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 except 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 P8:**

P8 contains the field notes that have been added by Verheijen after the fieldwork period ended, hence the name “Extra notes”. The data comes from the notebooks in which I wrote down (by hand) the answers that the village women gave during the formal interviews. Most of these answers have been described in P3, but details that were later found missing were included in P8. Also occurrences that Verheijen remembered after returning from the field and that were not described while still in the field, have been included in P8. P8 furthermore contains an email from Gertrude which she sent after Verheijen returned to the Netherlands (many more were sent, but this particular one was included as informative data). P8 also contains the writing out of some parts of the financial diaries (see Chapter 4 for elaboration).
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 leaves 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 research 100MK = 0.5 Euro)
SA = South Africa
VH = village head/chief
Agnessi (42) was proposed in 1979 @ 13. Did not accept for 1 yr, childish, didn't know about marriage. Man kept coming, even slept at compound (not with her). After hearing more about marriage and seeing/accepting gifts, accepted after 1 yr. He brought chitenje twice, which she used to make clothes. Still with same man, but daughter Saibi tells us her father had been with another woman for some time, but now back with Agnessi.

GVH says in interview that sons in SA don't help her, only their wives. Says she harvested less than usual bcoz busy going up and down to hospital with husband. Maize finished in Aug (says she harvested only 2 bags, while having applied 2 bags of fertilizer...), has been buying since (selling parts of a big radio that owner of our house left), but doesn't know how to find food now. In past villagers would bring part of their harvest to their chief, but not anymore, doesn't know why. In past ppl were more obedient, doesn't know why. Under Kamuzu & Muluzi ppl were given food, but Mutharika only lowered price of fertilizer... Mr Ntawanga and Hamra both came to make clear that they got scared bcoz GVH was complaining about us not interviewing (“registering”) her, were very relieved when I finally agreed to do so. NOW. She had furiously complained that “Hamra is not even originally from Mudzi A, and she WAS interviewed!” Used to farm together with H husband on both her (2 acres) and his field (0.5 acre). But now each on own, bcoz husband used money for other wives, so she decided to farm alone on her own field, and let him farm alone on his. He sometimes sleeps at other wives’ houses. She did not divorce him bcoz didn’t think she could manage to take care of their children alone - while also saying that he didn’t help her. But especially advising sons. Now he has changed his behavior, had grown up and gotten ill...

Hamra enrolled in FIDP tree planting bcoz told to participate by chairman of club, but sees no benefit.

Jeneti: Often ill, she says, and has sores on skin... But lot of achibale [relatives] around her, help each other: salt, ndiwo, fetching water when ill.

Nelia enrolled in FIDP Soy, mushrooms & forest, but sees no benefit. Did not receive anything after selling. Continues bcoz told by chief, can’t stop.

Balakasi enrolled in FIDP trees bcoz told so by chief. Benefit: received trees to plant in own field to get firewood. Balakasi’s ex-husband had 1 acre at Mgwira. She did not mind losing access to that field when sending him away, “bcoz she also lost a thief.” Shared a lot of her maize with her adult children & their families/households who did not have enough food, came to beg from her.

Aisha currently not enrolled in any FIDP club. Registered for chicken and goats, but waiting for chicken club to start, or someone to fail in goat club or a new goat club.

Maria (22, left behind) says all FIDP participants were divided between the various clubs, some in mbuzi, she in mushroom.

Meriam (56, married) sees no benefit in FIDP, but continues (goats, trees, manure, soy) bcoz maybe in future there will be benefit.

Zara (28, second marriage) only participates in FIDP goats (benefit: can be sold to help HH, eg in coming days will be selling to buy food). Doesn’t want to participate in other activities kusangalatsidwa: does not get happy from participating: some get benefit, others don’t, she may be one of last…
Rashida (45, 3rd marriage) enrolled in FIDP soy, forestry, manure. “Divided into groups by chief…”

Chenawe (70, 3rd marriage) was enrolled in FIDP mushroom, but no benefit, 4X water per day, which was far…

Second husband saw Yona (1938) at Limbe Company (Chiradzulo) where she visited her brother. He asked her brother about her behavior (she had been in prison for 6 months for attacking other wives of husband). Brother told Yona that colleague wanted to marry her. Remembering about unfaithful first husband Yona doubted for 3 months, asking around about his behavior. Was told he had been married but was now divorced. “That’s why I agreed”. During those 3 months he brought soap, salt, clothes for her. After marriage stayed together in Limbe, but cultivated land in Mudzi A. Home vlg had been in Chiradzulo, Uncle/brother had gone to Balaka to find land, then brought rest of family. When he died, Yona moved to Mudzi A (1968-1974). Last born child 1974. Up till this yr still lived in the iron sheeted house built by him, till rains washed it away. Has 1 pig + 1 chicken, both bought through selling fish (stopped BS when transport costs became too high). Plus 1 goat from FIDP (2 other + 2 sheep stolen by thieves).

Alida (1953) lived with parents when she was proposed at 15 by man (18) who came from Tradingcenter asking for marriage. She refused for a month, he kept coming, giving money, relish. He encouraged her to accept, “helping each other.” Was really good husband: no beating/fighting, eating together, working together on the field. He died in 1983, after 15 yrs of marriage. Had 4 children, all dead by now. Three grandchildren of whom 1 (girl) stays with her, others (boys) with relative in Balaka, bcoz she can’t manage to take care of all. Her children left her pots, tins, plates, clothes + she receives Orphan Care (1500 once a month no matter how many orphans, must go to Tradingcenter to receive, picture to check). Plus farming to survive - has 1.5 + 0.5 acre, but can’t cultivate all, bcoz ill. Will hire ganyu with Orphan Care money. Last yr one bale of cotton @ 6000MK, bought 4 bags of maize. Was not on HH list, did not receive coupon last yr bcoz couldn’t pay for fert anyway, she says. But selling? Afraid to, bcoz prohibited, maybe this yr… Plus says only in FIDP mbuzi bcoz “not written in book, hence not in other clubs.”

Kima also has income from Orphan Care.

Ms Ntawanga gave birth to 7 children within 8 years. Hence sex almost always lead to a new child – must make it a different kind of experience… Can Mr Ntawanga not restrain himself? Or would sex drive be considered god given?

Suset said in interview that she had had malungo [fever] and went to traditional doctor bcoz thought she may have been bewitched. She left school in Form 2 bcoz school fees payer stopped when she got pregnant (impregnator later married another instead of her).

Email from Gertrude [11-09-12]:
Hallow Janneke how are you here everything is fine only missing you,

now let me go back to the questions, i tried to do a little bit of research to different women from different places but everybody is still telling me the same examples that i sent to you, now we can conclude it in this way, we can define it as its a belief that people from the past said when you add salt in relish while menstruating you will suffer form tsempho, or you can add the examples that i gave

the truth is that i tried to add salt in my relish when i was menstruating my friend ate the food but nothing happened, lets just help each other to find the real definition, becoz what i sent to you is what i found from different people

if you remember very well in Mudzi A and B a lot of kids are indeed weak and most of them their husband are in SA or they have other wives eg Livia’s dotta is weak she just do zibwenzi, Sofias late husband had 2 wives and her son was weak,

people still believe it but indeed they use traditional medicine to protect themselves and their children

about having sex through dreams it happens through witchcraft, there are some traditional medicine that they use to reach any woman that they want at that time

about the question of Fisi it happens but especially chewa people eg kasungu and tumbuka people but in Mudzi A and B i didnt hear any one talking about it, this happens if the husband is failing to bear children they bring another man to sleep with that woman so that she can have a baby

if you are not comfortable please keep on asking am free to answer

enjoy reading and greet everybody

Mdu lo: circumcise i just remember that Jasmine was telling her dotta in law Sofia that, when i will have enough maize i will send my grand children for circumcision,

Tsempho: there are different meanings of this disease, people from the past said that when you are menstruating dont add salt in relish becoz you will affect the elders, you will make them suffer from tsepho, their bodies will become weak or have fever,

another example is that, when a woman is married and have sex outside marriage(with another man) you will make your husband ill he will become weak have fever and they call it tsempho

Another chitsanzo [example] when you just gave birth you cant have sex with your husband then the husband goes out to sleep with another woman that will affect your baby,that baby will look weak, open bowel, and the elders call it tsempho,

i remember Livia’s dotta Hana she was weak and she said i should stop sleeping with other men becoz am affecting my dotta, even Sofia’s son i think he was weak becoz her husband was sleeping with other women,of course he was already born weak,

Last example when Desi got married her first dotta got sick,her mother called her and said your dotta is suffering from tsempho becoz after she was born you didnt have sex with her father
instead you got married with another man and had sex with him, then the medication that she told her was that she must put a string on her waist but that string should be made from the piece of cloth that she use when menstruating. I think you know that in Malawi when menstruating they use a piece of cloth and wash it and dry it then use the other day.

Kanyera: in the past when we didn’t know about Aids people knew about kanyera, when someone got sick often, look weak feeling cold all the time, becoming thin even coughing, just like how the husband of group Mgwira. the way he was looking, people could call it kanyera

Income and expenditure tracking by Venesi: Feb 25 2009: receives 1000MK from CU as compensation for voluntary teaching. March 4: Attending the Teacher Development Committee as requested by Concern Universal, receiving 2800 for it. March 5, 2009: Ndinapatsidwa chokumwa ndi chodyera ndi bungwe la Concern Universal. Komanso andipatsa ndalama yokwana 1200 kuti tipange transposrt komanso lunch (for attending workshop). Komanso darling wanga Kamfoloma anandigulira botolo la Fanta mu Metro. [I was given drinks and food by the organization CU. They also gave me 1200MK so we should get transport and lunch. Also my darling Kamfoloma bought me a bottle of Fanta at the Metro store (in Balaka).]

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Janneke: Chifukwa? [I had dried fish which I gave to chief Mgwira and also a soap called Ufresh and also a packet of matches. Janneke: Why?] Venesi: As thanks for selecting me for CU workshop. March 30: receives another 1000MK from CU for voluntary teaching of fellow village women (although classes have stopped due to disinterest from both her and students).

April 15: Again meeting for voluntary teachers at Balaka, receives 2800MK, bottle of Fanta and a snack, 600MK for lunch and 400MK for transport. Had to spend night at Balaka, resthouse costed 300MK. Furthermore buys clothes for her children at 690MK, tea 100, sugar 270, soap 100, airtime 70, 5 bars of laundry soap totaling 150MK, paraffin 100, dried fish 100.

Money which Venesi received for attending a Concern Universal workshop (1200 on March 5, 2009) she spent the same day on earrings at 25MK, shoes for herself at 330MK, a bag for her mobile phone at 100MK, underwear for herself at 170MK, dried fish at 50MK, cooking oil at 40MK, salt at 50MK, onions at 20MK, toothpaste at 50MK, airtime at 210MK, sugar at 125MK, (relatively expensive, luxury) soap at 180MK. The next day she donated 20MK to the church at service, and charged her mobile phone at 30MK. = 1400

Venesi writes in her income and expense book that on April 7 she receives 350MK from the health extension worker to give her children vitamin and a medicine against worms.

Venesi writes in her income and expenses book on April 11 that she begged some thobwa (maize drink) from Lovely because "njala yandipota" - had an empty stomach/felt hungry. On the same day she bought eggs from 150MK, cooking oil for 40, batteries for her radio at 120MK, and phone units 80MK. On 26/5 begs 10Mk from Mercy to buy aspirin because head aches.

Suset has no money on the day she starts keeping track of her income and expenditure. On that day her grandmother, living next door, buys her a soap so that she can wash her baby’s diapers. The next day, a client comes to pay the 30MK that he owed her for the beer he drank earlier. Immediately, Suset spends the money by going to the mill to have some maize grinded, and buying
paraffin, matches, sugar cane, and painkillers on her way. Three days later, she makes MK20 by selling the maize husks that were left after she pounded her maize to the pig rearing group of which her grandmother is a member. Eating nsima with okra or pumpkin from her own field. When finding some money, buying dried fish, tomatoes, and cooking oil for nice meal. Also soap, paraffin, matches. When receiving 2000MK from me for her note-keeping, she pays back various loans, and immediately gives some money to her grandmother for soap, and sister for ndiwo. In the following days she buys sugar to brew beer, and nice food for herself (= fish, cooking oil, onions, tomatoes, salt). Her sister comes to beg soap so she can wash her daughter (Suset buys her cheapest soap), her grandmother says she craves for beans which Suset then buys for her, another sister begging tomatoes. With the beer she brews, she makes 480MK + 180 + 380, which is spent on fish, and sugar cane for herself, and bread buns to share with her grandmother. Matches, g’nuts, jersey for daughter, batteries.

On March 31 sells her radio speaker for 350MK, same days buys a chicken for 300MK, cooking oil 20MK, onion 10MK. Shares the chicken with her grandmother and elder sister Teleza. On May 9 receives 500MK from uncle to buy soap from her child. The same day Suset buys (the cheapest) soap Nirma at 25MK at Crossroads, and bosy lotions called Soft touch at 120MK, and pays back 20MK to her elder sister which she had borrowed earlier to add to money which she already had herself in order to buy batteries. On May 20 receives 1500MK from uncle. Same day buys a chicken at 250MK to keep, mutemba [dried fish] 30MK, tomato 20MK, parafin 15MK, cooking oil 15MK, also cooking oil for grandmother, mandasi [snack] 40MK, sugar 20MK, gave back 350MK borrowed earlier (May 16) from Jasmina to pay someone to build bafa, charcoal 75MK. Next day pays 200MK for bicycle taxi to Balaka, buys 2 packets of sugar 125MK for beer brewing, 15 MK salt, 50MK Irish potatoes,, 90MK cooking oil, 20MK unions, 60MK Vestine body oil, Soft touch boy lotion 60MK, fruit (manaches) 30MK, relish 100MK, batteries 80MK, gave matches to elder sister who says she does not have any. = 1645MK (forgot exact prices, or had some other money left too? -- May 19 received 100 from debt beer drinker, May 18 sold beer 500MK, May 17 sold 200MK beer). May 22 buys 15MK snacks for daughter, usipa [dried fish] 40MK oranges. May 22 receives nandolo [legume] from grandmother bcoz Suset has no relish, begs 10MK cooking oil from vender she always buys at. May 24 grandmother gives her tomatoes to put in relish. May 25 receives potatoes from grandmother, and parafin bcoz child crying bcoz of darkness, borrows ufa [maize flour] from elder sister bcoz doesn't have own. Finds 10MK selling beer, spends it on leaves. May 26 receives (bega?) soy beans from elder sister to add to porridge of daughter bcoz hers finished, receives (bega?) snacks and biscuits from father of second daughter, receives (bega?) okra from wife of XXX bcoz she has a lot. Same days she finds 200MK through selling beer: buys fresh fish 45MK and 30MK from grandmother, 10MK tomatoes, 20MK cooking oil, gives Nirma soap to grandmothers who said she wants to wash her body, buys tobacco form grandmother, and gives back ufa that she borrowed.

On April 3 borrows a basket from her grandmother to use for harvesting maize bcoz doesn’t have one herself. At other occasions borrows bike from others (e.g. father second child - May 27) to go to hospital. On April 28 borrows tin to fetch water from grandmother because her own was leaking.

On April 5 Teleza asks Suset to buy a tin of maize 200MK from her with the money made by selling beer bcoz needs to go to hospital.

On April 7 gave 50MK to her brother to cut down a tree for her so she can brew beer with it.
On April 2 receives 60MK matemba [dried fish], 20MK cooking oil, & 2 mandasi [snack] from grandmother who always buys her something after receiving Orphan Care money. On April 8 Suset makes 540MK by selling beer, buys eggs (and sugar, bread, a plastic cup for daughert, and goes to maize mill), gives two boiled eggs to grandmother. On April 10 Suset receives 10MK from grandmother to buy relish because she did not have money. On April 28 buys 4 mandasi for grandmother to eat when drinking tea. May 1 received thobwa [maize drink] from grandmother. On May 8 receives 120MK from grandmother which she had borrowed to buy sugar. May 9, grandmother buys Suset rice 40MK & tomato 10MK from passing by vendors.

Suset receives money from fathers of children (April 9 father of first born: Colgate toothpaste to put on wound on child’s head, 4 bars of soap Ufresh, body oil Vaseline; April 17 500 - spent 350MK on goat meat; April 24 25MK paraffin father last born). Does some ganyu every now and then, eg 50MK carrying maize from Kachere’s field, or harvesting cotton at Mr Banda @ Crossroads 100MK April 23).

Often ill these days, and sometimes pays a girl 10MK to fetch her water (eg May 13 - but also twice before...).

On April 25 Suset receives a T-shirt saying Chifumbi for Malawi president bcoz she attended meeting.


Suset at times still receives gifts from fathers of both children, sometimes begs support, does not always get. E.g. potatoes from father of Queen on June 4 & June 11 & June 15. April 20: Jasmine gives “sopo wa Washa” to wash clothes of first born = Jasmine’s granddaughter. May 22 (financial diary) calls Jasmine “mother-in-law” (who borrowed 350MK to Suset to pay someone to build bafa, paid back several days later) of whom she received 25kg of maize becoz Suset helped Jasmine harvest her field; June 8 receives 100MK from Jasmine; June 10 borrows tin pot from Jasmine becoz own is leaking; June 13 receives two soaps (Nirma = cheapest) from Jasmine. May 29 Chikondi receives shirt for one of her children from its grandmother; June 5 soap, 1 kg sugar & money for medicine from “mother-in-law”; June 13 “agogo a XXX” [grandmother of Chikondi’s last born] 30MK to buy herbal med; May 11 mother-in-law from [nearby village] gives Chikondi 50MK, buys milk; May 16 receives 50MK from other mother-in-law;
May 18 receives 20MK from "grandmother of [other child]"; May 23 receives 40MK from apongozi (mother-in-law) from [nearby village]. Hence lasting relationship of support also with paternal grandparents of child!

Chikondi on March 2 has 15MK balance from mother and 15MK from Julia who had borrowed this on Feb 28 to go to the maize mill. She uses the money to buy sugar to add to the maize porridge for her 3 months old twin for whom she has not enough breastmilk. The next day she receives 2 pumpkins from Mrs. XXX, and makes 100MK by picking cotton for Alida. Of this money she uses 60MK to buy two bars of the cheapest soap (Nirma, without wrap), 20MK for salt, and 6MK for matches. On March 4 Chikondi borrows 30MK from ??? and receives 50MK from the father of her recently born twin. On the same day she buys soda at 10MK, skin oil for her babies at 40MK, and takes some maize to the mill to be grinded. On March 5 she picks some groundnuts from her field to sell to Mr Musitafa at 100MK. She buys dried fish from her selling neighbour for 60MK, and gives some maize to another neighbour who begged for it as she herself had none at the moment. Chikondi furthermore gives 50MK to her eldest son to take to school as payment for the school committee. Regularly borrows mtondo [from Mrs Tulipesi, Chenawe, Lovely, Hamra to pound medicine or porridge flour for babies. On May 8 makes 100MK picking cotton for Alida and sells her chicken for 200MK. On the same day she buys a relatively large quantity of parafin at 50MK, pays 120MK for her eldest son’s education, buys matches and salt for 12MK, and pays back the 50MK which she had borrowed from Mrs Tulipesi. The next days she receives 200MK from her brother and 50MK from her husband. She buys body lotion and soap at 200MK, and sugar at 30MK. Furthermore pays back 200MK which she had borrowed from Belita. Sometimes her loans with fellow villagers are repaid by husband (eg May 13). On May 21 apparently in desperate need for pain killers: begs 20MK from Alida and 40MK from uncle "for painkillers", and asks the 20MK for which ??? earlier took tomatoes.

A lot of borrowing between women (eg Venesi 15/3; P2 0387, 0724, 1248, 1328, 1597, 1832, 1870; P3 0797, 0914, 0915, 1040, 1095, 2281, 2585, 3770). P2 1232: mandasi & zigumu [snacks] obtained on tick, so delayed payments, exchange flows are disconnected in time. Chikondi 2/3 gets 15MK from jula who borrowed earlier to go to maize mill. Chikondi repays 50MK to Mrs Tulipesi May 8; 200MK to Belita May 9; is repaid 50MK by mother May 10; repays 50MK to Rashida @ Mudzi A & 500MK to Kima May 11; repays 100MK to ??? @ Mudzi A & repays 30MK to mother May 12; repays 80MK to ??? @ [nearby village] May 13; repays 30MK to Julia May 14; borrows 20MK to mother May 15 & repays loan for fish 60MK husband of Julia & husband of Jasmine; is repaid 30MK by Victoria for tomatoes May 16 & repays 15MK ??? @ Mudzi A & 10MK to Livia; May 17 gives 30MK worth of tomatoes to ??? @ [other village] & 100MK to husband of Hamra; repays bill at grocery store @ [other village] May 20; repays 50MK to ??? @ Mudzi A & 30MK to Mrs. Tulipesi May 21 & begs to be repaid for 20MK tomatoes; repays 30MK to Hamra & 10MK to grocery husband of Jasmine May 22; May 23 repaid bill @ husband of Jasmine & husband of Julia; is repaid 20MK by Hamra May 25; is repaid 30MK for tomatoes by Kima & 20MK from Rashida & pays back 20MK to Mrs. Tulipesi; May 27 is repaid 20MK by Thokozani @Mudzi A & 15MK by ??? @ Mudzi A; Suset received 8000MK from me May 28, pays back loan of 425 and loans out 120MK to Livia on May 31 (repaid on June 10), and gives 500MK to younger sister to buy soap (but gets 500MK which younger sister had borrowed on June 3...); Sofia loaned out at least 500MK of the 2000MK that I paid on March 16, repaid at March 25 & also was repaid 500MK of the 2000MK I paid on April by Alika.

Also begging food/small amounts of money (eg Venesi ¼ - mother chief Mudzi B begs therere [okhra], 25/4 - leaves from Pamela, 26/4 leaves from Molly, 11/5 - thobwa [maize drink] from Lovely, 21/5 – 200MK to Molly to buy soap, 24/5 - tomatoes from Molly & nkwaní [green leafs] to Jasmine, 25/5 - 10MK from Molly for painkiller, 26/5
- 20MK from Molly to buy ndiwo [relish], 27/5 - paid back loan of 300MK with Grace (after receiving 8000 from me), 1/6 - ?? begged ndiwo, 3/6 - asked to get ndiwo from uncle chief K [other village] garden, 4/6 - taking okra for Grace’s field + 5 tomatoes from Molly, 6/6 - 20MK to begging father, 7/6 - begged Molly to be taking some leaves from field (and bought 10MK tomatoes from Molly), 11/6 - taking leafs from chief K [other village] field, 12/6 - taking potatoes from chief K [other village] field + okra from Dora’s field - 5/3 Teleza begs maize from Chikondi & Tumanene begs maungu [pumpkin] from Chikondi; June 12 Suset begs tomatoes from Teleza and paraffin from other sister “chifukwe ine ndinalibe” [because I don’t have any] (but buys slippers at 120MK at Crossroads market…); March 5 Sofia begs 100MK from g’mother to buy paraffin (buying 50MK paraffin, soap at 25MK and salt 20MK)

gifting of food (eg 2/3 - receives 4 pumpkins, 18/4 potatoes from Pamela, 6/5 - in-law sends leafs, 8/5 - potatoes from Grace, 16/5 - chicken meat from Roda, 22/5 - potatoes from Pamela, 30/5 - guava from ???, 2/6 - nandolo [legumes] from Esnat + small cup of g’nuts from mrs ???, 5/6 - potatoes from ???, 10/6 - giving a few sweets to several fellow mothers)

gifting of money: Chikondi receives money from mother 2/3, mother-in-laws, friend May 24 (25MK “just gave”), grandmother from [other village] 50MK May 26, brother @ Blantyre 500MK. Suset buys airtime 85MK for older sister Teleza “bcoz she has no money” June 4, buys 16MK for g’mother who begged her for it (receiving potatoes, ndiwo [relish], eggs from her to prepare for children).

When Dyson escorted me from Th. Village to one of the women I wanted to interview, we spoke (in ChiChewa) about HIV and AIDS. About condoms he said (what I had earlier read is often said in Malawii): “You don’t eat a sweet in its wrapper either…”

When still living in Lilongwe I used to get up early to have some exercise before going to the office. As I walked my usual route through the neighbourhood, a man once came cycling next to me. To my great surprise he – very seriously – said that he did not yet had a wife and was looking for one, wondering if I’d be interested to marry him!

Teleza: First married a lazy man, didn’t want to work in the field, therefore she decided to leave the marriage. See for further details P3 3898.

Auleria (32, divorced, 3 children, lives with mother): HB worked in town, did not provide enough (while he had a clothes selling BS – usually relatively good income). She decided that it would be better to see how she would manage alone, rather than just staying with a man who does not provide.

Molly: Man came to village staying with relative, saw her and proposed (was first to propose). She explained that she had a baby, he said he could manage to take care. Then she agreed. Was secret from God whether he would be good or not. But was not a good HB: drank beer and beat her. She went to ankhoswe t complain, but still h…

Dyson brought me to a woman in a neighbouring village who made public that she is HIV-positive: she had agreed to be interviewed by me. Was married to a policeman, who died 2 years ago. Then she had herself tested and was found infected too. Has two young sons. Has a large field, but cannot manage to cultivate it all. When husband still lived, they could afford to hire ganyu workers. But not anymore. Moreover, she has not received a coupon for subsidized fertilizer. When the coupons were distributed (too few for all villagers) other villagers argued to the chief that she should not receive a coupon because she would die soon anyway, would not benefit from the fertilizer as much as others would… While she still looks healthy and strong, veclhustig I would say.