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Successful Approaches to Integrating Gender in U.S. Development Assistance:

USAID/Malawi

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GLOSSARY

AFWID	Africa Women in Development Project
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
API	Assessment of Program Impact (reporting document)
ASAP	Agricultural Sector Assistance Program
BASW	Business Advisory Services for Women
CDSS	Country Development Strategy Statement
CPSP	Country Program Strategic Plan
DECIDE	Democratic and Civic Institution Development Project
DEMATT	Development of Malawian Traders Trust
DEVPOL	Development Policy
FA	Field Assistant
FHA	Farm Home Assistant
FINCA	Foundation for International Community Assistance
GABLE	Girls' Attainment in Basic Literacy and Education Program
GENESYS	Gender in Economic and Social Systems Project
GOM	Government of Malawi
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HIV/AIDS	(see HIV and AIDS)
HRID	Human Resources and Institutional Development Project
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDP	Malawi Democratic Party
MIE	Malawi Institute of Education
MNDP	Malawi National Democratic Party
MOA	Ministry of Agriculture
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOWCACCS	Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs and Community Services
NABW	National Association of Business Women
NCWID	National Commission on Women in Development
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPA	Non-Project Assistance
PA	Project Assistance
PAAD	Program Assistance Approval Document
PAIP	Program Assistance Identification Paper
PAMET	Paper Making Educational Trust
PD&S	Program Development and Support
PDO	Project Development Officer
PHICS	Promoting Health Interventions for Child Survival Project
PID	Project Identification Document
PIO/T	Project Implementation Order/Technical
PP	Project Paper

GLOSSARY (Continued)

PPD	Program and Project Development
RFP	Request for Proposals
SHARED	Services for Health, Agriculture, Rural and Enterprise Development Project
SO	Strategic Objective
SOW	Statement of Work (also, Scope of Work)
STAFH	Support to AIDS and Family Health Project
UDF	United Democratic Front
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USAID/Malawi	USAID Field Mission in Malawi
USAID/W	United States Agency for International Development/Washington, D.C.
WID	Women in Development

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

USAID/Malawi has been exemplary in its systematic integration of gender issues into its programs and projects. Due to its success, USAID/Malawi was selected for inclusion in a series of case studies, sponsored by the Office of Women in Development, which document effective approaches to the integration of gender considerations in development programming. These studies aim to provide Missions with examples of useful strategies for strengthening attention to gender, and to inform regional and central bureaus in USAID/Washington about how their guidance and support has affected attention to gender in the field.

The USAID/Malawi case study takes place in a context of transition. Since early 1992, Malawian society has been experiencing major political and economic developments which have contributed to the emergence of a more democratic society after 30 years of autocratic rule. Although significant political advancements are being made, the Malawian economy continues to stagnate. Malawi faces a significant external financing gap, low foreign exchange reserves, and marked increases in inflation. The per capita gross domestic product (GDP) remains among the lowest in the world. In terms of people-level impact, the situation remains alarming. Malawi is constrained by a high population growth rate, the spread of HIV/AIDS, and limited social and education services.

Women in Malawi are particularly disadvantaged compared to men: they have significantly lower levels of literacy, education, political representation, formal and non-traditional employment opportunities, and access to resources to increase agricultural productivity. Recognizing that the exclusion of women and girls from mainstream participation in Malawi's economic and social development is an obstacle to the country's overall development, USAID/Malawi has paid particular attention to the situation of women and girls. The goal is to increase women's access to resources, development opportunities, and avenues of expression to enable women to attain a level of social and economic participation equal to that of men.

The case study focuses on three areas in which USAID/Malawi has achieved particularly significant results: promotion of democracy and governance, educational advancement, and NGO capacity building. Accomplishments in these areas include:

- **Democracy and Governance:** In preparation for the first multi-party elections since independence, the Democratic and Civic Institution Development Project (DECIDE) convened a women's session during an "All Party Conference" in January 1994. This provided the country's first opportunity for female political party representatives to come together across political lines. At the session, the women identified the five most important issues affecting their lives. By the end of the conference, the women secured agreement from all seven political parties to address these issues in the new government. During this period, the Mission also provided support to the National Commission on Women in Development. This support helped ensure that women's rights were enshrined in the new Constitution. Currently in draft form, the new Constitution contains a

separate section for women's rights in the Bill of Rights, and calls for equal representation of men and women in the upper house of the National Assembly.

- **Educational Advancement:** The Girls' Attainment in Basic Literacy and Education Program (GABLE) seeks to increase enrollment, achievement and persistence of girls in primary school -- combining both project and non-project assistance to achieve its objectives. Through non-project assistance conditionality, the Ministry of Education introduced a gender appropriate curriculum and implemented a school fee waiver program for non-repeating girls. Through project assistance, USAID/Malawi provided technical assistance in the development of a gender appropriate curriculum and will fund a nationwide social mobilization campaign to underscore the importance of girls' education. Over 400,000 girls benefitted from the school fee waiver program in the 1992 school year, and girls' enrollment and persistence rates have increased steadily.
- **NGO Development:** The Support for Health, Agriculture, Rural and Enterprise Development Project (SHARED) aims to strengthen the capacity of community-based organizations. To that end, SHARED provides institutional development and program grants to NGOs. SHARED's criteria for evaluating NGO funding requests includes a preference for organizations which seek to increase opportunities for women. As a result, women constitute roughly half of the total participation in these 29 NGOs, and many women have become involved in, and empowered by, NGOs which are assisted by SHARED.

These impressive accomplishments are the result of a systematic effort by USAID/Malawi to address gender issues throughout the design, implementation, and evaluation of its programs and projects -- including the policy dialogue process. Ten factors were identified by the study team as the most significant in USAID/Malawi's achievements in addressing gender issues in development. They are as follows:

- ✓ A highly participatory development approach that promotes extensive collaborative efforts on gender issues with host country counterparts and other donors.
- ✓ Strong receptivity of Malawian women toward USAID/Malawi, enhanced by the gender-balanced work force of the Mission over the past decade.
- ✓ Strong and consistent commitment by Mission management to address gender throughout the portfolio as a regular part of the program/project cycle.
- ✓ A highly qualified and resourceful WID Officer who focuses attention on strategic interventions that have a significant and sustainable impact.
- ✓ Effective use of Non-Project Assistance as a tool to create a positive policy environment that promotes and sustains the consideration of gender issues in development.
- ✓ Effective and consistent use of research to identify effects of policies and programs on both males and females.

- ✓ Use of USAID/W resources to strengthen field activities.
- ✓ Integration of gender considerations into ongoing tasks as a regular part of the program/project cycle.
- ✓ Location of the WID Officer in the Program and Project Development Office (versus a technical office) which affords a comprehensive, cross-cutting view of Mission activities and facilitates identification of key interventions.
- ✓ Development and revision of a practical WID Action Plan to guide the Mission, that actively involves and promotes the participation of WID Committee members and technical staff in its design and implementation.

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

This case study is one of a series examining USAID country programs with successful approaches to the integration of gender issues in development. A gender approach examines how the roles and responsibilities of women and men at household, community, and national levels differentially affect their access to and benefits from development activities, and thus affect development outcomes and sustainability. While a gender approach provides the basis to ensure that women are a part of the development process, the focus is on both men and women in their socio-political and economic context.

Initiated by the Office of Women in Development, Bureau for Global Programs, Field Support and Research, these case studies document a range of successful approaches and trace the driving forces that influenced their effectiveness. The studies also examine the effect that attention to gender issues has on the impact and sustainability of Mission development efforts. Specifically, they aim to:

- provide examples of useful strategies to other Missions for strengthening attention to gender in their own programs;
- inform regional and central bureaus on how their guidance and support has affected attention to gender in the field; and
- enable USAID Management to share these successes with Congress, other donors, and other development practitioners.

Methodology

The Africa Advisor for the Office of Women in Development, USAID/Washington (USAID/W) selected USAID/Malawi based on the high quality of their reporting on gender considerations in various program and project documents. She collaborated with the Mission's WID Officer to select the following programs and projects for review in this case study:

- Girls' Attainment in Basic Literacy and Education Program (GABLE);
- Services for Health, Agriculture, Rural and Enterprise Development Project (SHARED);
- Human Resources and Institutional Development Project (HRID);
- A component of the Agricultural Sector Assistance Program (ASAP); and
- The design and first phase of the Democratic and Civic Institution Development Project (DECIDE).

Field data were collected over a two week period from January 17-29, 1994, by a three person team comprised of two individuals from Development Associates and the Africa Advisor in USAID/W's Office of Women in Development. The team interviewed Mission management, as well as both program and project staff; representatives of counterpart organizations implementing selected projects, including contractor staff and Ministry personnel; the University of Malawi's Coordinator of Women's Programmes; research staff at the Center for Social Research supported under the HRID project; the chairperson and key officers of the National Association of Business Women (NABW), and rural recipients of loans provided through NABW under the SHARED project; staff of the National Commission on Women in Development (NCWID); and teachers at a primary school who received assistance under the GABLE project. Appendix A presents a list of people who provided inputs for the case study. In addition, the case study team assisted in the facilitation of a women's session at the National Democratic Institute's (NDI) "All-Party Conference" sponsored under the DECIDE project. The team also reviewed key program and project documents and other relevant materials.

Organization of Report

The main body of the report is divided into seven sections. The first, "Country Context," gives an overview of Malawi's political and economic situation, its most pressing gender and development issues, and USAID/Malawi's program. This is followed by a description of the Mission's experience considering gender in three program areas. The next two sections focus on the specific details of how the Mission integrates gender considerations at the program level and at key junctures in the program/project cycle. In the following section, factors influencing the consideration of gender in the programming process are described. The final section summarizes the main lessons learned from this case study. The report also includes four boxes that highlight accomplishments of incorporating gender considerations in specific Mission programs/projects.

COUNTRY CONTEXT

Political and Economic Situation

Since early 1992, Malawi has experienced major political and economic developments. On the political front, Malawians began to question the political repression and economic inequalities under the Banda regime, and a rash of political unrest began. In March 1992, the Catholic Bishops issued a pastoral letter which boldly cited the need for improvements in the human rights situation. With support from the church and emerging opposition groups, and facing deteriorating economic conditions, the Malawian people were primed with grievances against the system. A series of strikes and political demonstrations took place in the first half of 1992 that were unprecedented. In May 1992, in response to this situation, donors suspended non-humanitarian aid to Malawi until "a more open and transparent political system was in operation and the deplorable human rights situation improves significantly."

Throughout the summer and fall of 1992, internal and external pressure on the Government of Malawi (GOM) mounted, and President Banda called for a referendum to determine whether the country would remain a one-party state or be replaced by a pluralist system. On June 14, 1993, Malawians voted overwhelmingly (63%) for a multi-party system of democracy in a referendum that was declared by all national and international observers and monitors to have been an accurate reflection of the will of the Malawian people. Hoping to appease the situation, the ruling party reacted quickly by declaring an amnesty which allowed political refugees to return to Malawi and included freeing all remaining political prisoners.

By the end of June, Parliament met and passed legislation recognizing the right of political parties to operate in Malawi -- there are now seven registered political parties. The opposition parties became part of two transitional bodies which paralleled the parliament and the cabinet. A set of legislative and constitutional changes are being drafted which will facilitate a multi-party election, set for May 17, 1994, and protect basic human rights. In general, the human rights climate has improved significantly since the June 1993 Referendum. These improvements have spanned respect for the person, civil liberties, and political rights.

At the same time that political strides are being made, the Malawian economy continues to stagnate. This is due largely to the 1992/93 drought; the perception by the private sector of a potentially risky political transition; a substantial wage increase in both the public and private sectors following labor unrest; and the impact of donors withholding balance of payments support. One of the most serious outcomes is the severe decline in the country's foreign exchange reserves to less than one month's import requirements during most of FY 1993. As a result, Malawi's per capita gross domestic product (GDP) remained among the lowest in the world, despite the currently projected increase for 1993. Malawi continues to face a significant external financing gap, low foreign exchange reserves, and marked increases in inflation.

In terms of people-level impact, the situation remains alarming. Along with one of the lowest per capita GDPs in the world, infant and child mortality rates are among the highest; the population growth rate is among the highest; per capita food production and consumption are falling, resulting in widespread malnutrition; a declining proportion of primary school age children are enrolled in school; and there are insufficient job opportunities for the increasing number of rural Malawians who cannot be productively employed on their shrinking farm plots. In addition, AIDS is rapidly becoming a leading cause of death for children under five years of age -- as it has already become for young adults, with nearly 13% of the adult population HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) positive.

The relationship between a closed political system and poor development performance has been particularly apparent in Malawi. The repressive political environment of the 1980s encouraged fear among the citizenry, entrepreneurial spirit died, and people in the countryside did not want to "stand out" by doing well economically. Poverty became a cloak of anonymity. Inversely, the wealth and economic assets remained in the hands of three or four large companies, thereby further reducing participation and competitiveness. As the political

liberalization occurs, the trend is being reversed and both men and women are feeling more confident about speaking out.

Gender Issues

Women make up more than 52% of the country's total population. However, national statistics demonstrate that women are disadvantaged compared with men in virtually every social and economic sector. Women have significantly lower levels of literacy, education, political representation, formal and non-traditional employment opportunities, and access to resources to increase agricultural productivity. Female headed households represent approximately 30% of the population, but are disproportionately represented in the bottom 25% of the income distribution. In a country where 85% of the total population is rural, 70% of the rural female population are full-time farmers. Studies have shown that women typically work more hours than men to complete the same farm tasks because they rarely have the improved tools and equipment used by men. Furthermore, women have limited access to agricultural extension services, training, and credit.

Although formal sector employment in Malawi is limited, women's participation in this sector is particularly constrained. Women work primarily in a narrow range of occupations such as nursing, teaching, sales and secretarial positions. Overall, women make up less than 5% of the administrative and managerial cadres. In 1994, only 190 Ministry of Agriculture extension workers were female, compared to 2,000 male extension workers. Similarly, only 9 women occupied middle management/decision making posts, representing 1% of the total women in the Ministry. In the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs and Community Services (MOWCACs), 175 of the total 800 Community Development and Social Welfare Assistants were female in 1994.

With regard to education, women and girls face a number of economic and social constraints which hamper their educational attainment. Only 9% of females have more than four years of schooling. Female literacy is approximately 35%, while male literacy is estimated at 60% for the 15-45 age group. Girls typically drop out of school more frequently than boys, so that in the last year of primary school, only 25% of all students are girls. While significant gains have been realized in girls' education in the past few years, large gaps remain between girls' and boys' enrollment, persistence, and achievement. In 1992/93, for example, 73% of boys passed the Primary School Leaving Examination compared to 56% of girls.

In the political arena, there are only two women in Cabinet positions, and only 5% of the members of Local Councils are women. The recent transition to a multi-party system, however, may provide new opportunities for women to increase their political voice.

Malawi's women also face significant health challenges. Most notably, Malawi has among the highest fertility and maternal mortality rates in Africa. A Malawian woman of reproductive age averages 6.7 births, yet only 7% use modern contraceptive methods. AIDS has also become a significant threat, and females in the 20-24 age bracket are almost twice as likely to be HIV

positive than men of this age group. Further, data from a 1993 study conducted on the economic impact of malaria, found that the incidence of malaria may be significantly higher among adult women than among men.

USAID/Malawi Program

The USAID/Malawi program addresses key constraints to the country's development and supports the transition to democracy. The goal of the Mission's strategy is to enhance the economic well being of the average Malawian household. This goal is supported by four strategic objectives:

- Increase Food Crop Productivity and Production
- Reduce Fertility
- Reduce Infant and Child Mortality and Morbidity
- Control the Spread of AIDS

To achieve this agenda, USAID/Malawi implements activities in agriculture, health and population, primary education with a focus on girls' education, non-governmental organization (NGO) development, and democracy-building. The Mission also implements a portfolio of regional transportation and drought rehabilitation activities. Mission efforts not only affect national policies, but strengthen policy-making bodies, and provide support and training to policy-makers and advocates. At the same time, Mission activities strengthen host country institutions and organizations, both inside and outside of the government, which improve and expand the human resource base necessary to advance the social, economic and political development of the country. Recognizing that the exclusion of women and girls from mainstream participation in Malawi's economic and social development is an obstacle to the country's overall development, USAID/Malawi has paid particular attention to the situation of women and girls. The intent is to increase women's access to resources, development opportunities, and avenues of expression to enable women to participate in Malawi's social and economic development on a level equal to that of men.

ACTIVITIES, ACHIEVEMENTS AND IMPACTS

USAID/Malawi addresses gender concerns through a multi-faceted approach that weaves gender considerations throughout the Mission's portfolio. Rather than solely focusing on improving the conditions of female beneficiaries in individual programs and projects, the Mission works to ensure that improved conditions and opportunities for women and girls become an integral and permanent part of Malawian society overall. To illustrate how this approach has been translated into specific activities, the Mission's experience in three program areas is

outlined below, including democracy and governance, education, and NGO capacity building.

Fostering Participation in the Democratic Process ✍

Women comprise a majority of the population in almost every age category in Malawi, but they have lacked equality with men in decision-making processes and in access to resources. However, the transition from a single to multi-party system has provided a major opportunity to create forums for women's participation. Recognizing this potential, women's organizations, the National Commission on Women in Development, and USAID worked together to lay the groundwork for women's involvement in politics that could have significant and long lasting effects.

- The Mission's core project to support democracy is the Democratic and Civic Institution Development (DECIDE) Project, which is being implemented, in part, by the National Democratic Institute (NDI). At the NDI-sponsored All Party Conference (see Box 1), a separate women's session was organized which brought women together from all political parties. The women identified the five most important issues in their lives and secured agreement from all seven political parties to address these issues in the new government.
- The drafting of a new constitution is a once in a lifetime opportunity to ensure that women have equal rights and protections under the law. The Mission helped set the tone to ensure that women's rights are included in the new Constitution by providing support for the publication of a book entitled Women and the Law in Malawi. This book, prepared by the National Commission on Women in Development (NCWID), outlines the laws which affect women in Malawi and recommends reforms to those laws which appear to be discriminatory against them. It also recommends strengthening those laws which protect women's rights.

The book was particularly useful to the Chairperson of the NCWID when she drafted a paper on women's rights for the Constitutional Conference held to solicit views on the content of the new Constitution. The WID Officer worked closely with the NCWID Chairperson as she developed her recommendations and helped facilitate her presentation to the Constitutional Conference. Most notably, the paper recommended that the new Constitution include a separate section for women's rights in the Bill of Rights. The first draft of the constitution did a commendable job of incorporating women's rights, but many thought it could be strengthened. In response, the WID Officer helped mobilize the various women's organizations to alert them to the situation. They, in turn, registered their recommendations with the press and the political parties. As a result, the most recent version of the Constitution includes a separate section for women's rights in the Bill of Rights which bans discrimination based on gender, and calls for equal representation of men and women in the upper house of the National Assembly.

- Through work with the NCWID, the Mission has encouraged the introduction of gender considerations throughout the national government. With Mission financial support, the NCWID drafted a national strategy and planning document on women's issues; trained desk officers from Ministries and NGOs about the document; assisted those desk officers in drafting individual action plans in line with the national strategy and planning document; and encouraged policy-makers from these same institutions to endorse the national plan. These efforts resulted in the incorporation of the NCWID's national strategy into the official development policy for Malawi (DEVPOL). Active collaboration with the NCWID benefitted the Mission by increasing Mission staff's understanding of the needs and priorities of Malawian women, and by providing a plan the Mission could support on an on-going basis -- as needed.

Although the Constitution is not yet finalized, evidence strongly suggests that the Mission's recognition of the opportunities available during the transition period, and their quick action to seize this window of opportunity, could result in significant positive impacts on women in the new multi-party Malawi.

Educational Advancement

Education was identified by many interviewed for this case study as the single most important vehicle for improving women's lives. This view is corroborated by research which shows a strong link between investments in the education of females and improved agricultural productivity, better health and nutritional status, and reduced fertility rates. Lack of education has constrained women's participation in Malawian society, limiting their roles in government, and preventing them from asserting their rights and opportunities.

USAID/Malawi has used resources strategically and creatively to enhance the educational status of girls and women. In particular, the Mission has:

- coordinated project assistance, non-project assistance, and policy dialogue within a single program; and
- combined resources from within and across multiple projects to achieve the Mission's educational goals for girls and women.

The Girls' Attainment in Basic Literacy and Education Program (GABLE) is USAID/Malawi's key initiative in primary education and supports the achievement of other Mission objectives as well. When asked what propelled the Mission to focus on girls' education under the GABLE Program, the previous Mission Director reflected, "As I recall, [the GOM] put the very low enrollment rates of girls in front of us, raising it as a major development issue. In preparing our multi-year strategy, we decided to do GABLE not necessarily for education reasons per se or even equity reasons, but because girls' education would be critical to achieving any of our other strategic objectives. This was most clear with regard to our population/fertility reduction objective, but also to agricultural productivity, off-farm employment, and improving the health of children. I think that our success in demonstrating the importance of gender issues to the overall Mission strategy was in fact key to the Mission's success

GABLE utilizes a combination of project and non-project assistance to increase enrollment, achievement, and persistence of girls in primary school. Through project assistance, GABLE supported the creation of a Gender Appropriate Curriculum Unit in the Malawi Institute of Education (MIE). The Ministry Of Education set up the office and hired a Gender Lecturer, whose scope of work includes gender-sensitive teacher training and curriculum reform, as well as gender considerations in policy reform. The Gender Lecturer has trained curriculum writers who are now producing textbooks with positive messages about girls' and women's roles in society and school. She has completed supplemental flip charts that accent gender issues for standards (grades) 1 and 2, where textbooks were developed earlier without a concern for gender considerations. New textbooks for standards 3 and 4 have also been gender sensitized, while those for standards 5-8 are underway.

Portraying women as household decision-makers and professionals in schoolbooks helps to keep girls in school by building public understanding of the positive benefits and impacts of educating girls. Until now, many parents and students have doubted the benefits of girls' education because they rarely see educated female professionals, leaders, mothers, or other role

models, either in school books or in society. GABLE sends the message that the government considers girls' education to be important. To further underscore that message, the University of Malawi, with GABLE-supported project assistance, will launch a social mobilization campaign for pupils, parents and communities which reinforces the value of girls' education.

Other results of the Gender Lecturer's work include:

- MIE professionals are designing and implementing a gender planning workshop for Teacher Training College staff to revise the teacher curriculum to include content and classroom management techniques that are gender-sensitive;
- Teachers are more aware of gender issues in their classrooms and describing their use of techniques to promote participation of girls;
- Materials developers are considering gender issues when designing science and math materials at the secondary level under a German development project; and
- A task force on girls' education, led by the Gender Lecturer, lobbied the MOE to issue a new policy that allows a pregnant girl to return to school after having one child. This is particularly significant for girls' education. In the past, government policy required the permanent expulsion of pregnant girls, and pregnancy was one of the leading causes of the high dropout rate for girls. Task force efforts on girls' education also led to other policy changes which support girls' persistence, such as the elimination of the uniform requirement.

With non-project assistance, GABLE ensures that gender specific "conditions" create a supportive policy environment within which its programs/projects can be sustained. GABLE has also used non-project assistance to enhance its overall impact and increase sustainability. As the Mission Director noted: "Non-Project Assistance serves two important purposes: it establishes policy conditions for institutional reforms which are essential for Mission support to be successful and sustainable, and NPA is the major mode of USAID assistance that puts implementation into the hands of Malawians." Thus, NPA promotes ownership of development activities which enhances sustainability and active host country participation.

To encourage parents to persist in sending girls to primary school, GABLE's NPA conditionality included a school fee waiver for non-repeating girls. Families responded favorably, and the enrollment of girls has risen dramatically. During the 1992 school year, over 400,000 girls benefitted from the school fee waivers. Successful implementation of this gender aware strategy has produced wider benefits: school fee waivers for non-repeating girls in standards (grades) 2-8 under GABLE has contributed to increased enrollment of girls in all standards, from 1-8.

Annual school fees are minor when compared to other costs of sending children to school, such as clothing, school supplies and the loss of labor at home. With the introduction of multi-party politics, several political parties are suggesting that school fees be eliminated for both boys and girls at the primary level. If school fees are eliminated, there may no longer be a special

incentive for parents to send their girls to school. In anticipation of this event, the Mission is discussing the scope of an analysis which could determine whether other special incentives are still needed, such as offering free school materials and supplies to non-repeating girls.

USAID/Malawi will be developing an amendment this year to GABLE, and as such, it will continue to identify appropriate gender-specific policy level NPA actions for the amendment. For instance, a new position called "Assistant Regional Educational Officer for Girls' Education" (AREO) was created by the Ministry of Education, reflecting increased concern about girls' education. Unlike its title, however, its scope of work is limited to the traditional area for women of home economics. The Mission is considering making an adjustment in the AREO's scope of work as a condition for the release of new funds.

While the Mission has effectively used NPA to create a positive policy environment for girls' education, other policy decisions made by the MOE, and encouraged by GABLE, benefit both boys and girls. These include increasing the national budget allocation to education, especially primary education; making better use of Teacher Training Colleges so that more teachers are trained; providing learning materials at lower costs using competitive procurement procedures; and building more classrooms and teacher housing to reduce the critical shortage of both. Thus GABLE's effort to increase girls' educational opportunities is part of an education program that improves Malawi's primary education system overall.

Box 2

The Girls' Attainment in Basic Literacy and Education (GABLE) Program

GABLE seeks to increase enrollment, achievement and persistence of girls in primary school. This is accomplished through a combination of Project and Non-Project Assistance (NPA). Through NPA, the Ministry of Education has implementation responsibility to finance a school fee waiver program for non-repeating girls, introduce a gender appropriate curriculum, and establish a nationwide social mobilization campaign to underscore the importance of girls' education among pupils, parents, and communities. USAID/Malawi has provided project assistance to the Malawi Institute of Education (MIE) for the development of a gender appropriate curriculum, and to the University of Malawi to initiate a social mobilization campaign.

The GABLE-funded Gender Lecturer at the Gender Appropriate Curriculum Unit in the MIE is a catalyst for incorporating gender sensitivity and balance into the development of new curricula for primary schools, teacher colleges, and in-service teacher training. She works directly with curriculum design teams to sensitize them to features of texts that reinforce girls' inferior position. One analysis of an old text indicated that boys appeared or were referred to 139 times, while girls appeared or were referred to only 17. Girls are depicted as weak and passive rather than in active, positive roles.

In classrooms, as well as texts, gender sensitivity begins with consciousness raising. Teachers inadvertently belittle girls with phrases such as "Come on Thomas, you can't let a girl do better than you." The Lecturer described a scene which occurred during a school visit. Students were reading their work aloud, and a female student read an essay on the topic of boys discrediting girls in class. The teacher was about to go on to the next essay, when the Lecturer asked the students to discuss the issues raised in the essay. Several boys protested, "It's not true what she says ... she doesn't know anything ... girls always lie." An insightful boy then said, "Hey, wait a minute, we're doing what she says right now!"

During a visit to Mpingu primary school, teachers were asked about how girls and boys are presented in the new teachers' guides and books. One teacher said, "there are pictures of girls now," while another said, "in the old books the boys are pictured doing things and the girls are doing hardly anything at all." A standard (grade) two teacher noticed that in his new teachers' guide "boys and girls are doing the same thing."

Interviews with teachers also revealed that they use a variety of methods to encourage girls' participation, i.e., mixed seating for boys and girls, increasing the proportion of times they call on girls, and providing positive feedback to girls who answer questions to motivate other girls. The teachers realized that their own attitudes and expectations can have a significant impact, and they have adjusted their teaching methods accordingly.

The teachers at Mpingu school have noticed the increase in girls' enrollment over the last two years, and emphasized that their efforts at gender balancing work much better now that there are more girls in the classroom. In the 1992 school year, over 400,000 girls benefitted from GABLE school fee waivers - - positively impacting the lives of thousands of girls, parents and communities throughout Malawi.

The Human Resources and Institutional Development project (HRID), another educational project in the Mission's portfolio, is aimed at improving the human resource base through advanced training and upgrading the depth and scope of Malawian educational and training institutions. HRID explicitly recognizes that the country can make better progress if all of its human resources are enriched. Furthermore, HRID recognizes the practicality of being able to fill resource needs more quickly and efficiently by educating both men and women. Because women have had few opportunities for advanced training, increasing their participation is one of HRID's key objectives. This objective is addressed primarily through the University of Malawi using a variety of strategies: 1) establishing a Coordinator for Women's Programmes, 2) implementing a women's scholarship program, 3) implementing a Master's degree program in sociology, specializing in women in development, and 4) funding two Research Fellows who specialize in research on women's issues.

The Coordinator of Women's Programmes at the University of Malawi provides educational counseling to female secondary students. She encourages female students to take courses that will provide them with practical skills they can use to earn an income, especially in non-traditional fields. She also provides career counseling to female scholarship recipients at the University and promotes the hiring of women graduates. Under HRID, the Mission took the initiative to establish this position, financing the office, car, and the first year of salary. In the second year, the University took over the responsibility for the salary position and upgraded it. The University hired a respected female professional in the field of chemistry who obtained her degree in the U.S. through the support of a USAID/Malawi scholarship. The job incumbent is considered a highly effective and positive role model for girls considering non-traditional careers.

The HRID women's scholarship program is carried out jointly with the University, which is responsible for selecting and monitoring recipients. These scholarships have been offered since 1987, and there are currently 75 annual scholarships awarded to women accepted into undergraduate programs in non-traditional fields. Benefits of the education provided with these scholarships are increased by the Coordinator of Women's Programmes' efforts to place these graduates in appropriate jobs where they can make a concrete and ongoing impact.

With HRID support, Chancellor College, one of five constituent colleges of the University of Malawi, instituted a Master's degree program in sociology, concentrating on women in development. To date, eight of the 12 participants in the program have been funded through USAID/Malawi. This program has created, and will continue to create, a pool of Malawians who are well versed in gender issues. As one student said, "Most writing done on WID in Africa is done by people from other places in the world. It's important to have people from this country doing this work." The Malawian woman who directs this program received her master's degree in Sociology through an HRID scholarship to the U.S. She returned to Chancellor College to direct what was then the only master's degree program. Recently, another master's degree program in Economics was established and the lecturer of that program is also a Malawian woman who received her master's degree through an HRID scholarship in the U.S. as well. These women provide powerful role models to the students at Chancellor College, demonstrating that women can be effective leaders. HRID also funded two Research Fellows

at the Center for Social Research in Chancellor College. These Research Fellows conduct studies on women's issues pertaining to health and education, resulting in a wealth of Malawi-specific research on women which has informed the University's and the Mission's ongoing work in these sectors.

The HRID project and the GABLE program illustrate the benefits obtained from combining resources across projects. For example, the studies conducted by HRID-funded Research Fellows on girls' achievement at the secondary level are being used in the analysis for the GABLE Amendment -- which will provide continued support for girls' education at the primary level. In a wider arena, HRID-funded scholarships can increase the number of female agronomists and agricultural extension workers, and enhance the participation of women burley growers in USAID/Malawi's Agriculture Sector Assistance Program (ASAP).

Other benefits have accrued to educational development from the collaborative relationships that have developed among GABLE and HRID participants. When the GABLE Gender Lecturer established a task force on girls' education, she recruited the Coordinator of Women's Programmes at the University of Malawi and the Education Research Fellow at the Center for Social Research (both funded under HRID) to be members. Furthermore, when the GABLE Coordinator of the Social Mobilization Campaign developed a baseline study of knowledge, attitudes, and practices in this area, she recruited the same HRID resource persons to collaborate with her.

These examples demonstrate USAID/Malawi's skillful use of resources. GABLE provides basic education, while HRID works at the level of higher education to increase employment opportunities. GABLE gets girls in school, while HRID provides incentives and role models which encourage girls to stay there. The success of GABLE and HRID in getting and keeping more girls in school, and in correcting the gender imbalance, is reflected in the 1992/93 primary school statistics which show a steady increase in girls' enrollment and persistence at the primary level. In that year, the primary net enrollment rates indicated that girls outnumbered boys for the first time ever. Also, due to the HRID scholarship fund, the percentage of women in three of the four constituent colleges (excluding the College of Nursing, which is mostly women) increased from 18% in 1987 to 26% in 1993. Through the Mission's comprehensive approach, benefits are multiplied and chances for sustainability and long term impact are substantial.

It should be noted that the gross enrollment rates still indicate that boys outnumber girls at every level of primary and secondary school, even though there are more girls than boys at every age bracket except 0-4. Further, only 1% of female pupils from the original primary cohort currently enter at the university level. However, through the Mission's continued efforts, a critical mass of educated girls and women is being formed, many of whom will serve as future role models and advocates for women's rights and opportunities. Younger sisters of girls who are in school now, and daughters of women who are in the university, will be influenced to pursue higher education. Further, the positive results of educating females at all levels will encourage continued efforts by parents, teachers, policy-makers, and employers to promote girls' and women's education.

NGO Capacity Building

In a different kind of effort, Mission support is helping to extend the impact of national development and economic growth to more people in a more equitable way. The benefits resulting from changes in macroeconomic policies in the 1980s are not yet equitably shared by the population, and vulnerable groups such as women and the rural poor, may even suffer adverse impacts from these policies. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) represent a potentially important vehicle through which useful services can be provided to marginalized sectors. Historically, the number of NGOs in Malawi has been very small and they have been only peripherally involved in development. However, as the national context is changing quickly, the potential value of NGOs is being increasingly recognized.

USAID/Malawi's Services for Health, Agriculture, Rural and Enterprise Development project (SHARED) aims to expand and increase the impact of national development by strengthening the capacity of community-based organizations. SHARED provides one year Institutional Support Grants to new organizations, and Development Activities Grants to established organizations, for implementation efforts. SHARED currently grants technical and financial support to 29 NGOs, including producers' organizations, production cooperatives, and educational institutions working in the areas of agriculture, off-farm employment and health.

Recognizing the importance of increasing opportunities for women, SHARED has provided several incentives for organizations to promote women's participation, beginning with the criteria for evaluating NGO grant proposals. Guidelines in the SHARED Operational Manual for NGOs requesting grant assistance specify that:

- women should be targeted as ultimate beneficiaries of NGO activities to the extent possible;
- priority consideration will be given to NGO proposals that target women, including female-headed households, as beneficiaries and participants in the design and implementation activities; and
- proposals must indicate how they will collect and use gender-disaggregated data for monitoring, evaluating and reporting on subgrant progress and impact.

SHARED also requires reports of sub-grantees to gender disaggregate data on project outputs including number of beneficiaries, technologies adopted and used, and successful community projects. The explicit gender statements in implementation documents underscore the importance and relevance of gender and increase the odds that gender will be taken into account on a continuing basis. As a result, approximately 50% of participants in SHARED-funded projects are female.

With its funding, SHARED enables grassroots and women's groups to gain experience and expertise in planning, administration, and program monitoring skills they have to date lacked opportunities to obtain. SHARED's support also increases individual skills that contribute to

women's economic advancement. For example, SHARED provides funding to the National Association of Business Women (NABW) (see Box 4). NABW offers technical assistance and training which will enable participants to expand and improve their businesses. Among NABW affiliates, there are different levels of financial experience. Some groups of women are simply using loans to maintain their activities, while others are investing in technical improvements or using the money to diversify activities or lower costs through wholesale buying. Those women who use their loans to improve their businesses are becoming more self-sufficient, and may create new jobs for others by expanding their businesses.

NABW's training for women entrepreneurs is provided through collaboration with several organizations, including the Development of Malawian Traders Trust (DEMATT), which has expanded its program over the past decade with support from USAID/Malawi. For several years, NABW has contracted DEMATT's Business Advisory Services for Women (BASW) to conduct training programs for women to develop skills in market research, business planning, project cost estimates, and bookkeeping. One of BASW's major challenges has been developing training and management systems for clients who have very low levels of literacy and numeracy.

As with its education portfolio, USAID/Malawi has drawn resources from within and across projects to advance gender objectives for NGO development. Promotion of linkages between NABW and DEMATT is one example. Another example is when the Chairperson of NABW wanted to visit the United States to develop export possibilities for NABW's handicrafts, the WID Officer arranged financing for her trip under another project (HRDA) which was appropriate for this type of request. As a result of the trip, the first consignment of handicrafts has been sent to the U.S. Should sales go well, the Chairperson proposes that NABW buy handicrafts in Malawi and export them on a regular basis to the U.S. These exports will provide incomes to handicraft producers, most of whom are women. It will also generate income for NABW, making it a more self-reliant and sustainable organization. Sustainability is one of SHARED's targets for their sub-grantees and, as a result of this HRID funded trip, NABW may be in a better position to meet this target.

In their shift from a traditional charity orientation, common among many organizations which have women beneficiaries, NABW, DEMATT, and other organizations are fostering economic empowerment of women that leads to material benefits and other important impacts. The Chairperson of NABW stated that the most effective way of improving women's position in society, including women's status, rights, decision-making, and political power, is to provide women with opportunities to make money. She explained that many NABW members who have established small businesses report that their husbands treat them better because they know that a woman who is financially independent can leave if she is not being treated well. "The money has provided power and leverage and is reducing violence since women can say they will leave." The Chairperson believes that financial empowerment brings empowerment at all levels. She stated that her members have realized, "... you can change your life. You don't have to be the fourth wife and have your husband take your money. You are a human being too."

Box 3

The National Association of Business Women (NABW)

NABW began several years ago as a group of female entrepreneurs who joined together to learn from one another, to obtain technical training and advice, and to plot their own business development. NABW waited a year and a half for GOM approval to become an officially registered NGO. Once registered, NABW sought assistance from USAID/Malawi's private enterprise project and immediately tackled the task of establishing clear objectives and developing a strategic plan. They then received an institutional support grant from the Mission's Services for Health, Agriculture, Rural and Enterprise Development (SHARED) project, which helped establish a stable institutional structure.

NABW provides loans to small groups of women ranging in value from MK 100 to 3,000 (\$23 to \$680) with payment periods from three months to one year. The majority of NABW micro loans are for local market ventures, including sales of items such as raw produce, prepared food, used clothing, and tailoring services.

Although SHARED required compliance with high institutional standards, it encouraged NABW to maintain their individual identity and autonomy as a grassroots group. NABW uses the same approach in its own program. Small groups of women who want to receive a loan from NABW must first participate in meetings for several months, go through one to two week training, and develop a business plan. These activities foster solidarity among NABW members and give them a sense of empowerment through working together to overcome constraints and build new opportunities.

The study team visited half a dozen NABW groups in the Zomba District, where there are 20 affiliated groups, each having between 4 and 20 members. In a fishing village near Lake Chilwa, the team spoke with six women who have been buying fish, smoking them over a rustic hearth, and selling them for a small profit. The group received training from a Malawian organization which provides business and technical advisory services, and is now using a MK 2,000 (\$454) loan from NABW to build four brick kilns -- which will enable them to smoke more fish with less fuelwood and less labor, and produce better quality smoked fish. By investing their loan money to expand and improve their business, it is hoped that the cycle of poverty will be broken.

This group's impressive strategy also includes looking ahead to challenges in supply and marketing. They identified gender-linked discrimination in the fresh fish market as one of their major constraints. The fishermen selling fish at the lake generally favor sales to other men, making the women wait in line and forcing them to buy small quantities of "leftovers" at higher prices. Once the new three-racked kilns are functioning, the group will have the capacity to smoke greater quantities of fish on a more regular basis. It is expected that their larger purchasing capacity will put these women in a position to become more favored buyers among the fishermen.

NABW's strategy of women learning from each other, seeking out training, and strategically planning for the future is evident throughout the organization, from the Chairperson to the smallest microentrepreneur. NABW members share a philosophical commitment to advancing the cause of women, as well as a practical approach to success -- that is reflected in a loan repayment rate of 80%.

INTEGRATING GENDER AT THE MISSION PROGRAM LEVEL

This section focuses on two program design and reporting mechanisms that illustrate how gender issues influence and are addressed in the Mission program. They consist of the FY 90-95 five year strategic plan called the "Country Development Strategy Statement" (CDSS), and the annual progress report known as the "Assessment of Program Impact" (API) document.

The Five Year Strategic Plan

The current program strategy document for the Mission is the Country Development Strategy Statement (CDSS), which was prepared in 1989. At that time, Malawi's economy was strong and growing, the weather had been reasonable for several years, and the government (although single party) was viewed as stable and supportive of economic reform, private sector growth, and the West. In support of the goal to enhance the economic well-being of the average Malawian household, the Mission identified five Strategic Objectives (Sos):

- SO 1. Increase food crop productivity and production*
- SO 2. Increase off-farm employment*
- SO 3. Reduce fertility*
- SO 4. Reduce infant and child mortality and morbidity*
- SO 5. Control the spread of AIDS*

The CDSS was developed based on a series of background studies undertaken for the Mission, including two focused on opportunities and constraints that women face in: 1) agriculture and 2) off-farm employment. Per USAID/W guidance, a WID Action Plan was developed in tandem with the CDSS. The information on women from the background studies was integrated throughout the body of the CDSS, and specifically incorporated into the WID Action Plan. The end result was a CDSS well-complemented by a WID Action Plan -- both which were praised by the Africa Bureau's WID Working Group.

Since then, the Mission has submitted two interim strategy papers to USAID/W -- one in FY 93 and another in FY 94 -- to serve as a bridge between the Mission's 1989 strategy and the new Country Program Strategic Plan (CPSP), which will be submitted during FY 95. The interim strategies were developed in response to major political and economic changes that occurred in 1992 and continued in 1993. These papers dealt with proposed levels of funding tied to progress made toward democratization. In the March 1993 paper, the Mission eliminated SO 2, primarily because of reduced funding for off-farm employment activities.

Thus, the current Mission program concentrates on agriculture (SO 1), primarily through its Agricultural Sector Assistance Program (ASAP); on health (Sos 4 and 5) primarily through its Support to AIDS and Family Health project (STAFH) and its Promoting Health Interventions for Child Survival project (PHICS); and on population (SO 3) through both the STAFH project and the Girls' Attainment in Basic Literacy and Education Program (GABLE). The Mission recognizes that both education and NGO development advance the achievement of all of these SOs. As noted earlier, the key initiatives in the educational area are the GABLE program and

the Human Resources and Institutional Development project (HRID); and NGO development is promoted through the Services for Health, Agriculture, Rural and Enterprise Development project (SHARED). Finally, to support Malawi's transition toward democracy, the Mission added the Democratic and Civic Institution Development project (DECIDE) to its portfolio in late FY 93.

The Mission is beginning to develop its new Country Program Strategic Plan (CPSP) for the period FY 95-99. Working toward the long term goal of improving the conditions of women, the incorporation of gender considerations into this new strategic plan for the Mission will accomplish two parallel objectives. First, it will identify opportunities for women in the development process that will contribute to the ability of the Mission to attain its development objectives. Second, it will identify targets and indicators to measure the Mission's impact relative to the improvement of women's lives.

To facilitate inclusion of gender issues into the CPSP, the WID Officer will use Project Development & Support (PD&S) funds, already earmarked, for a WID consultant to contribute to the strategic design. Also, although not required by USAID/W guidance, a WID Action Plan will be attached to the CPSP. Members of the WID Committee will work with the WID Officer in developing the plan. In addition, women will be included in sector advisory groups organized to inform the strategic planning process. Commenting on women's involvement in planning for the CPSP, the Mission's Program Officer stated, "Women are so central to our program, that even if we purposely tried to exclude them they would have an impact."

Assessment of Program Impact (API) and the Role of Monitoring and Evaluation

The Office of Women in Development's Africa Advisor conducted a comprehensive review the 20 API documents submitted for FY93 by USAID's Missions in Africa. USAID/Malawi's API was found to be one of the five best in terms of reporting on gender issues at the program level. This distinction was mostly achieved through an Annex to the API that describes how gender has been incorporated into each of the Mission's Strategic Objectives (SOS). While the Mission did not include gender-disaggregated indicators for all of their program activities, important qualitative information on gender considerations relating to each activity was provided. In addition to documenting direct program and project impacts, the report documented gender-based linkages and impacts between objectives -- such as increases in girls' and women's literacy and decreased fertility rates. This understanding of the importance of gender consideration in development planning, both in terms of the final outcome of positive people-level impacts, as well as overall program success, was reflected in the Mission's API.

In USAID/Malawi, the development of the API is the primary responsibility of the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Advisor, located in the Program and Project Development (PPD) Office. In carrying out this assignment she is responsible for developing, refining and maintaining the Mission-wide monitoring and evaluation system that is used to contribute to the API. In order to provide a context for interpreting Mission performance, data is collected on

a broad range of variables, sometimes across sectors. For example, the number of females who are functionally literate is collected as an indicator that affects the health sector; and the share of female smallholders growing burley provides information about women's cash crop -- income which is often used to improve the health of their families.

The M&E Advisor is currently helping the Ministry of Education (MOE) to revise the set of indicators for primary education. The MOE is considering a variety of gender-disaggregated variables in their monitoring and evaluation system including gross and net enrollment ratios by gender and district; gross and net admission rates by gender and district; primary school and standard (grade) specific repetition rates by gender and district; and primary school and standard (grade) specific dropout rates by gender and district.

The M&E Advisor also works closely with the Ministries of Agriculture, Health and Education to improve their monitoring and evaluation systems, in general. Some of the data collected in the GOM systems become inputs for the Mission's program assessment and reporting in the API. By virtue of the fact that the M&E Advisor works with the Ministries which implement Mission programs and projects, USAID is assured of an accessible channel for obtaining the most current data available and vice versa.

It is evident from the work described above that it is crucial for the M&E Advisor to be aware of gender issues. If data are not gender-disaggregated, reporting on the status of women will be limited. To this end, the WID Officer works closely with the Mission M&E Advisor as indicators are developed. She also ensures that the M&E Advisor is aware of the work of short-term consultants who may be conducting research on relevant gender considerations, so that their findings are incorporated into the monitoring and evaluation system.

INTEGRATING GENDER IN THE PROGRAM/PROJECT CYCLE

In USAID/Malawi, gender issues are considered at each of the three major stages of the program/project cycle: design, implementation, and evaluation. The WID Officer coordinates this process. The following subsections document how she and other Mission staff have successfully integrated gender considerations at each of the three program/project stages.

Design Stage

Within the Mission, programs/projects are designed by an in-house committee that includes staff from PPD and the relevant technical office, as well as assistance from an external analysis team. Gender analysis is used at the design stage to identify differences in constraints and opportunities for men and women. Findings are then incorporated into the program or project design, not only to ensure that the project/program starts off on a sound analytical footing, but also because it is more difficult to add gender components to ongoing activities that may have overlooked the consideration of gender issues in the initial stages.

The design of the DECIDE project illustrates this process. DECIDE's approach to addressing gender issues is reflected in a statement from the Project Identification Document (PID), "In social and political terms, there is no democracy unless access and opportunity are equal across genders." Gender issues were incorporated by the WID Officer into the PID's Social Soundness section, and then into the Project Paper (PP). For example, in the project description of civic institution development, a key project component, the criteria for selecting civic institutions to be supported through DECIDE included gender representation and equality of benefits for men and women.

The WID Officer uses other strategies to ensure gender is considered in project/program design. A few examples follow:

- When external teams are involved in preparing analyses for program or project design, relevant gender issues are identified in their Statements of Work (SOWs). Issues to be addressed in the analysis are identified by the WID Officer or by members from the WID Committee. Given scarce resources, the WID Officer noted that it is more important to have a gender knowledgeable person assisting the preparation of the Project Paper (PP) or the Program Assistance Approval Document (PAAD) than earlier documents (e.g., the Project Identification Document (PID) or the Program Assistance Identification Paper (PAIP)) -- since the former documents describe planned activities in more depth.
- The WID Officer works with colleagues to ensure that gender issues are addressed in terms of their economic implications in the main body of a program or project document, as well as described in the Social Soundness section -- where the discussion of gender is typically (and sometimes solely) found. Analysis of the important linkages between social and economic impacts of gender analysis can strengthen the case for gender issues, while increasing the effectiveness of the development effort overall.
- The Mission uses research to strengthen a project or program, especially in sectors where women predominate, such as subsistence agriculture. Research is used to identify key constraints in the sector and then specific objectives are developed to address women's issues within the sector. For example, ASAP was intended to address food security objectives. The design team recognized that women are the main food producers in Malawi. Instead of responding to this information with a project focused solely on strengthening women's traditional roles in food production, however, the designers carried out a broader analysis of the food security situation affecting both men and women. They found that despite the perception of sufficient production of food crops, including exports, many Malawians are undernourished and suffer from protein deficiencies. The analyses showed that the main constraints to food security include inefficient food distribution and the lack of capacity to buy nutritious foods. ASAP addresses these constraints through liberalization of the agricultural market and the creation of opportunities for farmers to earn money by

growing burley as a cash crop. Specific equity objectives involve working with those most vulnerable to food shortages, including female-headed rural households which represent approximately 30% of the population (see Box 4). The wisdom of emphasizing female-headed households was supported by a survey which showed that male-headed households had nearly double the per capita market income of female-headed households.

Finally, the Mission includes gender considerations in the design of non-project assistance (NPA), as well as in project assistance. The GABLE and ASAP programs are the cornerstones of the Mission's NPA activities. As with all NPA activities, the designs of GABLE and ASAP identified and tied conditionality to tranche releases. Under the GABLE and ASAP programs, gender considerations are strategically included as part of the conditionality. For example, release of GABLE's second tranche was tied to implementation of the school fee waiver policy for non-repeating primary school girls. Similarly, before the release of ASAP's first tranche, the MOA was required to design, implement and announce a burley registration system and encourage registration of both customary landholders and women. As they have implemented these policies, the Ministries have taken ownership of the gender actions which have led to positive policies that have a substantial impact on women and girls.

Box 4

**Improving Cash Crop Opportunities for Women through the
Agricultural Sector Assistance Program (ASAP)**

The successful implementation of ASAP implies a new orientation of agricultural production for poor rural families, including complex changes in women's roles in agriculture and market participation, as well as changes in gender roles and relations within families. Traditionally, men have been nominally responsible for cash crops, and burley was considered a crop that male farmers grew. It is therefore a significant step for women to produce this crop and join the growers' clubs.

The ASAP program aims to increase smallholder access to agricultural production, especially cash crops. Burley was selected as the centerpiece for the ASAP program because it is highly profitable, has a well established and currently expanding cash market, and is relatively inexpensive to cultivate. The advantage of farmers with small crops is that they can carefully survey for pests and can harvest each leaf at the right moment. Farmers of small plots can also supply the labor necessary for the manual (organic) control of pests and diseases, required for top export prices. Despite these advantages, many doubted the ability of smallholders to grow this crop. Over the last three years, however, it has been clearly demonstrated that smallholders can produce burley of equal or higher quality as compared to estate growers -- who had exclusive rights for growing burley in the past.

ASAP placed specific emphasis on recruiting female heads of household into the burley program. During the first season of the project, 10% of all burley club members were women. The percentage increased to 13% in the 1992/93 season and 16% in 1993/94. Additionally, in 1992/93, MK 88 million (approximately US\$20 million) of smallholder credit was extended to 320,000 smallholders, of whom 29% were women. These smallholders went on to earn nearly \$4.4 million from burley sales. These earnings were used for food, bicycles, radios, and school fees; many of which were first ever purchases.

Since its inception in 1990, the ASAP program has involved mostly male extension workers. Efforts have been increased, however, to work with the Ministry of Agriculture's (MOA) Women's Programme Section staff in ASAP's efforts to encourage, coordinate and monitor the participation of women in the burley program. To remedy the common exclusion of women from regular farmers' clubs, extension workers are promoting women's only clubs, which are called "pure stands," in reference to agricultural plots which are planted with only one variety.

The Mission and the MOA continue to make a concerted effort to encourage women's participation. The MOA, with financing from the Mission, is now conducting a study to identify how more women can be encouraged to participate. The study will also create awareness about ASAP's policy to involve women as burley growers among the extension workers who carry out the study. As the type of assistance and support services necessary for improving women's participation in burley production are identified, more women farmers will be mobilized to participate in the burley program.

Implementation Stage

Incorporating gender considerations into the design of a program/project is only part of the process. The WID Officer uses her knowledge of ongoing project activities to ensure that gender remains a focus during implementation as well. Examples of this process follow:

- **Incorporation of gender issues in implementation documents**

Careful attention to gender considerations at the design stage is often undermined when the Request for Proposal (RFP) to select a contractor to implement the activity is prepared. Typically, a staff member from the relevant technical office prepares the RFP which includes a Statement of Work (SOW). SOW details will be extracted from program/project documents as well as from evaluation criteria to be used in determining the award. The WID Officer ensures that the SOW and criteria for awarding a contract include relevant gender considerations. When this occurs, women are more likely to participate in and benefit from program/project activities.

To underscore the importance and relevance of gender and increase the odds that gender will be taken into account on a continuing basis, the WID Officer also ensures that explicit gender statements are included in project manuals and other implementation documents. The Operational Manual for the SHARED project, for example, clearly states that preference for grants will be given to NGO proposals that target women, including female-headed households, as beneficiaries and participants in design and implementation activities.

- **Enrichment of planned activities**

Under the HRID project, the National Commission on Women In Development (NCWID) received Mission support to develop a strategy and planning document (Policy and Plan of Action for Women in Malawi). To maximize the potential impact of this document, the WID Officer proposed two WID workshops -- one for the Commission's desk officers who carry out the Commission's work and represent various ministries and NGOs, and the other for policymakers who are the desk officers' supervisors. The desk officers' workshop resulted in the endorsement of the desk officers' action plans and support for those officers at the highest levels. More importantly, the policymakers also recommended that the policy section of NCWID's strategy document be incorporated into Malawi's Development Policy (DEVPOL). The WID workshops thus enriched the assistance to the NCWID by increasing the impact of the NCWID's document on a national policy level.

- **Identifying opportunities outside Mission programs**

When the Peace Corps WID Committee (of which the WID Officer is a member) was considering various topics for a national essay contest, the WID Officer suggested posing the question, "What is the importance of educating females?" The WID Committee adopted this idea and the WID Officer provided background information for the Peace Corps teachers so that they could lead classroom discussions on this topic before the students wrote their essays. Over 1,000 students around the country participated in this contest and each school selected a finalist. The WID Committee then selected the top three winners from those finalists and their essays were published in the newspaper and read on the radio in recognition of International Women's Day. By using this strategic opportunity for nationwide coverage of the importance of educating females, the WID Officer complemented USAID and MOE efforts to reinforce the goal of the GABLE program (see news article in Appendix B).

- **Facilitating implementation**

The Chief of the Agriculture Office suggested that a study of female burley growers could provide insights about how to better address their needs. In response, the WID Officer brought together the WID Committee member from the Agriculture Office and another member of that Office to meet with staff from the Women's Programme Section of the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) to discuss the importance of the study and how to proceed. The WID Committee representative from the Agriculture Office, a former MOA employee, encouraged the Ministry to program some of its local currency generation funds to conduct the study. With these positive indications from initial meetings, the WID Officer stepped back and the Agriculture Office took primary responsibility for carrying out the study.

As these examples illustrate, consideration of gender continues throughout the program/project implementation process. It involves attention to procedural documents, building on existing activities, taking advantage of new opportunities, and facilitating the work of other organizations.

Evaluation Stage

To increase understanding of project or program results and impact, USAID/Malawi ensures that gender considerations are part of both mid-term and final evaluation processes. In facilitating inclusion of gender issues in evaluations, the WID Officer:

- routinely incorporates gender considerations into the evaluation SOW. The WID Officer noted that it is easier to evaluate a program/project from a gender perspective when gender considerations are addressed up front in the design. She explained that

without adequate attention to gender considerations in the design stage, it is difficult to hold a project responsible for not addressing these issues during implementation.

- assigns responsibility for addressing the gender issues to one team member. Both the ASAP mid-term evaluation, completed in 1993, and the GABLE evaluation, now underway, included a team member responsible for addressing gender issues.
- flags suggestions made in a mid-term evaluation that have gender implications and then tracks the project to ensure that relevant actions are taken. The mid-term evaluation of ASAP, for example, made a number of recommendations focusing on women. The evaluation suggested that the program develop ways to involve more women in burley clubs to ensure greater equity. It also suggested that ASAP design an information system that provides sex-disaggregated data to track women's participation in the smallholder burley program. Finally, it recommended that the program consider a "sentinel club" monitoring system where standard data are collected from 12 randomly selected clubs annually and special studies are done on such topics as household equity and household decision-making regarding the use of burley profits. The Mission followed up on these recommendations with a study of women burley growers, which is now underway. The study will determine how women join burley clubs, the nature of their participation in the clubs, and the opportunities and constraints that exist to further their participation.

The implementation of evaluation recommendations from one project may be facilitated by collaboration with staff from another project. For example, to address the acute paper shortage in schools, the Paper Making Educational Trust (PAMET), supported under SHARED, has introduced modest, locally made equipment and instructed teachers and students in more than 60 schools on how to recycle paper. The PAMET evaluation recommends that the MOE take responsibility for paper-making in the schools and that PAMET serve as a technical resource. As GABLE works hand-in-hand with the MOE, program staff are working to facilitate this transfer of responsibility.

Finally, it should also be noted that gender analysis conducted as part of an evaluation can inform future consultants working with the same program or project, and thus increase their awareness of relevant gender issues. For example, the gender analysis which was completed as part of the ASAP mid-term evaluation has been distributed to the team which is analyzing next steps for an ASAP Amendment. This will enable the team to build upon gender recommendations that have already been made.

FACTORS INFLUENCING THE INTEGRATION OF GENDER

The study team identified factors that have contributed to USAID/Malawi's effectiveness in integrating gender issues into its activities. They are grouped into three categories: 1) Internal Organizational Factors, 2) Mission Approach to Gender Issues, and 3) Contextual Factors. Described below, these factors provide insight into the people, events, and activities that have shaped the Mission's program.

Internal Organizational Factors

WID Officer Position and Approach

- **Position**

Two aspects of the WID Officer's position in the Mission contribute to the effectiveness of the WID Officer. First as a Project Development Officer (PDO) in the Program and Project Development (PPD) Office, the WID Officer works across sectors and programs. From this advantage point, she gains a comprehensive view of program activities and is thus able to integrate gender issues across sectors. As project backstop officer for the Education and Health Offices, she reviews and clears their program/project documents and reports. This enables her to pay particular attention to gender-related opportunities in these sectors. In the Agriculture Office where she is not a backstop officer, she stays informed about their implementation activities through close contact with the Chief and the WID Committee representative from that office.

Second, as a USAID direct hire, the WID Officer has opportunities to incorporate gender considerations at key junctures in the program/project cycle that might not be available if she were a contractor. For example, one of her PDO responsibilities includes clearing PIO/Ts, a task reserved for direct hires. She regularly uses this opportunity to double-check PIO/T Statements of Work (SOWs) to ensure that gender considerations are explicitly included in the proposed program or project activity.

- **Approach**

The WID Officer's effective approach reflects her exceptional enthusiasm, creativity, commitment and professional competence. She makes a concerted effort to ensure that gender considerations are included throughout the Mission's development activities. Rather than initiate isolated women's activities, she emphasizes integrating gender considerations into ongoing program/project activities. Her approach creates an environment in which Mission staff consider her support integral to program success, rather than an addition to their workload. The WID Officer uses both formal and informal mechanisms to include more people and thus shares responsibility for addressing gender issues in the Mission's program. Formally, she collaborates with the WID Committee (described below). Informally, the WID Officer encourages gender analysis and consideration of WID activities by providing resource materials, and offering information and raising questions among staff at meetings and in individual conversations.

Additionally, the WID Officer is highly qualified for the position. Formerly the Africa Liaison in USAID/W's Office of Women in Development, she is well-versed in WID legislation and has facilitated gender training workshops, conducted gender analyses, and assisted a number of missions in the development of their WID Action Plans. She has developed a network of professional contacts and is familiar with the many technical resources and funding mechanisms available to support her work in the field. Through

her position and effective approach, she has increased the visibility, sustainability, and impact of USAID/Malawi's WID activities.

Mission Directors' Support

The current and previous Mission Directors, both women, have played vital roles in instituting policies that advance the consideration of gender and development issues. Both Mission Directors clearly recognize that women play a key role in the success and sustainability of any development effort, and that contributing to the improvement of women's lives is also a worthy endeavor in and of itself. As a result, they supported efforts to raise women's status in Malawi, and worked to provide them with the resources and skills they need to improve their lives and those of their families, communities, and country.

The previous Mission Director has an extensive background in WID issues which began in the early 1970's shortly after the establishment of the Percy Amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act. At those early stages of WID, she began contact with the Office of Women in Development and was appointed the WID Officer in USAID/Nepal. In 1987, she participated in gender training, and later served as the Chair of the Africa Bureau's WID Working Group. Her historical perspective of gender and development, including knowledge of WID legislation and guidance, has been instrumental in advancing these issues throughout her career. Demonstrating this in Malawi, she:

- established and maintained professional relationships with women in key positions in and out of the government which facilitated action and resolution of issues;
- introduced the current WID Officer to these individuals, providing the WID Officer access and status as a USAID representative in meetings with them;
- continued to act upon the lessons she first learned in USAID/Nepal regarding the value of being a role model. As the only U.S. direct hire woman in USAID/Nepal, she realized what an oddity she was as a professional woman to host country counterparts. Women in village cooperatives took note of her role, and she built upon that interest to encourage cooperatives to recruit more women. In turn, the cooperatives took her seriously and the participation of women increased. In Malawi, she continued to serve as a role model for convincing both men and women at all levels, both in and outside government, to increase women's participation; and
- supported WID Officers who worked for her and provided a supportive environment for them. She noted, "one important lesson for me is the value of Mission Directors permitting staff to pursue some activities of great personal interest to them. WID Officers in Missions always have other responsibilities. Mission Directors need to give them the time, space, and encouragement to be leaders on the WID front."

Finally, since half the Mission staff, including the Director, was and still is female, it has both increased the number of women who can serve as role models and reinforced the example

of a gender-balanced organization. This gender-balanced staffing pattern was not a Mission policy. Rather, those most qualified for the positions were women. The previous Mission Director recognized its impact on the Mission's work, however, stating,

I'm sure that the number of women [in the Mission] had a positive impact on our dedication to gender issues. Female staff, in particular, ... pushed for the rights of women to participate in the burley program and encouraged women agriculturalists in the MOA to organize ... pushed on the human resources front ... [and] pushed Mission support for Women's World Banking and the National Association of Business Women Further, ... the number of women in the Mission probably expanded our outreach to Malawian professional women. I think that Malawian women saw us as potential supporters and felt more comfortable coming to us with proposals and requests.

As a consistent voice for the consideration of gender issues in USAID/Malawi's program, the previous director laid the groundwork that continues to support the Mission today.

The current Mission Director also has a comprehensive background in gender and development issues, which spans both academia and the work place. As a graduate student, she researched and published articles which focused on the costs and benefits of incorporating women into selected development interventions. She also served as a WID Officer in USAID/Honduras. The current Mission Director continues to build upon the groundwork which was laid by the previous Mission Director, as is evidenced in a recent speech she wrote and delivered at the National Commission on Women in Development's workshop for Cabinet Ministers. In this speech she stated:

To different degrees, at different levels of economic development, and within practically every culture on earth, every country faces the complex challenges associated with women in development, women's rights, or gender equity ... the issue goes by many names. We also face the challenge in the United States, in the United States government, and in USAID. In USAID we try to address the issue of women in development in four ways: through our policies, through our people, through our processes, and through our product.

Policy refers to high level commitment. The administration of President Clinton has adopted a high profile, public policy to encourage the involvement of women in all aspects of US government activities. At USAID, our Administrator has translated this into our Agency's policy framework. USAID Missions abroad, and Mission Directors themselves, are evaluated on how well they translate this policy into action.

People refers to our personnel. USAID has a formal policy of developing its women professionals. It actively seeks to place its women in high level positions within the organization worldwide. It is increasingly placing its women professionals in key policy positions so as to ensure that women's viewpoints and women's concerns are addressed at the highest levels of USAID.

Processes refers to how we do our business. In the design of our programs and strategies, USAID consistently reaches out formally and informally to Malawian women for advice and assistance. Formally, we work with several Malawian women's organizations to ensure that our programs reflect their priorities. Informally, we consult regularly with Malawian advisory groups across sectors. USAID professionals spend time with women smallholders, women entrepreneurs, teachers, and health care providers to discuss directly their needs, their participation in USAID programs, and the impact of USAID programs in their communities. Finally, we use the results to modify our programs.

Product refers to what we seek to achieve. In practically all USAID sponsored programs, we incorporate specific goals or targets related to women. In our agricultural program, for instance, there are specific numerical targets for assistance to female-headed households. In education, girls' enrollment and persistence in primary school is a main objective.

I believe that by pursuing women's concerns and issues through the four P's outlined above, policy, personnel, processes, and product -- USAID has had some success in incorporating women into its strategy and development program. More importantly, by fostering institutions like the National Commission on Women in Development and others, USAID is proud to be part of a Malawian success story. Your presence here today is also part of that story. Let me state that we at USAID stand ready to work with you to implement the results of this seminar.

The extraordinary support from the current and previous Mission Director has contributed substantially to USAID/Malawi's exemplary progress in incorporating gender issues into its programs and projects.

Structure and Functions of WID Committee

The WID Committee, established by the WID Officer to institutionalize gender considerations in the Mission, consists of four Mission staff representing all the Mission's technical offices. The Committee meets periodically, and each member reports on gender-related issues and developments pertaining to his/her activities. The objectives of the WID Committee are as follows:

- increase awareness, knowledge, skills, and motivation for addressing gender issues in all aspects of the Mission's development policies, programs and projects;
- identify gender activities in programs within the Mission and in the country;
- improve Mission reporting on gender;
- ensure full sectoral representation in order to ensure better linkages and coordination among the different projects in the Mission; and

- promote more equitable and sustainable development of Mission programs.

A significant accomplishment of the WID Committee was the improved reporting on gender at the program level in the Mission's FY 93 Assessment of Program Impact (API) document. The WID Officer worked in collaboration with members of the WID Committee to document the people-level and gender-specific impact of Mission activities at the program level. The API provided an explanation of how gender has been integrated under each Strategic Objective (SO) and effectively demonstrated the interrelated gender impacts across sectors and programs.

Mission Approach to Gender Issues

Several factors stand out in USAID/Malawi's approach to its work related to gender. They include a partnership approach to development, use of research to undergird projects and programs, innovative use of non-project assistance, support for women's NGOs, and effective use of the media.

Participatory Approach to Development

USAID/Malawi is highly participatory in its approach to planning and highly collaborative in program implementation. The Mission regularly initiates consultation and dialogue in the form of meetings, public debate, surveys, collaborative research efforts, and other mechanisms. In designing programs, the Mission elicits men's and women's viewpoints and incorporates local capacity building for both men and women. During program/project implementation, the Mission actively seeks collaboration with and participation of a broad spectrum of people including the national government, other donors, local government officials and residents, and project participants. Through this process, the Mission hears from a broad spectrum of people, including women and girls, about the constraints and opportunities they experience in their daily lives, as well as their perspectives about development priorities and approaches.

Use of Research

Research is effectively used by the Mission to inform program/project design, especially in a sector where women predominate. Indeed, the Mission Director believes that the Mission's portfolio is sound due to the emphasis on research and the incorporation of gender questions that apply. Research is conducted not only at the country strategic planning stage, but also during program/project design and implementation as well. Project-related research provides guidance to Mission staff during the design phase and keeps Mission staff informed of the direction and impact of programs and projects on a regular basis. It also provides good indications about what will happen to women in Malawi as policies, programs, and projects are implemented.

Non-Project Assistance

USAID/Malawi has utilized NPA to ensure that gender specific "conditions" create a supportive policy environment within which its programs/projects can be sustained. As mentioned earlier, the successes with GABLE and ASAP demonstrate that incorporating gender

related conditions in the design of NPA programs can be an effective tool for ensuring gender specific policy actions that garner national recognition and impact.

Support for Women's NGOs

USAID/Malawi supports women's NGOs through two main vehicles: the DECIDE Project and the SHARED Project. SHARED has provided grants to three women-specific NGOs including the National Association of Business Women, Women's World Banking, and the Foundation for International Community Assistance (FINCA), as well as numerous NGOs which have large numbers of women as participants and beneficiaries. All of these efforts have been strategically planned and aimed at strengthening organizations whose work can positively impact the lives of Malawian women.

Effective Use of The Media

On a number of occasions, the WID Officer has worked with the local media to encourage local participation and convey important messages on gender in development. For instance, as stated earlier, she was involved with the Peace Corps WID Committee in coordinating a local essay contest which asked the question, "What is the importance of educating females?" The winner's essay was printed in the local newspaper (see article in Appendix B). This served to both raise awareness about the importance of girls' education, and encourage local participation in the goals of the GABLE program.

The media also played an integral role in publicizing the results of the Women's Session at the NDI "All Party Conference." After the women finalized the list of key issues they wanted incorporated into the new political party agendas and the Constitution, their work was immediately printed into a "flyer" format and distributed to the journalists reporting on the conference. As a result, the media accurately and persuasively reported on the event -- allowing the voices of Malawian women to be heard throughout the country, and possibly beyond (see news article in Appendix B).

Contextual Factors

Malawi: Receptivity of the Government, Elected Officials and NGOs

A key factor in the success of the Mission vis a vis gender is the receptivity of Malawians, both institutionally and individually. USAID/Malawi has sought out organizations in the public and private sectors, as well as key individuals, who are concerned with women's issues. The Mission is fortunate to have the well staffed and effective Malawian Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs and Community Services (MOWCACS) with which to work. Its role in the formation of the National Commission on Women in Development (NCWID) illustrates the remarkable talent pool and political support that Malawians have given to women's issues. For its part, the Mission has recognized this talent and, in the case of the MOWCACS, supports and works closely with the Ministry's Permanent Secretary.

Activities undertaken during the Decade of the Woman (1970s) prompted the MOWCACS's Permanent Secretary to try to help women at the grassroots level. She was instrumental in the formation of the National Commission on Women in Development (NCWID), housed in the Ministry, which leverages wider consideration of women's issues through its membership of representatives from other Ministries and women-focused NGOs. Through various projects, the Mission has strengthened the Commission, which in turn, has strengthened government policies and practices which affect women at all levels.

The Mission's programs are more effective because they enhance and complement local efforts and strengthen key organizations already involved with women's issues. In describing the Mission's outreach and collaboration with Malawian professional women, the WID Officer stated, "You go out of your way to let them know you are interested in their views, you listen to them and act on what they say, and you facilitate for them when they have something they want a larger community to hear. Women need to be encouraged, but once they know they are being listened to, they will speak freely."

USAID/W Institutional Resources

The availability of resources through USAID/W, such as technical assistance, training, and funding, has also been a contributing factor in the Mission's success in effectively integrating gender concerns into programs and projects. The WID Officer regularly accesses these resources, including technical assistance from the Africa Women in Development (AFWID) project, buy-ins for gender training through the WID Office's GENESYS project, and most recently, a matching funds arrangement with the WID Office.

Technical Assistance

The Mission has sought and received considerable technical assistance from USAID/W's AFWID project, co-funded by the Office of Women in Development and the Africa Bureau. Technical support was provided by both the AFWID Advisor based in USAID/W, and the Southern Africa AFWID Advisor, based in Botswana. The Mission's WID Officer described the AFWID Project as an "ideal support mechanism," and emphasized the ease with which it could be accessed. She explained, "The AFWID project worked well because it provided free services to the missions and there was no need for a PIO/T. Normal channels for acquiring assistance from USAID/W include a PIO/T, development of a SOW, drafting face sheets, obtaining clearances, allotting funds, sending requests to the contracts office, etc., and all of this is very time consuming. AFWID simply required a SOW and then the AFWID Advisors took it from there"

USAID/Malawi has used AFWID project assistance for a variety of gender-related activities, including the development of the Mission's 1992 WID Action Plan; the design and delivery of a professional women in agriculture workshop and placement of a gender trainer to conduct it; an ASAP pre-evaluation data collection exercise; a mid-term evaluation which focused on gender and equity issues for the ASAP program; and a feasibility study for a series of gender training workshops for the National Commission on Women in Development (NCWID). Given the

success of these activities, the Mission placed high value on the technical support provided by the USAID/W and Southern Africa AFWID Advisors.

Gender Training

"Gender training is critical," noted the WID Officer. "The more people who understand gender issues, the easier it is for me to implement gender activities across the board. Almost everyone in the Mission has either attended a gender training workshop or has been sufficiently exposed to gender issues on the job." As a result of training, major decisions made by USAID/Malawi staff demonstrate a solid analytical understanding of the strategic relationship between addressing gender issues and achieving desired development outcomes.

The WID Officer assesses the level of gender understanding among colleagues through informal discussions, and then identifies training opportunities according to need and readiness. For example, the WID Officer is currently arranging for two staff members working on the Support to AIDS and Family Health Project (STAFH) to attend an upcoming "Gender and HIV/AIDS" workshop, sponsored by USAID/W's Office of Women in Development.

The previous WID Officer also played a significant role in promoting gender training among USAID/Malawi staff. In 1989, she ensured that two Malawian male staff attended a gender in development training course, sponsored by the WID Office. According to the previous Mission Director, "They returned from the course in Botswana very energized and committed to considering women more actively in the management of their [agriculture and small enterprise] projects."

A key support mechanism that has assisted the WID Officer in the provision of gender training has been the GENESYS project, funded by the Office of Women in Development. Its activities have increased the knowledge about gender for Mission staff, contractors and host country counterparts. For example, Mission staff benefitted when two staff members, selected by the WID Officer, attended a 5-day "Southern Africa Regional WID Officers Training Workshop" in 1993. One workshop participant explained that while she had always had a keen interest in gender issues, the workshop provided her with practical tools and guidance on how to effectively incorporate gender into her job, such as preparation of scopes of work. Both participants frequently refer to the resource materials distributed at the workshop, and have shared the materials and guidance with others in the Mission on numerous occasions.

Recognizing that contractors/grantees play a major role in implementing Mission programs, the WID Officer ensures that USAID contractors/grantees are knowledgeable about gender considerations as well. For example, the WID Officer arranged for staff of two organizations implementing the DECIDE Project to attend a "Gender and Democracy" workshop conducted by the GENESYS project in Washington D.C. The WID Officer also arranged for staff from both DECIDE grantee organizations to attend a debriefing that was given at the Mission by the Chairperson of the National Association of Business Women (NABW). This presentation provided the grantees with a valuable opportunity to learn about the needs, constraints, and opportunities of Malawian women. It also demonstrated the level of importance the Mission places on the inclusion of gender considerations in development programming.

Gender training in Malawi has also been extended to host country counterparts. When the National Commission on Women in Development (NCWID) wanted training for staff and policy makers to educate them on their Policy and Plan of Action for Women in Malawi, the GENESYS project conducted the workshops. Over 70 Malawians were trained in these workshops and the impact raised the Policy and Plan of Action to national prominence. Annual follow-up workshops have been scheduled to ensure continued implementation.

Planning for and facilitating training both inside and outside the Mission have multiplied the impact of the Mission's gender and development activities.

WID Office Matching-Funds Mechanism

Obtaining funds for gender-related activities is a difficulty identified by many WID Officers. Often, a WID Officer must convince other Mission staff to commit funds for such activities. While WID Officers can access Program Development and Support (PD&S) funds, there are often serious limitations to this funding source. As it is also utilized by other Mission staff to support their activities as well.

The matching funds mechanism administered through USAID/W's Office of Women in Development was designed to encourage Missions to engage in gender training, technical assistance, and gender specific project activities. Matching funds were accessed by the Mission for the SHARED project, for example, to support the strengthening of NGOs working with women in Malawi. The Mission committed \$50,000, which was matched by \$50,000 from USAID/W's Office of Women in Development. The incentive of matching funds from the USAID/W's Office of Women in Development contributed to the Mission's decision to add this component to the project.

The internal organizational factors, the Mission's approach, and the contextual factors have contributed substantially to a successful mission strategy which aims to enable women to attain levels of social and economic participation in balance with that of men. It is hoped that this case study has reinforced the wisdom of considering gender issues in development programming, and at the same time, provided useful examples of how to do so. Below is a summary of the key lessons learned.

KEY LESSONS LEARNED

This case study has documented the experience, accomplishments, results, and impacts of USAID/Malawi's incorporation of gender considerations into its programs/projects. From this process, ten key factors have been identified as being most influential. They are summarized below:

- ✓ USAID/Malawi's highly participatory development approach which emphasizes collaboration efforts by Mission staff with host country counterparts and other donors on gender issues -- making Mission efforts highly appropriate to the Malawian context and sustainable in the long term.
- ✓ Strong receptivity of Malawian women to USAID/Malawi's program, due in part to the gender-balanced work force the Mission has exemplified in the past decade.
- ✓ Strong and consistent commitment by USAID/Malawi's former and present Mission Directors to address gender throughout the portfolio, creating a supportive environment for the WID Officer, WID Committee, and Mission staff; and providing incentives to use the skills learned in gender training.
- ✓ A highly qualified, proactive, and resourceful WID Officer who focuses her attention on key interventions within and across projects that will have a significant impact.
- ✓ Integration of gender considerations into ongoing tasks as a regular part of the program/project cycle.
- ✓ Effective use of Non-Project Assistance (NPA) and conditionality to create a positive policy environment that addresses, promotes and sustains the consideration of gender issues in development.
- ✓ Effective and consistent use of research, as part of the normal program/project cycle, to identify the effects of policies and programs on men and women, including the constraints and opportunities for women's participation.
- ✓ Use of USAID/W resources by the WID Officer to support and complement her work in the field, including gender training, technical assistance, and matching fund opportunities from USAID/W's Office of Women in Development.
- ✓ Location of the WID Officer in the Program and Project Development Office, rather than a technical office, which affords a comprehensive, cross-cutting view of Mission activities and facilitates identification of key interventions.
- ✓ Development and revision of a practical WID Action Plan that actively involves and requires the participation of WID Committee members and technical staff in its design and implementation.

APPENDICES

A. Persons Contacted

B. News Articles on Girls' Education and Women's Issues

APPENDIX A: PERSONS CONTACTED

USAID/Malawi

Cynthia Rozell, Mission Director
Office of the Director

Carol Peasley, previous Mission Director and currently Deputy Assistant Administrator for Africa, USAID/W

Thomas Lofgren, Chief, PPD Office
Office of Program and Project Development

Stephanie Funk, Project Development Officer, WID Officer, Democracy and Governance Officer, Office of Program and Project Development

Mike E. Sarhan, Program Officer
Office of Program and Project Development

Laurie Cameron, Monitoring and Evaluation Advisor
Office of Program and Project Development

Tim Kaendera, Assistant Program Officer
Office of Program and Project Development

Joan Larcom, Chief, HRD Office
Office of Human Resources Development

Shobna Chakravarti, GABLE Program Manager, WID Committee member
Office of Human Resources Development

Donna Carpenter, STAFH Program Manager, WID Committee member
Office of Health, Population and Nutrition

Stephen Shumba, AFS Project Officer, WID Committee member
Office of Agriculture and Food Security

Margaret Sarhan, SHARED Program Manager
Office of Agriculture and Food Security

Adina Rosenthal, ASAP Program Manager
Office of Agriculture and Food Security

APPENDIX A: PERSONS CONTACTED

Government of Malawi

Jane Asani, Planning and Coordinating Officer
National Commission on Women in Development (NCWID)

Mrs. Senoya, Principal Community Development Officer
Ministry of Women and Children Affairs and Community Services

Stanley Chamdimba, Chief Planning Officer
Joseph Chikhungu, GABLE Desk Officer
MacPhearson Jere, previous GABLE Desk Officer
Teachers at Mpingu School
Ministry of Education

Dora Mwalwenje, Gender Lecturer, Gender Appropriate Curriculum Unit
Malawi Institute for Education

Mrs. Impango
Mrs. Haule
Women's Programme Section
Ministry of Agriculture

Non-Governmental Organizations and Microenterprises

Joyce Banda, Chairperson
Chrissie Katundu, National Executive Committee Member
Grace Maseko, Business Promotion Coordinator
National Association of Business Women (NABW)

NABW microentrepreneurs involved in drying and selling fish, operating a restaurant, raising and selling chickens, selling flour, selling vegetables, candy making, and coffin making.

APPENDIX A: PERSONS CONTACTED

University of Malawi

Lucy Thawe, Coordinator of Women's Programmes
Chancellor College

Karin Hyde, Research Fellow, Education
Center for Social Research, Chancellor College

Paula Tavrow, Research Fellow, Public Health
Center for Social Research, Chancellor College

USAID/Malawi Contractors

Charles Ward, Chief of Party
Grasiano Bulla, Program Manager
Molle Chikoko, Program Training Assistant
SHARED Project

Rudi Klauss, Chief of Party
Simeon Mawindo, Deputy Chief of Party
HRID Project

Traci Cook, NDI/Malawi Program Officer
National Democratic Institute (NDI)
DECIDE Project

Laurie Cooper, Program Officer for Africa
International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES)
DECIDE Project

Pamela Brook, Social Mobilization Campaign Coordinator
GABLE Project

**APPENDIX B: NEWS ARTICLES ON GIRLS' EDUCATION AND
WOMEN'S ISSUES**

ESSAY CONTEST

What is the importance of educating females?

This question was answered in essays written by approximately 1,000 secondary school students in a national essay contest. The contest was sponsored by the Women In Development (WID) Committee, a group of eight Peace Corps Volunteers and a USAID representative who are dedicated to promoting women in development and creating awareness of women's issues.

A recent activity of the WID Committee has been promoting participation in this national essay contest in conjunction with International Women's Day on 8th March. The topic of the contest was, "The Importance of Educating Females".

During the last WID Committee meeting, three national winners were selected from 22 school finalists. It was difficult to choose among the well written essays.

First prize was awarded to Kaulungu Simwaua from Chaminade Secondary School. He will receive a certificate of commendation, school fees paid for a term, a calculator, and photos to be taken of his choosing.

Second prize was awarded to Thandie Haiza from Mzimba Secondary School. She will receive a certificate of commendation and a dictionary.

Third prize was awarded to Grace T. Lipato from Chipoka Secondary School. She will receive a certificate of commendation, and pen and painter pens.

The top three national winners will be awarded their prizes at their schools tomorrow. A letter of congratulations, a pen, and certificates will be given to all 22 school finalists.

In order to congratulate the winners and promote further awareness, essays will be broadcast on MBC tomorrow.

In addition, the WID Committee is in the process of compiling a calendar featuring prominent women in development in Malawi. The Committee feels this will be an excellent way to show support for these women and encourage the efforts of other women in development. If you know of a woman who is making a difference in Malawi, please submit her story to the U.S. Peace Corps office in Lilongwe, who will

consider them for inclusion in this or future calendars.

precipitates the nature she is gifted from God and if she is able to provide her children financially, on the other hand, the responsibility is a burden to a woman who neglected her nature and is unable to provide her children financially. The child is always in its mothers lap from the time it is born to a later age. It is through the mother that the child becomes worldly - education is thus an enlightenment to a mother, she is able to manage child care with proficiency hence the children grow exuberantly. An educated woman knows the right time when to have the next baby - for her own and the baby's good health and she is also able to understand her baby's emotions. But this is not the case with an uneducated woman; she is usually remiss in attending to duties of child care, hence the children are frequently haunted by diseases which brings great torment to the mother. The family is thus deprived of freedom. But education does not help a woman

only as a mother or housewife, it also acts as a sort of challenge a woman's capability can offer. As a contradiction to the traditional notion on female education, a lot of women these days are overwhelmingly getting to the top levels of education just like men! The number of females going into secondary school and the university and getting high posts in offices is gradually increasing. This easily signifies how ambitious, determined and competent women are! Education is therefore one way women can use to achieve success. In addition education gives women their right of expression - either within the family or in a community in general. Hitherto, women had been considered inferior to men; they had been sort of denied the opportunity to uplift themselves to a higher level in different fields just like men. But now education enables women to realize that they do not deserve such a deprivation. Women are now working hard towards uplifting their status in a community, socially and politically, just like women in western countries.

Generally, a woman's education alleviates the financial and moral posture of a family and it plays an eminent role in the social and political achievement of our nation. It is really appreciable that women, besides child responsibility, are proving capable in the fields of science, literature, and politics! There is hope that there will come a time when females in our country as well will become politically strong like Benazir Bhutto, (of Pakistan), Janet Reno (of U.S.A.), Margaret Thatcher, and others. I am not a psychologist anyway nevertheless I believe women are equally intelligently gifted just like men hence they need as much education just like men do. Females should, therefore, be provided opportunity and encouragement to learn.

First Prize essay by:

KAULUNGU SIMWAUA,
Chaminade Secondary School
(Submitted by Peace Corps Volunteer Charlie Bauer)

The importance of educating females

".....After all, I can not manage. Where do you think I will get money for your school fees, suppose both of you get selected for secondary education? K300 per term - which is about K1,000 a year! Whew! I've never even seen K1,000 since I was born. So the only thing is that you, Vitumbiko, should continue with your education, we'll try our best to pay your school fees to secondary school. But as for you, Nkhuwola, my daughter, so long you learn to write letters find a man and get married. Women do not need much education, anyway."

This is traditional philosophy (concept) you would learn in many villages you would go to throughout the country. But you will eventually also learn with great enthusiasm that there are some girls who greatly resent this notion; they are ambi-

The importance of educating females



An educated female can ensure a prosperous posterity and socio-economic growth of the country

Today is International Women's Day. To commemorate the day a question was asked on the importance of educating females through the secondary schools in Malawi.

This question was answered in essays written by approximately 1,000 secondary school students in a national essay contest. The contest was sponsored by the Women In Development (WID) Committee, a group of eight Peace Corps Volunteers and a USAID representative who are dedicated to promoting women in development and creating awareness of women's issues.

A recent activity of the WID Committee has been promoting participation in this national essay contest in conjunction with International Women's Day on 8th March. The topic of the contest was, "The Importance of Educating Females".

During the last WID Committee meeting, three national

winner were selected from 22 school finalists. It was difficult to choose among the well written essays.

First prize was awarded to Kaulungu Sinwau from Chamlnade Secondary School. He will receive a certificate of commendation, school fees paid for a term, a calculator, and photos to be taken of his choosing.

Second prize was awarded to Thandie Halza from Mzimba Secondary School. She will receive a certificate of commendation and a dictionary.

Third prize was awarded to Grace T. Lipato from Chipoka Secondary School. She will receive a certificate of commendation, and pen and painter pens.

The top three national winners were awarded prizes at their schools last week. A letter of congratulations, a pen, and certificates will be given to all 22 school finalists.

In order to congratulate the

winner and promote further awareness, the essays will be broadcast on MBC today.

In addition, the WID Committee is in the process of compiling a calendar featuring prominent women in development in Malawi. The Committee feels this will be an excellent way to show support for these women and encourage the efforts of other women in development.

If you know of a woman who is making a difference in Malawi, please submit her story to the U.S. Peace Corps office in Lilongwe, who will consider them for inclusion in this or future calendars.

Prize presentation ceremony will be conducted in various schools by members of the American Embassy and Peace Corps.

To commemorate the occasion five outstanding women have been invited to a luncheon to be held in Lilongwe on Saturday March 12.

First Prize Essay by:

Kaulungu Sinwau, Chamlnade Secondary School — Submitted by Peace Corps Volunteer Charlie Bauer

The Importance of Education Females (in my country)

"... After all, I can not manage. Where do you think I will get money for your school fees, suppose both of you get selected for secondary school education? K300 per term — which is about K1,000 a year! Where I've never even seen K1,000 since I was born. So the only thing is that you, Vimbiko, should continue with your education, we'll try our best to pay school fees to secondary school. But as for you, Nkhwola, my daughter, so long you learn to write letters find a man and get married. Women do not need much education, anyway."

This is traditional philosophy (concept) you would learn in many villages you would go to throughout the country. But you will eventually also learn with great enthusiasm that there are some girls who greatly resent this notion; they are ambitious to get somewhere with education just as me.

Educating females is of great importance, in our country, both socially and economically — needless to say politically it goes without saying that woman's major responsibility is the children. With close observation, it is learnt that the responsibility is a burden to some women while it is a pleasure to others; it is a pleasure to a woman who appreciates the nature she is gifted from God and if she is able to provide her children financially, on the other

hand, the responsibility is a burden to a woman who neglected her nature and is unable to provide her children financially. The child is always in its mother's lap from the time it is born to a later age. It is through the mother that the child becomes worldly-wise — education is thus an enlightenment to a mother; she is able to manage child-care with proficiency hence the children grow exuberantly. An educated woman knows the right time when to have the next baby — for her own and the baby's good health and she is also able to understand her baby's emotions. But this is not the case with an uneducated woman; she usually resorts to attending to duties of child care, hence the children are frequently hanked by diseases which brings great torment to the mother.

The family is thus deprived of freedom. But education does not help a woman only as a mother or housewife, it also acts as a sort of challenge a woman's capability can offer. As a contradiction to the traditional notion on female education, a lot of women these days are overwhelming getting to the top levels of education just like men! The number of females going into secondary school and the university and getting high posts in offices is gradually increasing.

This easily signifies how ambitious, determined and competent women are! Education is therefore one way women can use to achieve

success. In addition education gives women the right of expression — either within the family or in a community in general — Hitherto, women had been considered inferior to men; they had been sort of denied the opportunity to uplift themselves to a higher level in different fields just like men.

But now education enables women to realise that they do not deserve such a deprivation. Women are now working hard towards uplifting their status in a community, socially and politically, just like women in western countries.

Generally, a woman's education alleviates the financial and moral posture of a family and it plays an eminent role in the social and political achievements of our nation. It is really appreciable that women, besides child responsibility, are proving capable in the fields of science, literature, and politics! There is hope that there will come a time when females in our country as well will become politically strong like Benazir Bhutto, (of Pakistan), Janet Reno (of USA), Margaret Thatcher, and others. I am not a psychologist anyway nevertheless I believe women are equally intelligently gifted just like men hence they need as much as education just like men do. Females should, therefore, be provided opportunity and encouragement to learn.

Second Prize Essay by:

Thandie Halza, Mzimba Secondary School — Submitted by Peace Corps Volunteer Craig Garric

Educated women can easily adjust

"It is useless to educate women. Women have to be left for the kids and the kitchen."

These words have been spoken by so many people ever since education was introduced in Africa. There is however great need to convince such people who have little knowledge on the importance of educating women.

In Malawi one's mother is his first love because she teaches the infant many things some of them being speaking her language as well as walking and in general child care is left to the mother alone so why should a man who was himself first taught by his mother insist on refusing girls or women education.

Bringing up children alone is worthy educating a woman for. For a woman to appreciate the fact that a child's good health and mental development depends on feeding it with a balanced diet she needs education. It is hard to convince an uneducated woman that malnutritional diseases come because of underdevelopment rather than witchcraft. Healthy children grow into useful

citizens of a country thus helping in economic development.

Educated women accept change and understand modern ways of life. Child spacing is one of the greatest issues concerning women which if taught properly would help reduce the problem of many uncared for children who turn into beggars or thieves. One of the major reasons for not educating women or girls is that parents are afraid of just losing their money if their daughter attend school was suddenly found pregnant, but have we ever thought of what would have been the chances of falling pregnant if the mother was educated enough so as to be open with her and teach her ways of avoiding pregnancies?

An educated woman married to an uncaring husband is still able to support herself and her children without difficulties. As a woman one has to know their rights. Uneducated widows have suffered with their children because their husbands' relatives have snatched everything away from them. Educated women know better and turn to legal aid.

Understanding how AIDS is spread and how it can be prevented also needs

education to stop the epidemic. It is pleasing to a father to see his son marry an educated woman. But how is it difficult for the same man to educate his own daughters? It is senseless for one to urge his son to marry an educated lady while his own daughters are uneducated. An educated woman is the source of pride to her husband. For how can an educated husband introduce his wife who doesn't know English to his white friends? This brings embarrassment to the man and he starts looking for other educated women leaving the poor soul alone and increasing his chances of contracting AIDS. Community development, modern ways of cooking and farming as well as hygiene need education for the benefit of the country economically and socially.

However one might think if you educate a woman you've educated a nation. You educate a man and he'll keep all the knowledge to himself. So education is a privilege of all citizens regardless of sex.

Third Prize Essay by:

Grace T. Lipato, Chipoka Secondary School — Submitted by Peace Corps Volunteer Bruce Rudolph

What is the importance of educating females

Education is better for both males and females. So there must be a good number of educated males as well as females. But in Malawi, there is a greater number of educated males than females. The reason behind is that males are considered to be the heads and decision makers of the families. Males have a role of supporting the whole family. So many females are more likely to educate boys than girls since the boy will need to support both his wife, children and parents while the girl will be supported by her husband. Most families consider education as of no importance to females, yet there are so many reasons why females must be educated.

To begin with, educating females is important because though it is the father who is the head and decision maker of the family, it is the mother who plays an important role in the caring of the family. So in a family in which the mother is educated, there is better care than a family in which the mother is not educated. An educated mother know how to keep

the family healthy. She tries her best to give the family a balanced diet at all times. She fights hard to keep the family happy and clean, especially the children.

Secondly an educated mother is more likely to listen to advice about family planning. So an educated mother plans for good child spacing. As a result there is good number of children which the father and mother knows that they will be able to support. The children therefore receive all the family is planned there aren't many children. Too many children in the family hinders the proper growth of the mother. The children too suffer from so many diseases due to poor child spacing.

Another reason why more females must be educated is that they may be able to get better jobs and on the other hand be able to support her children in the case of the husband's death. Again when a mother is working and a father too. There is a greater income to keep them going. They don't face as many of the money problems because of their combined income as a family in which only the father is working or in which none of

them is working.

Educating females is also important because it is at the schools where girls learn how to live well with their friends. Therefore they have the same manners as they grow up and join the community of the grown ups.

An educated mother also knows the goodness of education, so she encourages her daughters to be educated too. She tries her best to educate her daughters. If the father has ideas of not educating the girls. While a mother who is not educated doesn't stop her daughters from being educated.

Educated women are taking part in politics. So there must be a good number of educated women who might be involved in politics and therefore see to it that there is an equal number of educated boys and girls.

It is important therefore to educate more women since they play an important role in the society. More girls must be educated in Malawi. Because more educated girls means more educated women of tomorrow.

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First women symposium



Mrs. Edda Chitalo



Mrs. Mary Nya-Ndovle Kerr



Mrs. Eunice Kazembe

ON Saturday, February 19, 1994, women from all the 24 districts of Malawi walked into the Kwacha International Conference Centre in the name of UDF to a Symposium called "The role of women in the new Malawi."

Before the official opening of the symposium, the convener, Mrs. Edda Chitalo made a few remarks on how women have been used over the past decades by Dr. Banda. She said Dr. Banda has used woman power to turn Malawi into a personal estate. She went on to say women have always made large contributions to the little success the country had right from the fight for independence.

It is just a pity that such little success is shown as the effort of only one man and one woman.

Opening the symposium, the President of UDF, Mr Bakili Muluzi expressed concern over the present situation of women. He went on to talk about efforts made by the UDF party right from when it started as a pressure group to uplift women. He said the UDF manifesto had tried and covered women issues extensively. The UDF so Shadow Cabinet has got a women portfolio. And they have reserved a quota of at least 20% in all UDF positions it could be occupied by women. He called on women to try and beat the quota. He said the symposiums organized to provide a forum of which woman should give their social, economic and political dispensations. He wished the symposium a success.

The two resource persons to the symposium Mrs. Mphande and Mrs. Kazembe did set the ball rolling indeed. In their speeches, they outlined clearly, the role and status of women as at now. They gave their reasons as what they considered the causes of the present situation. Expressed their opinion as to what should be done to redress the situation. And finally called all the

participants to air their views. And the participants did full throttle.

Resolutions reached unanimously at the symposium were as follows:

(1) Education

Looking at the high illiteracy of women which is 69% out of the total 85% of the illiteracy in the country, the following should be done:-

(a) Call on the government to send teachers into rural areas, where the real Malawi woman is, to combat the illiteracy. It was suggested that this could successfully be done perhaps following the example done by agriculture advisers who have made it successfully. The point is that these teachers would be well paid not K10.00 a month ngall aphuntst! a kwacha.

(b) Seeing that the other cause of women low education early pregnancies it was agreed that:-

(i) If a girl is pregnantet buy a boy, they should both be send out of school. It was argued this would reduce early pregnancies as not only girls will be afraid of being sent out of school but the boys as well.

But this should be forever readmitted into school and be encouraged to continue.

(ii) If a girl is pregnated by a sugar dad, 30% of his income should be set to support the young mother and the baby. The idea here is to check the immoral behavior of old men who see their own daughters as young girls and all other young girls as prey.

(2) Leadership

(a) Women should hold themselves as good leaders, from right in the home to out in the society. Women should hold themselves with dignity, and in that way we will respect them other than seeing them as machines for body entertainment.

(b) When women are offered positions, if they can, should accept. The traditional view that women cannot stand as high up as men should be thrown away.

(3) Commerce

(a) The government should be forced to see and appreciate the talents of women, especially in rural areas and help them to form small scale businesses.

(b) Women should try and contribute to the income of households rather than depending on the man for everything.

(4) Diseases and hospitals

(a) Women should be allowed to go to hospitals when they are sick; not to wait for the men to make decisions for them. This was reached after observing the traditional practice which say, "sitingawatenegere ku chipatala a malume awo asanalamule."

(b) And there should be laws laid out to safeguard women from the traditional view that regard them as the weaker sex. Stress here was on the inheritance of property where there is no will left.

(5) Laws

(a) There are a lot of laws in the land which discriminate a woman from a man. Here women should call out

Women and change

WHILST everybody is busy congratulating themselves for ushering the much awaited for democracy in Malawi, the country's population continues to live in a haze of under certainty.

These are none other than the women of this country who roughly make 52% of the country's total population. To them the fangs of the MCP's tyrannical rule is still polluting their blood and they believe that they are still in for it.

Most politicians in this country seem to be satisfied with the way the wind of change is blowing. Some are already being blown to higher latitudes of political myopia. They have once again forgotten to peep into the coal-dron of women suffering and it is apparent that democracy has failed the female sex.

For the past 30 years of Dr. Banda's dictatorial rule women of this country have been beneficiaries of absolute suffering. They were reduced to Dr. Banda's personal orchestra. In order to obtain status in society they had to compete against themselves in wriggling their bodies and blowing off their throats with praise songs.

More often than not, they did this either in the heat or cold rain. This gave their Nkhoswe number one satisfaction he badly wanted in order to build around himself his personality cult. Kamuzu became the Nkhoswe number one and the women of Malawi his Mbumba. Yet for all this, the women got a bottle of extra hot coke or fanta with dusty bans. Or worse still, took home to their unsuspecting husbands a multitude of verminous STD's. It is a pity that these women have been misfiled away in the annals of history.

Another creature of oppression that became an out growth of Kamuzu paraphernalia was CCAM. This charity-cum-equal rights organisation was solely launched to enable the basting of the official bossess image similar to that of Dr.



These young girls will have better things to do in a UDF government

Banda. Women were discriminated against by the very organisation that stood for their cause.

Women were forced to work in CCAM gardens by force without question. Those who showed any spark of potential of success were mercilessly pruned from the society so that the lines remains conspicuous. This organisation has only succeeded in elevating the status of very few women at the expense of the majority in rural areas.

Malawian women have suffered quite a lot almost all spheres of life. They have suffered absolute discrimination in both education and the work place. Male bosses have sexually harassed women and got away with it. Teachers have threatened young girls with failing examinations unless they succumbed to their demands. In some cases young women job seekers have to "prove their worth" in order to be employed or "later promoted". This is one of the reasons why no decent number of women have managed to rise to the same level as their male counterparts in society. This may only apply to those few women who have tried their best in life. What about those in rural areas.

In rural areas woman have been turned into beasts of burden. They work from dawn to dusk. They have to look after the welfare of their family, the husband included. Sometimes they have to do piece tasks (ganyu) in order to feed the family. The husband is there just as a symbolic head. The

burden of running the family is put on the woman's shoulder. It was also shocking to learn from the recently held UDF Symposium on the Role of Women in the new Malawi that the Malawian woman is being subjected to equally fatal balls from all corners of life. Tradition does not encourage the recognition of women as man's equal. Even some laws of the land on their part set a knee-high ceiling to women's recognition as human beings.

Statistics presented at the UDF Women Symposium show that 85% of the illiterate in Malawi, 69% are women. The few women who are considered educated are confined to jobs such as secretarial duties, nursing, teaching and all jobs which are lowest paying in the country.

Unfortunately, there appears little or no hope at all for the poor Malawian women. Decision making positions in the country are dominated by men. It is very unlikely that men who consider themselves will do anything to uplift the weaker sex. For less than 10% of the women total population are in decision making. What effect would such a small voice have in a democratic state. Worse still those women in decision making positions have been known to make decisions that tend to stand in the way of fellow women. Women who have made it to the top in the country have sold their bodies and see themselves as men. They join the men in oppressing fellow women. Another

shameful thing that has been imposed by society is that concerning legal matters. A woman is forbidden to bail out somebody who is being held on detention. Our legal mechanism has failed to redeem the woman from the jaws of sexual harassment, discrimination and legal exploitation. The maintenance for children of unmarried mothers has been restricted to K25.00 maximum. This is just to mention a few.

These ills befalling women may be regarded as a direct result of the past three decades. But it is worthwhile to point out that women themselves have held themselves out with a vice grip which has continually lubricated the oppressing machines set by the MCP government. For instance women always tend to look at fellow women like rivals other than sisters. They, in addition to the rituals of gossiping and backbiting, spend most of their time scheming the failure of fellow women rather than uplifting themselves. So unless the government in the new Malawi joins hands with the women themselves in trying to redress the situation, we can expect no success.

"Woman Awake" is a column which will be addressing women issues. It will be looking at what the Malawian woman is or has been. Why and how if their is a need to reverse the what.

Letter to the column can be addressed to "Woman Awake", UDF News P.O. Box 3052, Blantyre.