Will start growing cotton this year with the money that her husband made in 13 months in SA: rent 1 acre, buy materials.

Victoria (38, divorced): after husband left her with 4 small kids managed through farming and selling some crops (eg cotton), and sometimes ganyu when in need of soap. Is not looking for a new husband now, afraid of same behavior. [NB is building a new house with iron sheets! Says she doesn't receive anything for 4 days/wk 3 hours teaching at Concern Universal adult school], but Venesi says they receive 1000MK/month]. Thieves stole about 2 bags of her cotton. Hired ganyu in December for weeding and did in January (kupalira & kubandira).

Maria (22, left behind) and Josephine have chicken by borrowing chicken from others and multiplying them, afterwards give back parents and some of the offspring. Esther (88, widow) got her pigs by borrowing pigs from friend, feed them and receive big in return.
Nosalt (29, married) husband in prison. Survival: went to husband's work and received some maize from his boss, her mother helps out (father used to help a lot but died last yr), difficult to eat at relatives, will just work hard in the field. Last yr hired ganyu after husband begged money from her father. husband also did ganyu. Did not receive coupon last yr.

Belita (46, second marriage) would eat good food, with oil, if she had money.

Mery (74, widow) has a sister in Blantyre who has working children who Mery goes to to get support sometimes. Her own children in Mudzi A help her too. Hired ganyu for weeding (paid with maize) and did herself too.

Esther (88, widow) owns 7 acres but cannot cultivate all.

Zara (28, 2nd marriage) husband left fro SA on Sept 24 for first time with uncle who stays there. Had discussed about it together, will stay there maybe ¾ years. She is happy about it, because he will sending help. (Faith and Haliday say they are used to being without husband (in SA), don't feel lonely oid). Sold a goat and maize to pay for his transport and passport. Spends more time doing ganyu than working on own field: mornings ganyu, afternoons own. Have already changed their eating (Oct), using smaller pots to cook nsima, the one that is usually used for ndiwo.

Balakasi (51, divorced) shared maize harvest with her adult children when they come to beg for it.

Nyamwale (app 50, 1st marriage) says they spend more time doing ganyu than on own field, even though husband also makes mats for income.

Rebecca (18, 1st marriage, husband 21) & husband still have 7 bags of maize left at time of interview, while they only harvested 5: bought in April when prices where low, afraid that later when their own maize would finish they could not afford to buy because of high prices... Rebecca is not participating in the adult school, because she knows how to read & write [husband makes enough money with clothes BS]. Besides receiving one coupon, they had bought 1 coupon last year at 500MK with money from husbands BS. Hire ganyu, don't do. Has a bike that she got from uncle working in SA.

Sweetness (35, 2nd marriage) and husband don't grow cotton because they don't have enough field (1.5 acre) and cannot afford to rent, better use what they have for maize. Her agri problem is that they spend more time doing ganyu than on their own field. Have received a coupon but no money yet to buy, will do ganyu to find. All money from husband's BS is used for food these days. Did not participate in MASAF [Sweetness--> not registered. Do have a phone, which husband [of Sweetness] received from his brother.

Malita (62, 2x divorced) has no livestock because “receives money from Orphan Care (3000MK/month) but has responsibility to take care of those orphans, plus many funerals in her family...” [Recently lost daughter in Blantyre] Sold 1 of her 4 bags of maize at 250MK (!) to buy soap, ndiwo, paraffin, salt. Also sold the half basket of nandolo that she harvested (100MK) because her grandson died and she needed to buy materials for a coffin. But she will be eating as usual because of the Orphan Care money. Brews masese beer for sale (but not now because of daughter's death, first wait for ceremony).

Jasmine (56, 1st marriage) says during interview that they finished their maize in
August already, and that they will find money to buy through ganyu and BS. Mid Oct Gertrude overhears them discussing at our mat that when their maize finishes they should buy ufa directly in Balaka. Also says in interview that they will change their eating habits (although as elder one she will still eat more): smaller portions, in morning cassava, filling water with stomach, complains that there at not enough mango's this year. But beginning of Nov Gertrude sees her eat nsima in the morning. Didnt mention she was in pig club (with Kima) in interview. Both her and daughter Innocent say in interview they did ganyu last year in December to buy maize.

Fatima (17, 1st marriage) husband decides on expenditure because he is the one doing ganyu. Receive money from his brother in SA too. With last cotton harvest money he decided to buy kitchen tools, because up till then they had been borrowing his mother's ziwiya. She said in interview they sleep on bed, husband says later that she lied; she said they have radio, he later says they sold it because they had problem - but Gertrude later heard their radio very loud after they have received money from his brother in SA; phone he bought with money he found through helping a relative in field; bike he received from his father (whose wife said he himself rides on a borrowed bike to go and play card).

Lovely (29, 1st marriage) did not have enough food for family before her husband went to SA, now walks around with cellphone around neck and has enough maize to last her till March (although she is using smaller pots to cook now). Says people just think differently, that's why some decide to go to SA and others stay, not thinking about future. Some women go too, but she can't, has to take care of their 3 children (3 others died). Has a field at dambo, does do wintercropping, growing maize and pumpkin. But there are too many people growing there, with too little water. So she brings water from borehole twice a day. Her husband [in SA] told her to buy goats with money he sends from SA when the prices are low because of njala, at about 2000MK. When the money he sends finishes before new arrives, she sells some maize. husband left May 2007, talk over phone about 3x/wk. Hasn't told her the work he does there, hasn't come back yet. Sends her money and items via others, oo a tv and charging connectors for phones. She is just keeping these things till he returns, he will have a plan with them, will know what to do. He went because of “umphawi” [poverty], following younger brother. Paid for trip by selling maize ans tomatoes - before he left he sold tomatoes at large scale at the market, by bike. Now she only sells from house. With money he sends, she can hire ganyu. Plan to eventually move to town, build a house there and then rent it out. Themselves may still stay in vl, continue farming. Others coming back from SA usually build house in vl. Elube is mother of Lovely. This yr may start growing cotton: in past people sold at high prices, but then price reduced to 70MK/kg, now good prices again however, 100MK/kg. At time of interview had 3 adults making ridges for her, doing 1.5 acre, paying 4500MK when work is finished. the other half acre she does herself. Will hire young boys to do the weeding. Grows local and hybrid maize: put hybrid in bags with chemicals, started eating these. Local can be kept more easily, is not attacked by weavils.

Jeneti (37, left 2x--> Often ill, she says, and has sores on skin...) This yr bought 20 irons sheets, partly with cotton money, partly from selling maize (has 3 acres). Next yr will be able to pay for putting sheets up (trees, nails, labor etc). Both did (kupalira, kubandira in Dec+Jan) and hired ganyu (paying with money, others with maize). Now has 1 woman making ridges on 0.5 acre for 1000MK. Still has 5 bags of maize (end Sept), which could last her till next harvest if she not needed to sell some of it, e.g. to buy ndiwo. and pay daughter Modesta's secondary school fees. Because she was ill, thieves stole her nandolo and cassava. Has a bed and radio, both bought through selling maize. The bed was decided by husband in 2003, the radio she decided herself after husband took theirs.

Tumanene (26, 2nd marriage) First marriage at 19, “to take care of each other.” Lasted 2
years, child was about a yr when she decided to leave him, had come to dislike him she says: nkhanza, talkative. Stayed alone 4 yrs, went to Lilongwe where parents/aunt/uncle were, and found job at a HH in area 47 via relative working at Escom, cooking & nanny. Earned 4500MK/month, got soap and food where she stayed. Gave part of salary to mother who was taking care of child and kept some herself for clothes and savings. When she returned to Mudzi B bought maize with this money. Stayed with her parents and worked the field until proposed in 2006. Allowed “to have enough.” Mother supplied everything, but was a big family, better get married so mother can take better care of others. She didn't first ask around about his behavior, because: “people can cheat you, may not you to marry him, only way is to find out yourself.” At this moment they are staying well together, no nkhanza, work on field together, but doesn't know about future... Since March husband to SA, sent money (3800MK) for first time last month (Aug), used to buy soap, clothes, sick child to hospital, money is finished now. They talk each weekend on phone of Lovely, but doesn't know what job he does. Will wait for new money (hire ganyu, buy plastic sheet for grass roof), otherwise do ganyu, MIL helps too sometimes with ndiwo or soap. Hasn't been growing cotton because didn't see benefit, but now sees there is and will start. Comparing LL to vlg: in town have to buy everything, nkuni, ndiwo, maize, rent land. Definitely prefers to stay here in vlg. To finance husband's trip to SA, he tailored, they sold goats and she attended a seminar to teach blind people.

When husband of Blessings (28, 1st marriage) left for SA he arranged her brother to stay with his wife and kids. Blessings decided on expenditure, as she is “the owner of the family/kids”. She joined him in SA for 2 yrs (cooking, washing etc in HH), wants to go back as it makes her proud to work in SA. Returned to Mudzi B when she found herself pregnant, but will return when this one is old enough to be left behind = 3 yrs (also left other kid at 3 - sending money to mother to take care of them). Got blood test second wk of Nov, she told friends at borehole, but didn't mention result.

Met husband in primary school, were in relationship for 2 yrs, discussing that they would marry in the future. He sometimes bought her soap and lotion with money that he got from his parents, which he then brought to her parent's house where she stayed. Therefore she liked him, made her hope he'd be good husband, and indeed still is. She left school in Form 1 to marry (not pregnant, mother divorced father, no school fees & was just childish to stop), he finished secondary. He born in Balaka town where they stayed until he left for SA in 2000, then she moved back to Mudzi B. Eats with mother, but sleeps in own house. He sends her money through bank account or with a traveler. When the money finishes she calls him for more. He works in shop in Capetown. Uses the money for things in HH: food, salt, soap, plates, blankets. Husband told her to buy beds for the children. Bought screen, DVD player, typewriter, all to sell when husband returns. Hires ganyu, but also works herself in field, and also sold maize to pay for ganyu. Also before husband left to SA they had enough food, because he worked in PTC in Balaka. Difference SA vs vlg: very different, here difficult to find food, also behavior is different: there girls with tight trousers and naked bellies; easier to get employed there; more Indians and azungu there, therefore more developed and richer. He was the one who decided she should come to SA as he sent money for passport and transport. [Blessings] Is not growing cotton because is sold at once, better cultivate maize and keep.

NB In Mudzi B much less people say they grow cotton than in Mudzi A. Check fields whether this is true, or whether they were told to say so by GVH to look more deprived?

- Amila (36, 2nd marriage) has eelt on top of her head, from carrying so much water, says Gertrude. Also some other women have this, even saw a girl with it - daughter of Holy. Amila has a field at dimba, but stopped winter cropping after thieves stole crops. As her
field lies low, groundnuts were last yr destroyed by heavy water. At time of interview (25 Sept) she had just taken her last maize to the chigayo (had harvested 1/3 nkhokwe on 1 acre of land, hers - husband has none; applied no fert). Has started ganyu now to buy maize after this finishes. Will only eat porridge or smaller portions of nsima (2 ipv 3 cups of water). Has no blankets, only 1 child has a school uniform. Had a chicken, but a disease killed it last year (say more people in that side of vlg). She lives near some women who are relatively well off, because husband's in SA, but is not helped by them. Ashamed (manyazi) to beg for help, better to ask them for ganyu. husband sometimes disappears to home vlg, especially when moon appears, goes mad, misses home. Received a coupon this year, but had no money to buy so gave it to uncle who didn't give her anything in return. It's dangerous to receive money for it, so didn't sell. This year was told that everybody would receive, sharing 1 coupon for 2 types of fertilizer with 2 people. So she and husband decided to start ganyu early to find enough money to buy fert this year. Was one of the few who was enlisted to participate in the MASAF project. When she received the money, told friends she was going to buy the fertilizer soon. Started ganyu in Aug: kusosa + kugalauza mizere, to find soap. Then quickly back to own field so they can plant early and asap eat green maize.

Kondwani (35, left - sister of chief Mudzi B) is one of poorer people in Mudzi B, I estimate. But did hire ganyu last year, with money sent by ex-husband, This year won't. Started already looking for ganyu to do herself (end of Sept). Saw bundle of grass next to house: bought with money from cassava BS: 100 MK. But still has to buy trees, her father will then help, free of charge. Has to put new roof every year. Last year applied fertilizer, bought with MASAF money. But this year she wasn't enlisted for MASAF - only very few in vlg were. Will now have to find ganyu to get money to buy the fert - did receive coupon. Maybe wait for rains to start to weed for money...

Salika (39, abandoned 2x - chief Mudzi B) grows local maize because hybrid needs money for chemicals against weavils. Her son did ganyu last year to find food because she was pregnant (and left behind). Already end Sept eating their last maize, therefore changes to eating phala for lunch and nsima for dinner. Has one blanket, a mat, no radio/bike/phone/livestock. But 2 kids have school uniform. Is her 5th year as chief now, mother was growing too old (blind & deaf old woman). She doesn't receive anything for this (looking after people and advising them), but GVH does. Says begin Nov that she didn't participate in MASAF, but had come to Gertrude earlier to order some knitwork for her baby, paying with part of the money she will receive from MASAF...

Grace (21, first marriage, with child from earlier lover; hair extensions) husband has fish BS at lake. Cultivate half their field (1.5 acre) themselves, other half ganyu. She used to sell fish herself too, but stopped because husband torl her too. She would like to restart, begs husband for money, but he says it's not a good time yet. But he sometimes leaves for a week, without leaving enough money, therefore she wants own BS - anything but mandasi... They have sufficient money for food, but it is difficult to find breakfast type of food, have to go far: potato, cassava, rice.

Dora (42, single, 2 marriages - mother of Dorica) sold 2 bales of cotton at [small crossroads market] in July for 18000MK, which she used to buy a pot, clothes, blanket, tin, ndiwo and also kept some which she is using now to buy food. Will also do ganyu (kupalira) with kids, and cook less full pots of food. In Feb they will at least be able to eat fresh maize. husband had borrowed money to start tin making BS in Mangochi, but never came back to repay, the people who he borrowed from then took her goats. Has a son who works at [large commercial estate], and gives her some
money at end of each month. Grow tomatoes to sell (but now finished - end Sept); sometimes selling maize or livestock (pigeons, chicken, goats in past); ganyu.

- Venesi (36, 2 ended marriages) teaches at Concern Universal adult school, 4 days/week 3 hours, receiving 1000MK/month. Took out various loans from Concern Universal. Eats less these days (end Sept): tean and rice ipv nsima at lunch - for dinner still a lot of nsima.

Molly (27, 2nd marriage, child before ever married) husband works seasonally for cotton company, buying cotton. Is also tailor (at ‘grocery’). Yet they also do ganyu: kupalira “at people who have a lot of maize” and pay with maize.

- Yona (mother of Victoria, 70, widow) married at 17 with boy in school. Met when both in St3. He said “ndikukufunani banja” but she refused because wanted to continue school. Then men said she could continue school while he got prepared for marriage, then she agreed. Stayed 2 yrs in chibwenzi while by tried to get employed. After those 2 years he joined his father in Bulawayo (mother at Chiradzulo with kids) where he found employment at the railway company and called her to join him, which she did. There he proposed to other women too and when Flocy once met them on the road she started fighting. The police came and put her in prison for 6 months. Then uncle came to pick her and kids back to Chiradzulo. Flocy then started BS of selling thobwa & zitumbuwa. Uncle gave her money to start. Decided to stop BS when she married second husband. Later also did fish BS, but stopped now because of high transport costs. Bought clothes, ndiwo, soap, pig, school fees with profit. Last yr her daughter did MASAF to buy her fertilizer. Hired ganyu in kupalira (January) after selling a goat, paying 1000MK. When their maize finishes (1 bag left on Oct 10) will eat phala in morning, skip lunch, nsima for dinner. Has a bike that is used by grandson to go to school which Flocy bought with the money she received from Limbe Company when husband died.

- Lizzie (19, married, husband in SA) sold maize in May although prices were low then because she needed money. Made ridges on own field with ganyu labor, paying them 2800MK - money sent by husband from SA. Will do kupalira in Dec if husband does not send money. Already bought 2 bags of maize with money that husband sent. Will be eating as usual (= phala, nsima, nsima) because when eating less, means cannot manage to work hard in field... Already bought a radio with money husband sent (decided herself), husband also sent a cellphone. Bike and 3 goats inherited from mother. Chicken bought with SA money, decided herself. Is building kitchen, toilet, bafa.

- Alma (60?, single, 3x married) has been alone for over 20 years, she says. Managing fine on her own, working hard on field, doing better than some of the married couples. Some of those lack salt, while she does not. Has 1.5 acre, and harvested a full nkholwe of local maize this year (had two fertilizer coupons, one from daughter, bought with money from selling groundnuts) and 3 bags of groundnuts. Sells maize and groundnuts. When we went to buy some Chalimbana groundnuts from her she said they were her husband - through them she can find the things she needs. This year got one coupon, sold maize and groundnuts to pay (people buy for food and in Nov also for planting), but daughter borrowed money and hasn’t paid back yet. Will apply manure in top of ridges before the rains fall when she does not have enough
fertilizer. Did not participate in MASAF, because wasn't registered by GVH, she only registered relatives, says Alma. HH has 2 beds which she bought after selling maize, no livestock. Has 4 granddaughters living with her + son who works as teacher. [Do they eat from more fields than hers alone? Is income son used to buy food for HH?]

- Fiona (84, widow) claims she cannot manage to grow cotton, but granddaughter (Ganizani) that lives with her in earlier interview said they harvested and sold 2 bales. Fiona says they harvested 3 bags of maize, Ganizani says 5. Ganizani said the HH also receives assistance from a relative in town, Fiona denies. Fiona says they applied 1 bag of fertilizer, Gertrude said 4, with 2 coupons and 2 sent by aunt in town. Fiona says they sleep under zitenje, Gertrude says the HH owns 3 blankets. When Gertrude asked Fiona again explicitly whether they do not even have 1 blanket, she kept denying. Fiona says they have 3 goats (all received from FISD), Gertrude said 5 goats and 3 sheep.

Sept 20, 2010

Telefoongesprek met Gertrude: man van zus met HIV maand geleden overleden, zus wil nu al andere man trouwen. Andere zus 2 maanden geleden getrouwd & alweer gescheiden. Moeder niet blij met gedrag van deze dochters, waarom allemaal zo snel?

Opleiding gaat goed, net weer met examens begonnen, hele week, daarna week vakantie. Tweede jaar nu, gelukkig meer boeken in bieb, vraagt of ik boeken kan opsturen, over any onderwerp, e.g. economy, want daar leren ze nu over. Had in email om flash disk gevraagd zodat ze opdrachten op eigen laptop kan maken ipv in duur internetcafé.

Heeft nu (klein!) huisje met electriciteit vlak bij school voor 5000 p/m, maar gaat daar weg, want heeft geen geld meer...

Gertrude heel blij met mijn hulp voor haar assignments, mijn uitleg begrijpt ze goed, terwijl de lessen/literatuur onduidelijker zijn. Pleuniek vertelde dat leerstof uit VS komt, voor dit soort instituten in derde wereld, daarom ook vaak: “apply to own situation...”

Uit aantekenboekje met bloemenprint:

In some interviews: I decided to end the marriage then he agreed (eg Malita, Christina).

Empowerment: How easy can women send away their husband if they are not happy with his behavior? Some say they want husband to go (no benefit, just another mouth to feed) but that he refuses to go (Elube, Jasmine, Madalitso, Hilda), saying they have nowhere to go. Others say they have decided to divorce man who they found too lazy: Evelies, Teleza, Balakasi, Saibia, Chikondi (violence), Magda (lazy & quarreling), Belita (zibwenzi), Dora (several wives), Sweetness (beer), Christina (other wife). Some left husband, moving back to
parental home: Zara (violence), Tumanene (violence, talkative), Molly (beer), Nola (several wives), Auleria (not providing, not coming home). Alma said: husband refused when I wanted to end the marriage but I gave him 1 Tambala coin (app 20 yrs ago) to show him that I was serious.