1. HOUSEHOLD ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES AND LIVELIHOODS

**Economic activities**

- **70%** Women
- **75%** Men

Respondents whose economic activities changed during the pandemic

- **71%** Women
- **77%** Men

Women aged 18-34 years were most affected

- **23%** Women

listed farming as an economic activity after the onset of the pandemic, compared to **19%** during the pandemic

- **26%** Men

listed farming as an economic activity before the pandemic compared to **27%** during the pandemic

The largest proportion of respondents affected by changes in economic activities were those who owned businesses or were freelancers

- **52%** Women

owned a business/were freelancers before the lockdown, compared to only **34%** at the time of the study

- **43%** Men

owned a business/were freelancers before the lockdown, compared to only **32%** at the time of the study

**Effect of pandemic on income sources**

- **73%** Women
- **76%** Men

About 3 out of 4 in all age groups indicated that they had suffered decreases in income as a result of the pandemic

- **24%** Women
- **21%** Men

1 in 4 indicated no change in income as a result of the pandemic

- **63%** Women
- **69%** Men

experienced changes in combined household income during the pandemic

- **64%** Women
- **70%** Men

aged 18-34 years were most affected

- **60%** Women
- **66%** Men

aged 55 years and above were least affected

**Common negative experiences**

- **67%** Women
- **68%** Men

faced financial difficulties

- **62%** Women
- **64%** Men

ate less or skipped a meal altogether because of lack of money or other resources

- **46%** Women
- **51%** Men

did not eat at all for a day or more because of lack of money or other resources

- **18%** Women
- **19%** Men

face loss of employment of the head of household
2. AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND FOOD SECURITY

Food production

- **72%** Women lived in households that produced crops and livestock (i.e., fish farming, poultry, and other stock)
- **84%** Men
- **79%** Women aged 35-54 years & **90%** Men aged 55 years and above were most likely to indicate that their household produced food
- **52%** Women **45%** Men indicated that food produced by their household does not provide for their food needs

Food availability due to COVID-19-related movement restrictions

- **48%** Women **46%** Men thought that food had become less available
- **42%** Women **39%** Men thought that food was just as available during the pandemic as it was previously
- **61%** Women **57%** Men thought that the prices of food had increased
- **32%** Women **34%** Men felt that the prices had remained the same
- **67%** Women aged 55 years and above were most likely to indicate that food prices had increased
- **34%** Women aged 35-54 years were most likely to indicate that food prices had stayed the same
### 3. Education

**Limited access to learning materials such as books was the greatest impediment to learning for girls and boys in Malawi during the pandemic**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td></td>
<td>Limited access to learning materials such as books was the greatest impediment to learning for girls and boys in Malawi during the pandemic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of a skilled instructor also hindered studying from home for girls and boys</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of a conducive environment also hindered studying from home during the pandemic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experienced limited access to the internet presented a challenge for remote learning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experienced lack of electricity/source of lighting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls were more affected than boys by the learning challenge that the multiple roles of the parent/guardian presented</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faced other undefined challenges</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experienced increased household chores as an impediment to studying from home</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. WATER AND SANITATION

Access to clean and safe water

About 3 in 5

17% Women 20% Men

felt that they had sufficient access to clean and safe water

90% Women 82% Men

in urban areas who had access to clean and safe water compared to their rural counterparts (women 76%, men 74%)

83% Women aged 18-34 years & 82% Women aged 35-54 years

were slightly more likely than their counterparts aged 55 years and above (77%) to have access to clean water during the pandemic

80% Men aged 55 years and above

were most likely among men to have access to clean and safe water during the pandemic

75% Men aged 35-54 years

were least likely among all respondents to have access to the commodity

Reasons for limited or no access to clean and safe water during the pandemic

28% long distances to the source

23% water access has always been a challenge

19% inability to afford the cost of water

7% piped water has always been a challenge

More than 1 in 10 other unidentified reasons for the lack of access

Responsibility for collecting water and firewood

Nearly 3 in 4

74%

indicated that women carried out this task

8%

indicated that a man in the household carried out this task

16%

indicated this responsibility falls on women and men in the same household
### 4. UNPAID DOMESTIC AND CARE WORK BEFORE AND AFTER THE PANDEMIC

#### Activity most attributed to men

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Proportion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shopping for the household</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Activities least attributed to men

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Proportion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collecting water and firewood</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleaning</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooking and meal preparation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Time spent on activities since the onset of the pandemic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Proportion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cleaning</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooking and meal preparation</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional support of adults</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assisting other adults with administration and accounts</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Activities that had the highest participation proportions by men before the pandemic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Proportion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional support of adults</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assisting other adults with administration and accounts</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical care of adults</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing with and reading to children</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Activities that had the highest percentages of women and men who said the time they spend on these activities increased during the pandemic

- **26% Women** respondents observed increases in time spent in teaching children
- **28% Men**

- **23% Women** respondents observed increases in time spent in passive care of children
- **21% Men**

- **19% Women** respondents observed increases in time spent in playing with/reading stories to children
- **19% Men**

Activities that had the highest percentages of women and men who said the time they spend on these activities decreased during the pandemic

- **37% Women** respondents observed decreases in time spent on emotional support for adults
- **36% Men**

- **36% Women** respondents observed decreases in time spent in physical care of adults
- **36% Men**

- **34% Women** respondents observed decreases in time spent in assisting other adults with administration and accounts
- **35% Men**
### 5. HELP WITH HOUSEHOLD CHORES

**20%** Women reported getting help for chores and for caring for other family members from persons outside their household. **15%** Men did so.

**30%** percentage of women aged 55 years and above who said they received help with chores and caring for others. This was higher than for women in other age groups (18-19%).

Persons most likely to help with chores and providing care for others in the household:

- **41%** Women identified family members.
- **46%** Men did so.
- **28%** Women identified a person outside of the family.
- **22%** Men did so.
- **14%** Women identified daughters.
- **20%** Men did so.

Respondents who mentioned hiring help were asked how the situation has changed since the onset of COVID-19:

- **About 2 in 3**
  - **68%** Women reported receiving less help from a domestic worker, babysitter, or hired nurse.
  - **64%** Men did so.

- **Less than 1 in 5**
  - **16%** Women indicated that they received more help.
  - **14%** Men did so.

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1 These included a domestic worker, babysitter, or hired nurse.
6. MENTAL HEALTH

Effect of the pandemic on mental health

- 52% Women indicated that the pandemic has had a negative impact on their mental or emotional health.
- 59% Men

57% of women aged 35-49 years whose mental health was affected by the pandemic. This formed the highest proportion of respondents affected.

46% Women aged 50-64 years & 46% Women aged 65 years and above registered the lowest proportions of those affected.

Women and men’s worries during the pandemic

- More than 8 in 10 respondents indicated that COVID-19 and its related control measures and restrictions have caused them to worry.

- 21% Women and 20% Men worried about access to food during the pandemic.
- 19% Women and 18% Men worried about death during the pandemic.
- 10% Women and 9% Men worried about safety related to the crisis.
- 5% Women and 6% Men worried about access to medicine during the pandemic.

Concerns that varied by sex

- Nearly 1 in 4, 23% Women worried about children missing school compared to nearly 1 in 5 (19%) men.
- 50% Women worried about their economic situation and income compared to nearly 3 in 5 (57%) men.
7. HEALTH SERVICES

Seeking health services during the pandemic

Slightly more than 1 in 3 were inclined to seek health services during the pandemic.

- **Women**: 37%
- **Men**: 36%

45% Women aged 65 years and above were significantly more likely to seek health services during the pandemic.

While more than 1 in 2 women (57%) and men (52%) did not need health services, those who did:

- **Women**
  - 34% successfully accessed the services
  - 8% sought family planning/SRH services
  - 9% sought clinical management of sexual violence
  - 4% were unsuccessful in accessing healthcare services

- **Men**
  - 39% successfully accessed the services
  - 13% sought family planning/SRH services
  - 6% sought clinical management of sexual violence
  - 4% were unsuccessful in accessing healthcare services

Health services waiting times during the pandemic

- **Women**
  - 36% experienced longer waiting times since the onset of the pandemic.
  - 5% sought healthcare services for pregnant mothers/maternal healthcare services
  - 9% sought child healthcare services
  - 43% sought “other (unidentified) healthcare related services”

- **Men**
  - 39% experienced shorter waiting times.
  - 14% sought healthcare services for pregnant mothers/maternal healthcare services
  - 4% sought child healthcare services
  - 40% sought “other (unidentified) healthcare related services”

While more than 1 in 5 (17%) men, nearly 1 in 4 reported shorter waiting times compared to before the outbreak compared to 1 in 5 (17%) men.

2 Including menstrual hygiene, etc.
The pandemic brought changes in respondents’ feelings of safety in the community.

16% Women 19% Men indicated feeling less safe since the onset of the pandemic
43% Women 42% Men indicated feeling safer

Personal experiences with violence during the pandemic:

15% Women 17% Men have experienced violence
16% Women aged 35-49 years & 15% Women aged 18-34 years were more likely than older women to have experienced violence in the community during the pandemic

The proportion of individuals who experienced discrimination during COVID-19 was also fairly low compared to other countries in the sub-region

14% Women 13% Men have personally experienced discrimination
16% Women aged 35-49 years & 15% Women aged 18-34 years were significantly more likely than older women to have experienced discrimination

Respondents’ feelings of safety in the home

48% Women 49% Men felt the same level of safety during the pandemic as they did previously

More than 1 in 4

44% Women felt safer
43% Men

Nearly 1 in 10

7% Women felt less safe
8% Men

For those who felt less safe, most were concerned about:

37% Women 45% Men increases in crime
26% Women 34% Men living in densely populated areas, which they felt made their homes less safe
42% Women 37% Men other reasons for feeling less safe in the home
Nearly all respondents indicated that GBV is a problem in Malawi, irrespective of the pandemic.

**Frequency of GBV**

- **Nearly 9 in 10** reported that GBV happens very often, irrespective of COVID-19.
  - **88%** Women
  - **85%** Men

- **More than 5 in 10** perceived a change in occurrence of GBV since the onset of the pandemic.
  - **53%** Women
  - **56%** Men

- **Women aged 65 years and older** were more likely than women in other age groups to indicate that GBV has increased.
- **Women aged 50-64 years** were least likely to indicate that GBV has increased.

**Forms of GBV** that women and men were aware of and knew someone who had experienced covered a wide range:

- **Nearly 3 in 10** knew someone who had experienced emotional/verbal abuse.
  - **41%** Women
  - **39%** Men

- **Nearly 2 in 5** knew someone who had been physically abused.
  - **49%** Women
  - **51%** Men

- ** Nearly 2 in 5** knew of child and/or forced marriages that took place during the pandemic.
  - **49%** Women
  - **51%** Men
More than 36% of Women and 35% of Men knew someone who has experienced sexual harassment during the pandemic.

Nearly 24% of Women and 24% of Men knew of a victim of forced sexual relations.

Nearly 18% of Women and 20% of Men experienced or knew of someone who had experienced online bullying.

Nearly 9% of Women and 8% of Men knew a victim of FGM carried out during the pandemic.

Denial to communicate with others was a relatively common form of GBV during the pandemic.

Perpetrators of GBV:

- 33% of Women and 32% of Men identified neighbor as the perpetrator of GBV.
- 31% of Women and 33% of Men identified spouse as the perpetrator of GBV.
- 25% of Women and 28% of Men indicated friend as the perpetrator.
- 23% of Women and 22% of Men identified other family member as responsible for the GBV incident.
- 11% of Women and 12% of Men indicated that security agents were behind the most recent GBV incident they were aware of.

Nearly 1 in 4 in 2024.

Nearly 1 in 5 in 2020.

Nearly 1 in 10 in 2019.

Nearly 1 in 5 in 2018.

About 1 in 10 in 2009.
The study found that women and men **had similar** priority needs during the pandemic.

- **55%** Women identified **food** as their top priority.
- **56%** Men identified **food** as their top priority.
- **55%** Women identified **healthcare** as their top priority.
- **55%** Men identified **healthcare** as their top priority.
- Nearly **2 in 5** had **earning an income** as their priority need.
- **55%** Women identified **sanitation and hygiene** as a priority.
- **38%** Men identified **sanitation and hygiene** as a priority.
- **29%** Women identified **safety and security** as a priority need.
- **28%** Men identified **safety and security** as a priority need.
- **20%** Women identified **education** as a priority need during the pandemic.
- **24%** Men identified **education** as a priority need during the pandemic.