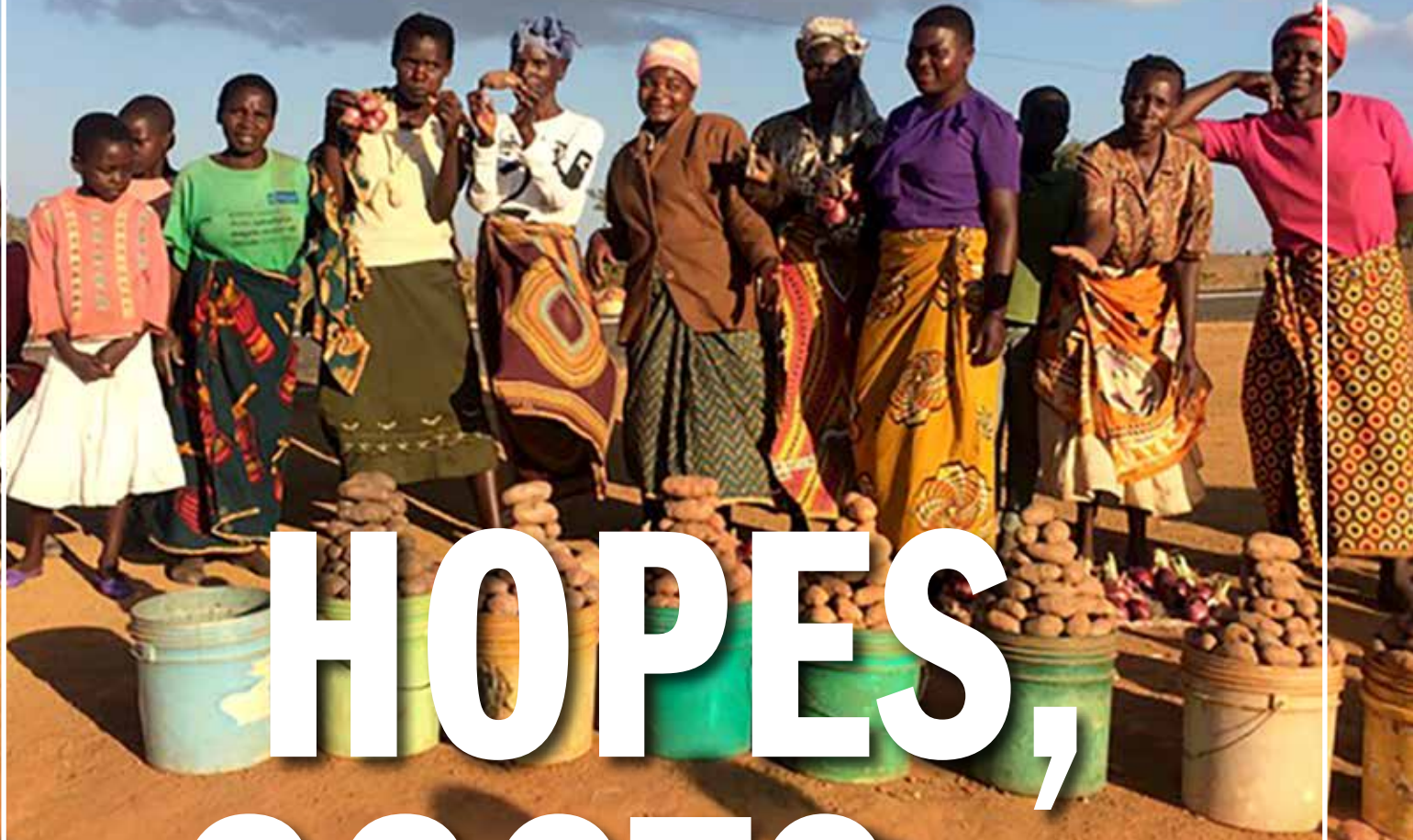


THE IMPACTS OF LABOR INFLUX FROM ROAD PROJECTS
ON WOMEN AND GIRLS IN RURAL MALAWI



HOPES, COSTS and UNEVEN BURDEN



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	Introduction	9
2	The effects of labor influx —good and bad	15
2.1	Positive effects on women and local communities	15
2.2	Negative effects of labor influx	19
	<i>Relationships and extra-marital affairs</i>	20
	<i>Violence against women and girls</i>	23
	<i>Additional negative effects on women</i>	26
	<i>Negative effects on communities and their members</i>	30
3	Factors that contribute to the negative effects of labor influx	36
3.1	Motivations and drivers for women and girls to enter relationships with workers	37
3.2	Motivations for men’s behavior	38
3.3	Community attitudes and norms	39
4	Existing interventions aimed at preventing harm to women and girls from labor influx	43
4.1	Existing prevention mechanisms at the community level	43
4.2	Existing prevention mechanisms in the camps	44
4.3	Mitigation mechanisms at the community level	46
4.4	Limitations to the effectiveness of existing institutions and initiatives	47
	<i>Shortcomings in prevention efforts at the community level</i>	47
	<i>Ineffective prevention efforts in the camps</i>	49
	<i>Governmental services that seem disconnected with the community</i>	51
	<i>Mitigation initiatives that also fall short</i>	52
5	Ten issues for priority attention	56
5.1	Sexual misconduct by male workers	57

<i>Issue #1: employee codes of conduct are variously non-existent, poorly disseminated, or unenforced—and rarely address sexual behavior at all.</i>	57
5.2 Institutional failures in the prevention and mitigation of gender-related harm	57
<i>Issue #2: solving labor influx challenges gets generally low priority.</i>	57
<i>Issue #3: contractors lack capacity, knowledge, and staffing for enforcing social safeguards.</i>	58
<i>Issue #4: Inappropriate sexual behavior tends to go unreported.</i>	59
<i>Issue #5: many communities lack clear, trusted, and responsive channels for filing grievances.</i>	59
5.3 Harm to women workers	59
<i>Issue #6: women workers battle negative perceptions by community members and male co-workers.</i>	59
<i>Issue #7: women workers lack means to report abuse in the workplace.</i>	60
5.4 Harm to community members	60
<i>Issue #8: women and girls may get sexually involved with workers in hopes of short-term improvements in their economic situation such as gifts or a job.</i>	60
<i>Issue #9: girls in communities may become sexually involved with workers in the hopes of getting married and improving their lives in the long term.</i>	60
<i>Issue #10: unsupported pregnancies, parental abandonment, and stis leave women destitute.</i>	61
6 References	63
Annex 1: Methodology	65
Annex 2: Research Instruments	74
Annex 3: Recommendations for stakeholders	82
Annex 4: Other Negative Effects of Labor Influx	87
Annex 5: Matrilineal versus Patrilineal Cultures in Malawi	89
Annex 6: Advisory Committee for this Study	91

ABSTRACT

This study attempts to explore the impacts of labor influx related to roads construction on poor rural communities in Malawi with particular attention to the impacts on girls and women. The study is based on 28 focus group discussions with men and women road workers and people living in communities that hosted the projects and additional key informant interviews with road project staff, traditional leaders, secondary school principals, local service providers such as police officers and medical workers, and survivors of gender-based violence. The study concludes that many of road construction's harmful effects are caused not

simply by the influx of outsiders, but by deep imbalances in gender dynamics of power and influence in the local communities and worker camps. Girls, women, and workers are found to have diverse and complex reasons for engaging in relationships that could be harmful. These motivations often grow from societal norms that make women subordinate to men and from women's efforts, within the constraints of these norms, to improve their station in life, the study concludes. It also identifies limitations in existing interventions and strategies and proposes steps by which they might become more effective.

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1. Introduction

“Business is booming. When we get our merchandise like sugar cane and vegetables, they [the construction workers] buy from us. They don’t have farming fields. They buy everything.”

—Woman, 18-24 years, southern region

“If we refuse a relationship, they will not employ us. But if we accept them, that’s when they give us a chance to work.”

—Woman, 25-35 years, southern region

All over the world, construction of modern infrastructure such as highways and bridges is a key step toward development and poverty reduction. To build these projects, large numbers of male workers often come into small and isolated communities for extended stays. This influx can bring many benefits for local people. They may sell food to the workers, rent them houses, and in some cases join their ranks as paid employees at the construction site. Local people may learn new languages and technical

skills and gain from exposure to ideas and cultures that they haven’t encountered before.

But the newcomers can also bring a host of social problems, many of them harmful to women and girls in particular. These include rises in rates of teenage pregnancy, school drop-out by girls, sexual harassment, gender-based violence, and sexually transmitted diseases. Long-standing community institutions and power balances can come under strain from the sudden presence of large numbers of men who

are living without families, knowledge of their hosts' customs and history and constraints by local norms.

In recent years, governments and international development agencies have become increasingly aware of these harmful side-effects of project labor influx and have begun working to address them.¹ Initiatives include creation of mechanisms to allow local people to file complaints; strengthening of law enforcement; creation of gender-representative committees in communities hosting the projects; fostering of collaboration between local people and camp-site managers and workers; and development of worker codes of conduct.

Though interventions are becoming more common², understanding of how pre-existing social issues, institutions, and cultural norms shape their impacts has remained limited. Unless based on a firm grasp of these complex dynamics, programs may seem effective in theory but do poorly on the ground.

1 Complaints about a World Bank road project in Uganda have helped build commitment in the Bank to assuring that its projects have strict rules, monitoring, and enforcement concerning potential negative impacts of labor influx.

2 A recent review commissioned by the World Bank assessed the extent to which social impacts of labor influx were identified and addressed in the planning and implementation of 20 projects across the Bank's portfolio (World Bank 2017). The review found that in some cases, risk minimization actions were in place. These included the siting of work camps away from communities (Turkey TANAP Natural Gas Pipeline Project); maximization of local hiring to reduce need for outside workers (Argentina Grande Norte Chaco-PR3 Road Project, Vietnam Da Nang-Quang Ngai Expressway Project, Turkey TANAP Natural Gas Pipeline Project, Uganda Kampala Infrastructure Project, and Lebanon Greater Beirut Water Supply Project); use of self-sufficient camps (Lebanon Greater Beirut Water Supply Project and Turkey TANAP Project); camp policies and codes of conduct that discourage contact with locals (Turkey TANAP Natural Gas Pipeline Project); and HIV/AIDS awareness training (Argentina Grande Norte Chaco-PR3 Road Project and Vietnam Da Nang-Quang Ngai Expressway Project). Other steps included worker health and hygiene programs, provisions to allow people to telephone in grievances, and vocational training for local workers

This study attempts to heighten understanding through a deep examination of four rural communities³ in Malawi that hosted road workers, with particular attention to the impacts of labor influx on girls and women.⁴ The study is based on 28 focus group discussions with men and women road workers and people living in communities that hosted the projects. Researchers also conducted 19 key informant interviews with road project staff, traditional leaders, secondary school principals, police officers and social workers. In the exploratory stage of the study, researchers consulted with 24 governmental and non-governmental organizations. See Annex 1 for a detailed explanation of methodology.

The study concludes that many of road construction's harmful effects are caused not simply by the influx of outsiders, but by incoming cash from projects that feeds deep imbalances in gender dynamics of power and influence. Girls and women in project affected areas can be exposed to GBV both at the hands of incoming workers and local men. Girls, women, and workers are found to have diverse and complex reasons for engaging in relationships that could be harmful. These motivations often grow from societal norms that make women subordinate to men and from women's efforts, within the constraints of these norms, to improve their station in life. Harmful project impacts can occur regardless of project duration, although they can worsen over time. The study

3 To protect the confidentiality of research participants, the report does not include location and project names.

4 Annex 4 offers a discussion of harmful effects of labor influx that are not gender-related, such as environmental harm.

Box 1: Ethical Considerations Researching GBV

Research that may touch upon issues related to GBV raise important ethical and methodological challenges in addition to those that arise in any research (WHO 2001). In this research, we took special steps to mitigate risks associated with interviewing survivors or perpetrators of gender-based violence (GBV) or violence against children (VAC). These included: special care when introducing the study to anyone to avoid stigmatization of participants; seeking continuous consent from participants; informing participants of local mandatory reporting laws; measures to secure privacy and confidentiality in data collection and processing; recruitment of an experienced field team; intensive team training prior to fieldwork on GBV and VAC and how to act when a participant discloses a case during a FGD; care protocols to protect team members from vicarious trauma; liaising with service providers prior to fieldwork to enable referrals of survivors who requested care; and provision of counselling services on-site by a local GBV specialist. More information of ethical considerations and protocols used in this study can be found in Annex 1.

also identifies limitations in existing interventions and strategies to prevent and respond to GBV induced by projects and proposes steps by which they might become more effective.

The research was conducted in Malawi, a country whose government has worked in recent years to promote gender equality. The country ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1987. The country's constitution recognizes women's right to full and equal protection under the law, and non-discrimination on the basis of gender or marital status.⁵ The Government's recently developed third Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS III)

includes provisions to promote gender mainstreaming in all sectors and the participation of women and youth in decision making.

In practice, however, women's rights in Malawi remain seriously curtailed. The country ranks 170 out of 188 on the UN's 2015 Gender Inequality Index. Customary laws and traditional practices, many of them harmful to gender equality, continue to shape the lives of women and girls (Malawi Human Rights Commission 2005). Gender disparities exist in income and ownership of large assets such as land (ILO updated Gender and Law Database). Traditional matrilineal and patrilineal systems are found among Malawi's ethnic groups and both tend to perpetuate discrimination against women

⁵ Malawi Constitution, Articles 20 (1) and 24. Discrimination on the basis of sex is also prohibited.

in the family (Kamyongolo and Malunga 2011) (see Annex 5).

Efforts to end gender discrimination in Malawi take place in a context of widespread poverty. Almost three quarters of the country's 18 million people live on US\$1.90 per day or less. The country's society is overwhelmingly rural. Most people are subsistence farmers, growing a small range of crops—maize forms the basis of the national diet (FAO 2013)—under very difficult conditions. Drought is a persistent threat, limiting most fields to just one planting and harvest per year.

Road contractors in Malawi, like in many countries, frequently bring in outside workers because labor or the required skills are unavailable locally. This includes workers from other regions of the country as well as from other countries. Arriving workers may live in special camps that are built for them or rent accommodations in nearby communities.

Labor influx is different from typical migration—it is temporary, occurs quickly, and can scale up or down without warning. Over a matter of weeks or even days, large numbers of people may arrive in a project area, unlike natural demographic changes that typically occur gradually. The head count can fluctuate on short notice, depending on the project's requirements. Temporary does not necessarily mean brief—construction can go on for years (World Bank 2017). Taken together, these factors can mean that local governments, residents, and businesses may lack sufficient time, resources, and predictability to adapt to the presence of the newcomers.

Malawi's Ministry of Transport and Public Works (MoTPW) recognizes the potential perils of labor influx and has taken concrete steps to promote gender equality in road construction and other parts of the transport sector.

The national transport policy adopted in April 2015 seeks to further the gender-balanced and non-discriminatory provision of transport services and the recruitment of women in the sector (MoTPW 2015). Together with the European Union and United Nations Population Fund, the Ministry has developed the Gender Mainstreaming Guidelines for the sector. These identify a number of issues to address, including that (1) male contractors dominate the hiring of workers, (2) women are under-represented in senior positions and technical jobs, (3) companies rarely retain women technical professionals, and (4) multiple gender-insensitive acts and regulations govern various transport subsectors (MoTPW 2016).

The current study was requested by the country's Roads Authority⁶. As part of the Southern Africa Trade and Transport Facilitation Program, the Bank is currently supporting the rehabilitation of 46 kilometers of the Karonga-Songwe highway in northern Malawi. Contractors are expected to bring in a considerable number of workers from other regions of the country or other countries. That agency has committed to use the findings to adopt country-wide measures to mitigate risks brought on by road construction work. Findings could also find application in other countries where labor

⁶ The Roads Authority (RA) reports to the Ministry of Transport and Public Works (MoTPW) and is responsible for policy and strategy development, regulatory and legislative functions in the road sector.

influx for infrastructure construction can cause social harm.

The report has four major sections. The first explores the effects that labor influx has on local communities and women working in the camps. The second presents social and economic factors that cause these effects. The third examines existing interventions, while the fourth identifies issues of particular concern and discusses possible approaches for their remediation.



2. The Effects of Labor Influx—Good and Bad

2.1 POSITIVE EFFECTS ON WOMEN AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES

In general, research informants in local communities believed that road construction has positive impact on their wellbeing and livelihoods (Figure 1). Improvements included higher income due to short-term employment on the work teams; acquisition of new skills; sales of goods and services to workers; and compensation paid to people displaced by construction. At some sites, participants invested those compensation payments in scaling up their family businesses. For the longer term, informants praised the completed roads for giving them easier transport, better access to health care

and education; and an improved sense of security due to increased traffic flow and policing.

Some of the positive impacts were stronger for women and girls than men and boys. In some regions, women ran most of the small businesses catering to the workers, while men were responsible for farming. Several interviewees emphasized that pregnant women now had much better access health services when giving birth. In some families, gains in income were used to pay school fees for girls, who often get less priority than boys in education. Women were also more likely to emphasize an improved sense of safety.

The most important benefit that community people mentioned was higher income. This took three main forms: sales by the local small businesses, casual service work, and income

“It is safer to travel along the road than before when it was bush and women got attacked and raped”

Woman from affected community, +35 years, southern region

Figure 1: Positive Effects of Road Construction on Women and Local Communities

	To Community in General	To Women in the Community
Economic benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased access to markets • Higher income due to short-term employment by road contractors • Sales of extra goods and services by local businesses to road worker and firms - scale up of businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women provide services (eg. cleaning) and run most of the small businesses catering to the workers • In some place, women are favored for short-term road work Jobs
Increase access to basic services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved sense of security due to increased policing • Improved access to health and education services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better security is particularly welcome by women • Pregnant women gain better access to health services
Other benefits at the community level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased mobility • Safer walking paths and model of transport • Exposure to new cultures and languages • Introduce to urban lifestyle • Learning through socializing with people outside the community and forming new friendships 	
Other benefits at the household level		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased family income pays school fees for girls • Change in household dynamics, as increased income can make it easier for women to leave abusive relationships
Other benefits at the individual level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquisition of new skills and cultural Exchange 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding a partner and lasting relationship • For women employment by the projects, greater Independence and confidence

from housing rentals. With the arrival of workers, who have an average higher income than the locals, the pool of customers expands. In the sites that researchers visited, local people were commonly selling the workers such things as farm produce and processed food. Many workers sought domestic services such as cooking and house cleaning. In addition, because many contractors don't provide housing for their workers, many community members

raised their incomes by renting accommodations to workers.

Another positive affect that participants mentioned is the communities' exposure to new cultures and skills. Through interactions with the outside workers, community members could learn new languages, cultures, and behaviors, all of which they perceived as a kind of modernization and expansion of their world views. Communities reporting this effect were generally rural and small with limited access

“For those who get to be close to them at soccer, they have taught some techniques. And culturally we have benefited from some of the chatting with them or from their interactions with the community.”

Man from affected community, 18-24 years, southern region

“Sometimes in having a friendship with them, they may help, maybe when you have problems like sickness.”

Man from affected community, 18-24 years, southern region

to the urban lifestyle. Workers often came from cities and brought with them, for example, new ways of speaking and dressing, which locals sometimes adopted. In addition, workers sometimes taught local people new skills such as operating machinery and driving.

Finally, the formation of friendships and relationships was important in shaping positive perceptions of labor influx. This could happen as workers rented houses in local villages and befriended their neighbors. They also interacted with community members in public spaces such as markets, sports fields, and bars where men meet for drinks and conversation. Through these interactions, the newcomers got acquaint-

ed with community members and sometimes used their knowledge and resources to support community members in their daily struggles.

Some women found lasting relationships and marriages with incoming workers. In focus groups, female members of local communities sometimes discussed women who married workers, started families, and moved to a new location. These stories were shared with a sense of admiration for the women for having improved their life situations. There were also cases of women employed in the camps developing amorous relationships with co-workers. These sometimes led to marriage.

Box 2: Basic Facts about Labor Influx in Malawi

Where workers are from: The composition of labor influx varies from region to region. The vast majority of incoming workers on the four projects that researchers visited were Malawians from other parts of the country. Compared to international workers, they were more likely to blend in with the community, for example, by renting houses in surrounding villages and frequenting the same public places as locals. International workers were generally higher-skilled workers while workers from other regions of the country were in medium- to low-skilled positions.

Where they stay: Most managers and foreigners lived in camps, which were usually rather small with room for only a few dozen people. Malawian workers generally rented houses in the communities or trading centers surrounding the project or—depending on the projects' location—lived in larger nearby towns and commuted daily to work.

Who comes with them: Most male workers living outside the camps in communities did not bring their wives and children to live with them, because of the cost and temporary nature of the employment (often only three months). However, a small portion of them did bring their wives.⁷

⁷ Although this issue will not be a focus of this study, labor influx has impact not only on local communities, but on the women and children who are left behind at home. Impacts may include psychological and emotional strain, exposure to diseases, and lack of financial support.

The study also found positive effects for women who are hired for work in road construction (Figure 2). A job on a road team confers greater economic autonomy on women and improves their ability to provide for their families. A significant share of women workers in the road construction sites were single mothers who supported their children and sometimes older relatives as well. In interviews, they proudly emphasized their ability to provide this support and the resulting feeling of empowerment.

Though most jobs that women get in road work are low-skill and low-pay, the increased income can significantly change household dynamics. These changes were particularly strong among married women: they reported changes in their husbands' behavior including greater respect now that they were independent and brought a financial contribution to the house. Family members often welcomed their employment and the income gains that resulted.

While successful women workers could be the target of resentment by family and

“My husband started showing me a different attitude because he knows that I have my own money...”

Woman working in road project, married, southern region

“We view them as different than us, as they have something to do, and we have nothing to do. The road construction has given them the opportunity to get some money and support themselves without depending on parents or their partners.”

Woman from affected community, 18-24 years, southern region

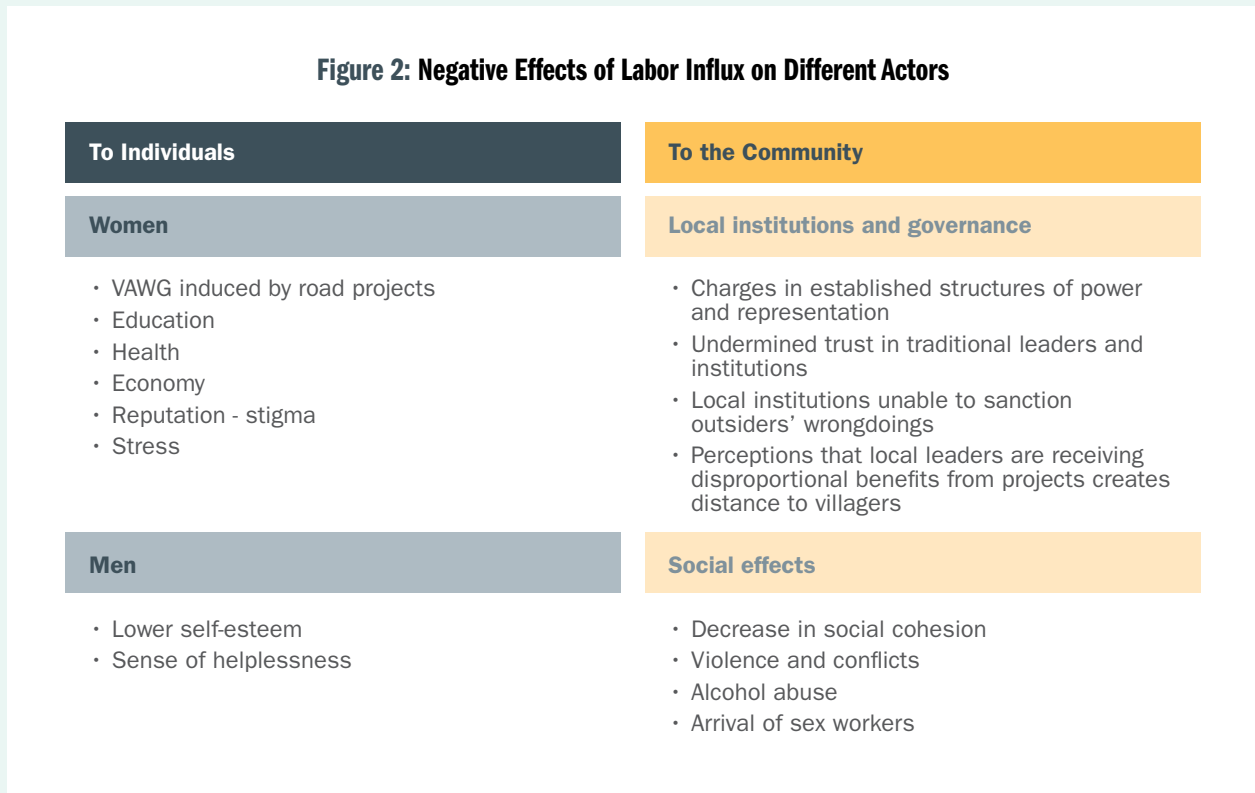
neighbors, and face accusations of sexual misconduct themselves in the camp, they also experienced increased social status in the community. In rural areas where jobs are scarce, working in a construction site was often seen as a rare and precious opportunity.

Mixing with co-workers from outside their communities enabled women to learn new things and acquire new perspectives—changes that would last long after the road project ended. Research participants shared their experiences learning new skills working with the construction company, which for some was their first work experience of any kind. During the research, women often spoke of a change in their personal and professional aspirations. They were starting to consider investing more in their career pursuits by acquiring new skills or by looking for jobs in other locations.

2.2 NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF LABOR INFLUX

Though research participants listed numerous benefits of labor influx, they also described multiple negative impacts (Figure 2). Many of these concerned sexual contacts between male workers and local girls and women. Unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases, and abandonment by the men were frequent outcomes of these relationships. Female drop-out rates at local schools rose. Community men felt resentment against the workers and grew suspicious of the fidelity of their own wives and girlfriends—which caused them to enhance the sometimes forceful control that they exercised over these women. Women who were hired into the road teams often became targets of sexual harassment on the job. In general, the newcomers’ behavior served to undermine established

Figure 2: Negative Effects of Labor Influx on Different Actors



customs and power relationships within the community.

Relationships and Extra-Marital Affairs

Research participants were unanimous in saying that intimate relationships that road work generates are the most powerful disturbance to social balance within the community. Given that these ties can involve pregnancy, jealousy, violence, AIDS/HIV, and marital infidelity, they are talked of constantly in the community.

Sexual relationships that result from labor influx come in many varieties (Figure 3). They differ in actors involved, type, level of formality,

how they began, length of involvement, and motivation on the two sides. Many are ultimately harmful to women.

These relationships can involve male workers (both local and outsiders), women in the communities, and women employed in the projects—with both genders having varied ages and marital statuses⁸. Incoming workers may enter into relationships with community women who may or may not be in established relationships with local men. Local men working in the projects may engage in affairs with female co-workers, or with other women in the community.

⁸ The research did not come across any cases of relations between individuals of the same sex.

Figure 3: Relationships with Workers Take Different Forms

Relationships vary in terms of:

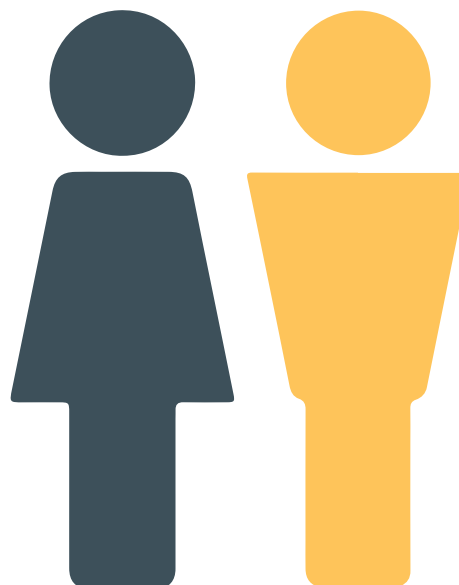
- Length
- Secrecy
- Formality
- Agency women
- Marriage status of the two people

Women meet men through:

- Interactions in trading center or quarters rented to workers
- Random meeting on the roadside when men drive by
- Employment as housekeepers in workers' quarters
- Local men and boys who act as connectors

Women and girls are typically motivated by:

- Short-term enticements such as gifts and jobs offered by workers
- Hopes of escaping poverty and fulfilling basic needs for self and family
- Romantic aspirations for a lasting relationship



The type of relationship also varied, by length, secrecy, and formality. Some were longer-term relationships in which a worker later married a local woman. There could also be temporary marriages through deceit, in which the worker proposed to a local woman and they lived together as husband and wife in the community—but only as long as the project lasted. With that, the man left her, sometimes with a child to take care of. Other relationships were informal, with the worker and the local woman having sexual intercourse periodically. Some of

these were transactional, with the worker providing the woman with gifts, cash, or the (often false) promise of a job. These sexual encounters could happen in rented houses, in the bush along the road, inside cars, and in guest houses at trading centers.

How the relationships began also varied greatly. Workers who rent houses in the community might start relationships with neighbors or with women they hire to perform services seen as women's work, such as cooking and cleaning. Another point of interaction is trading

“In the village, people don’t take account that this person is just a security guard or manual worker. They just think that anyone employed by the contractor can offer them work...So, based on lies, the stranger is free to do as he pleases, sleep with anyone, and when pregnancy or diseases emerge, he is gone.”

Man from affected community, +35 years, southern region

“They usually meet along the way as they go to school. The workers stop the girls and pick them up in their vehicles to wherever they are going. The workers also give these girls money, which acts as a bait to coerce the girls start a relationship with them. Sometimes they even do sexual intercourse in the vehicle.”

Woman from affected community, 18-24 years, married or with children, northern region

centers,⁹ where workers may approach women and girls doing business in markets or working in restaurants. Other random interactions occur on the roadside when women or girls are walking to school, collecting fire wood, or fetching water. According to participants, men often offer various enticements for accepting these interactions, such as rides in their cars, free cellphones, or work as housekeepers. While most reports stated it was men who made the initial approach, women and girls may also approach men.

⁹ Trading centers are located along major highways, usually within walking distance of villages, and function as the local hubs of commerce for rural community members. The centers usually have food and convenience stores, and in some cases hardware, clothing, and agricultural supply stores. They can also serve as a general marketplace on set days of the week, when people from neighboring villages bring their produce to sell.

Local men were reported to sometimes emulate the outside workers’ behavior and start having multiple affairs. Power shifts within the community were not exclusively the result of those coming in. Local men who were hired by the contractors suddenly had access to greater income. That could embolden them to start engaging in multiple affairs, with local women or women working at the camps, eventually abandoning their families and cutting off financial support.

Local men and boys acted sometimes as connectors, befriending workers and introducing them to local women. These connections were sometimes described as coincidental, with the local men and boys forming friendships

“Some men have divorced their wives after getting involved with ladies working on the site.”

Woman from affected community, 25-35 years, northern region

with the outsiders with no specific intention of making introductions. Other times, though, the locals provided these “services” in exchange for small gifts, cash, or employment.

In all work camps that researchers visited, sexual relationships between men and women working together were common. Sometimes the people were peers but in other cases, women became sexually involved with men who were their superiors in the organization. Women workers taking part in focus groups mentioned several instances of coercive and violent sexual harassment, but they also emphasized the consensual nature of some of those relationships. Co-workers could become partners or even marry, they said.

The why of relationships with camp men took many forms. In focus groups, women mentioned the development of romantic feelings for the men and hopes of eventually receiving proposals of marriage. They also spoke of poverty and the urge to fulfill basic needs for oneself or one’s family. It was significant that younger women were likely to bring romantic hopes into these relationships, while older women tended to see and openly speak of the relationships’ transactional nature. Community members and the young girls themselves could view these rela-

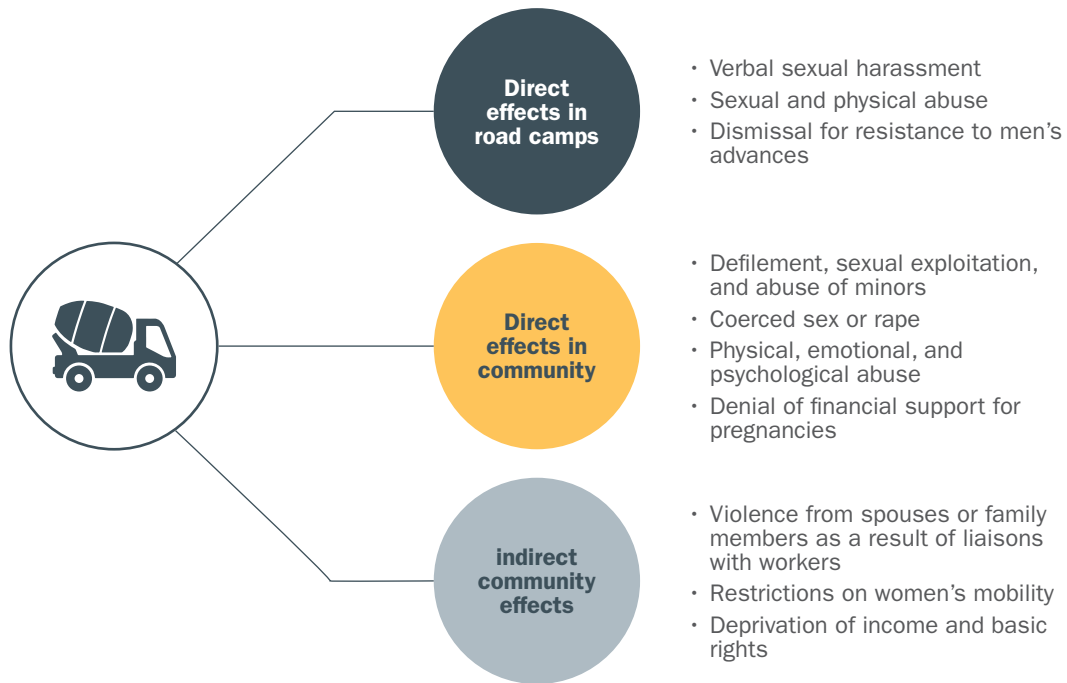
tionships as consensual, but the ties must also be understood in the framework of local social norms and power imbalances in the community, which we will discuss further on in this report.

Violence against Women and Girls

Some relationships are physically harmful to neither party but others end up in direct violence against women (Figure 4). All in all, labor influx has made women and girls more exposed to gender-based violence (GBV).¹⁰ Direct exposure included defilement, sexual exploitation, and abuse of minors; coerced sex or rape; physical, emotional, and psychological abuse; financial violence through unsupported pregnancies

¹⁰ For the purposes of this study, we use the terms “violence against women and girls” (VAWG) and “gender-based violence” (GBV) interchangeably to refer to the full range of abuses recognized by the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (DEVAW) and other international agreements. The UN Declaration, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1993, defines violence against women as “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.” The declaration encompasses all forms of gender-based violence against women (physical, sexual, and psychological), no matter in what context or setting they occur: (1) in the family (such as battery; marital rape; sexual abuse of female children; dowry-related violence; female genital mutilation/cutting and other traditional practices harmful to women), (2) in the general community (such as rape, sexual harassment, and intimidation at work, in school, and elsewhere; trafficking in women; and forced prostitution), and (3) violence perpetrated or condoned by the state, wherever it occurs.

Figure 4: Labor influx can increase violence against women



“They are even getting involved with young girls, and even those who haven’t reached puberty.”

Man from affected community, 18-24 years, southern region

and parental abandonment; and sexual harassment and intimidation at work. Indirect exposure triggered by labor influx included violence perpetrated by spouses and family members as a result of liaisons with outside workers, including physical, emotional, and psychological abuse, restrictions on women’s mobility, and deprivation of income and basic rights.

When violence occurred, a key feature of the relationships is power imbalances created by differences in gender, age, access to information, and financial resources. For example, one young woman in a focus group discussed how an older man whom a woman had met for an initial casual encounter might “forcefully push her into having sex despite [her] not being sure about it”—or rape her. In addition, a man

“When the married women in the community want to get themselves jobs, they are stopped or refused by their husbands, who usually say, ‘you want to go there and sleep around.’”

Woman working in road project, married, southern region

can engage in controlling behavior and physical violence if he suspects a woman whom he supports is having an affair with someone else.

Sexual abuse and exploitation of minor girls by adult men was a significant issue in most sites. Workers sometimes engaged in sex with girls as young as 12 years old, according to several community members. Community members expressed concern that these relationships could harm the girls’ lives and the community itself. They described their own feelings of helplessness in their attempts to counsel girls to avoid such situations.

Beyond abuse inflicted by camp workers, labor influx leads to an overall increase of violence against women in the community. Married women who engage in extramarital affairs with temporary workers may suffer intimate partner violence from their husbands. Underage girls may be targets of violence by their own family members. Community members often see violence in these situations as justifiable, something that the woman or girl “deserves.” Hence, the victims may receive no emotional, social, or economic support from others.

As the community becomes aware that relationships between local women and outside

men are common, local men can become more controlling towards women in general. Women who do not engage in affairs suffer nonetheless because spouses become increasingly suspicious of their activities. This lowers women’s mobility and access to economic opportunities, particularly married women whose husbands may prevent them from applying for jobs at the project or tell them to quit their jobs.

Women workers at road camps often endure harassment and emotional, sexual, and physical abuse from the men around them. Women workers, particularly single ones, often confront very negative dynamics in the camp workplaces. Men may touch them inappropriately, ask for sexual favors, or forcefully demand a regular sexual relationship. Women workers perceive that men assume they are—or should be—sexually available. Several women interviewees reported sexual harassment both from male peers and superiors.

Some women workers were able to refuse these advances without suffering negative consequences, but others paid a price. Some research participants shared that when women refused these advances, they could face retaliation in the form of verbal and even physical

“The problems we face when we refuse a relationship include even being beaten. You may be insulted because you have refused.”

Woman working in road project, married, southern region

“When they [male workers] ask you and you say ‘no,’ you are in trouble. They may report false stories to the office.”

Woman working in road project, married, southern region

violence. Perpetrators would directly threaten to cancel their jobs or implicitly communicate that their lives could become more difficult in the workplace.

Additional Negative Effects on Women

Relationships with incoming men bring other risks to local women (Figure 5), including increased exposure to sexually transmitted in-

fections (STIs). These include HIV/AIDS and other diseases that research participants were not able to identify. When probed for their knowledge about methods of protected sex and why people often didn’t use them, participants in women’s focus groups emphasized that it had little to do with lack of information or money. Rather, a recurrent theme was that men often coerced women and girls into unprotected sex by threatening to leave them or—in the case of transactional sex—to provide less money in ex-

Figure 5: Many aspects of a woman’s life can come under threat.

Affected dimension	Specific risks
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exposure to STIs• Dangerous abortions
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased rates of school drop-out due to relationships or pregnancies
Economic status	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rise in single mothers with no means to support children, sometimes forcing entry into prostitution
Stigma	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community defamation of women who take up with workers
Workplace	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Harassment (or the threat thereof) that causes constant stress for women;• Difficulties in socializing with co-workers casually and learning new skills

“We suffer harm because the men who work there are asking us out and we may end up failing school due to being made pregnant or even being infected.”

Woman from affected community, 18-24 years, southern region

change. During focus groups in the central and northern regions, women quoted an explanation frequently used by men when they refused to wear a condom: “You don’t eat candy while it’s still wrapped” (“*sweet sadyera mu pepala*” or “*yodyera mpepala siyikoma*”). In a site where the project had ended two years earlier, participants spoke about an increase in the number of disease-related deaths after the completion. The situation was aggravated by the lack of local services for sexual and reproductive health, preventing women from getting tested and treated, and intensifying the transmission of diseases.

Another health consequence is risky abortions. Women who experience unintended pregnancies may then get unsafe abortions. They often resort to traditional herbs and other dangerous ways to terminate a pregnancy. Such interventions may do severe harm to the woman’s health or even kill her, interviewees said.

Girls face an increased risk of dropping out of school following relationships and pregnancies. Community members and key informants from local schools reported that commencement of road projects meant fewer girls

in school.¹¹ After relationships with workers and pregnancies, girls decided they no longer needed to attend school or the worker fathering the child prevented them from doing so. In many sites, girls who left school never went back due both to lack of interest and the school’s refusal to take them back.¹²

Women who enter relationships often end up as single mothers without the means to support their children. It is common for a woman who becomes pregnant by a worker to be abandoned by that worker, who leaves the community and becomes untraceable. Affairs and related tensions between spouses in the community may lead to separation and divorce. Informants say it is women and children who end up suffering the most in these situations. A married woman may enter a relationship with a

11 The research reached no conclusion about whether the workers’ presence might have driven up boys’ drop-out rate by causing a rise in child labor to serve them. Child labor did not come up during interviews and focus groups.

12 Since 1993, Malawi has had a policy that teen mothers must be allowed to return to school after giving birth. However, the process for benefiting from this policy is complex. The young woman must write a letter withdrawing from school while she is pregnant and reapply six months after birth. When reapplying, she must send one request to the Ministry of Education and another to the local school. A study by USAID found that most teachers, parents, and students were not aware of the policy and procedures. In addition, the study argues that young mothers who did try to benefit from the policy often faced stigmatization by teachers, friends, and relatives.

“There are a lot of men [workers] who just dump the women and kids, and as a result the woman suffers with the kids and she ends up resorting to prostitution to cater to the kids.”

Woman from affected community, 25-35 years, southern region

“I remember my own experience, when we were in Form 3 [a secondary schooling level] when the project had just started...Our teacher came and said the people who have come here are not here to play, [but] from where they are coming, girls are quitting school because they were impregnated by these men. In Form 3 there were about 70 of us, but as we went to Form 4, we were 65. The rest of the girls were impregnated and are just staying at home now and some with children. Sometimes one would wonder, what is it really that they want?”

Man from affected community, 18-24 years, southern region

worker with the expectation that he will provide for her and any children. However, a common outcome is for the affair to be revealed, prompting both the worker to leave and the husband to demand divorce. As men are generally the main providers for the household and economic opportunity in these regions is scarce, the women and their children may end up destitute.

Economic need eventually forces some single mothers to enter prostitution. This was mentioned with particular frequency in the south of the country. Women there who became single mothers through relationship with workers had no means to support themselves. As a consequence, many left their children with their

parents and relocated to towns or cities. Some were said to have gone into sex work there.

Some community members expressed attitudes that blamed women and girls for bad outcomes from involvement with workers. The extent of this stigmatization remained unclear. This may be because these interactions have come to a certain extent to be considered “normal” in the community. But it is worth noting that there seemed to be no stigmatization in the form of discrimination against the children born of these relationships.

Community members had greater concern for younger women entering into relationships with workers, as it was seen that they tend-

“With the mobile nature of the work, people tend to think we are being promiscuous. So they label us with a bad name and it reaches the point where all the girls working at construction are prostitutes.”

Woman working in road project, single, northern region

Maybe on some day the staff bus is delayed and this makes us late getting home. You may be considered [by your husband] to have remained with a boyfriend and you end up quarrelling about it.”

Woman working in road project, married, southern region
region regioneiont,married, southern region

ed to suffer greater harm than older ones. Because they are in the early stages of their lives, these relationships were seen to have a more negative impact on their futures. Research participants told stories of teen-aged girls becoming pregnant, dropping out of school, and remaining at home.

The married and older women of a community generally lose out on road construction job opportunities but often must take on responsibilities of raising their daughters’ children.

Women said that older married women generally cannot get road jobs. This was variously because male managers felt they could not balance home and work responsibilities, would not provide the sexual favors of single women, and would not be up to the physical demands of the work. This left older women available to take care of children borne by younger women in relationships with road workers.

Women who do get hired at road camps often become the target of defamation.

This comes from a common belief in communities that female workers engage in sex with male co-workers at the camp. The strength of this belief is clear in the nickname that local people gave one of the camps visited—*Khanyula* (“open your legs”). Though sexual exploitation by men is rampant in the camps, this name blames the women’s action and stigmatizes them for working at the site. In focus groups, some women workers expressed frustration at sometimes being called prostitutes or being the target of gossip.

The high levels of sexual harassment and stigma can put female workers in a constant state of stress and self-policing.

Women feel they have to be constantly on their toes to avoid misunderstandings and the triggering of a chain of gossip. Married women in particular feel they

Box 3: The need for protective measures for women workers

Road construction and rehabilitation projects represent an important platform for supporting the empowerment of local women through employment and income generation opportunities but can also expose women workers to risks—both at home and in the workplace— if prevention and response measures are not put in place. Such measures can include awareness raising in affected communities on the advantages of women’s employment in projects; ensuring women are hired across skill levels; and designing confidential reporting mechanisms that can be used by women workers that reduce the risk of retaliation or of job loss. Recommendations are discussed in greater detail in annex 3.

have to limit any interactions with male peers lest gossip reaches their husbands.

While most women workers are hired locally for a single project, a few become itinerant, traveling to where the work exists—but they may face tensions in their relationships.

Itinerant female workers often can’t keep their marriages or relationships together in the way that male co-workers can as they move from location to location. This is related to the resistance that male partners commonly feel toward the women’s jobs. Gossip and suspicion of infidelity at distant work camps can trigger controlling or violent behavior at home and eventually lead to divorce.

Difficulties in interacting casually with male peers make it hard for women to take part in social networks and develop technical skills. Men normally hold the high-skilled jobs in the camps. Women say that sexual harassment and unwelcome attention make it difficult to interact professionally with these men in the

workplace, meaning there are limited chances to learn new skills. Similarly, word that a woman is spending extended time with a man while learning to operate a machine could make its way back to the husband, causing jealousy.

Negative Effects on Communities and Their Members

Camp-related relationships may spark conflicts and even violence within local families and between local men and outside workers (Figure 7). When affairs were revealed, conflicts sometimes erupted between a betrayed spouse and the worker. This could take the form of defamation, verbal attacks, and physical violence.

Local men and boys often suffer reduced self-esteem. The reason relates to the fact that the workers have more money and worldly experience than local men. The newcomers may seem more interesting to community women,

Figure 6: Negative effects can spill over into communities at large

Affected group	Issues
Local men and boy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability by local men to settle differences with outside workers on an equal stance • Reduced sense of self-esteem in competition for women's affections
Traditional leaders and local governance structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shifts in established structures of power and representation • Undermined trust in traditional leaders and local institutions due to feelings that they bow to the outsiders • Perception that local leaders and representatives get disproportionate benefit from projects, creating distance with villagers
Community members en general	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflicts within local families and between locals and incoming workers, over sexual relationships • Increased abuse of alcohol • Influx of sex workers

“It has affected our marriages and relationships as young men, because of the girls’ love for the money...They have their needs, so they get into relationships with the workers, not people of our status.”

Man from affected community, 18-24 years, southern region

including those who are already married or in relationships. Local men feel they have little to offer in contrast to these competitors. Several interviewees expressed a sense of lost manhood, and frustration that local women were being “spoiled” by the outsiders through STIs and unwanted pregnancy.

Local men feel unable to settle differences with outside workers on an equal stance. They were intimidated by the workers’ money and perceived power. One man recounted getting into a personal conflict with a worker, who took actions to temporarily damage his family’s

land. After this episode, nothing happened to the worker, and the man felt unable to make him responsible. This power imbalance often was rooted in locals overestimating the workers’ power and influence. Community people often took it for granted that the outsiders had ties to powerful people who could harm them.

Like women and girls who adopt new behaviors to get jobs or benefits from relationships with the workers, young men in the community make friendships with workers with gains in mind. Young men who want a job at a road construction company have to give something

“Where will we find girls to marry, and how many girls are we going to take to the hospital for HIV testing? If this behavior continues, all the girls will be spoiled.”

Man from affected community, 18-24 years, southern region

“The boys...try so hard to befriend the workers so that they get them beer... Those who didn’t drink are now drinking and smoking.”

Woman from affected community, 25-35 years, southern region

to get it. So some start acting as “scouts” for relationships between male workers and women in the community, even underage girls. In exchange, the workers may pay for alcohol, give gifts, or arrange for jobs.

Perceptions that traditional leaders are powerless or unwilling to solve problems related to labor influx undermine local people’s trust in institutions. Communities that researchers visited have complex traditional structures governing social life, including the resolution of conflicts within and between families (Box 4). Because they are outsiders, contractors and workers often have little knowledge of those structures, do not respect them, and do not feel accountable to the people who run them. This results in conflicts that traditional leaders are not able to resolve. In some villages, community members also spoke of cases of leaders being bribed by contractors.

Several interviewees sensed that some groups within the community—local leaders

and representatives in particular—benefit disproportionately from the road works. This perception of corruption among those in power was mentioned in many communities that researchers visited. While the facts of the situations remain in question, it is clear that locals strongly perceive a loss in their connection to their representatives. In addition, local people who had more money were believed to be benefitting more from employment opportunities, because a key strategy for getting jobs in road construction was reportedly bribery.

At a site where road work had ended two years earlier, participants mentioned alcohol abuse as one of the major longer-term consequences of the construction. During the project, several bars opened along the road, meeting demand from the outside workers and other people who came to the community due to the newly constructed road. Local men and women started frequenting these establishments. After the road was completed, the bars remained in

Box 4: Local Bylaws in Malawi

Malawi's Local Government Act provides for District Assemblies to formulate bylaws for the good governance of the local jurisdiction. People who violate the bylaws face fines. Local chiefs also have the liberty to formulate bylaws on specific issues. This has resulted in bylaws on child marriage, gender-based violence, harmful cultural practices, and the need for girls to go to school (PLAN, not dated & IKI, 2014).

Some studies have found that these laws have successfully addressed certain issues at the community level (IKI 2014). For instance, the Gender Empowerment Network in Malawi worked with traditional leaders in Chiradzulu District to develop local bylaws prohibiting child marriage. Men who engaged in the practice were fined in goats and chickens. This significantly reduced child marriage in the area and improved school enrolment (GENET 2014). Village Heads have enacted other bylaws to address the management of boreholes, water taps, and wells (Kafakoma and Silungwe 2003).

business and research participants reported that many community members had become addicted to alcohol. Alcohol abuse was evident at this site; during focus groups, several drunk individuals passed by. In addition, young men were reported to have started drinking more heavily and engaging in abusive behavior.

People at the southern site mentioned another drawback of road work, an influx of sex

workers. According to research participants, the arrival of men workers making relatively high pay drew prostitutes from other regions of the country. Sex workers became particularly concentrated around trading centers neighboring affected communities. This, in turn, was seen to contribute to the disruption of marriages and the spread of STIs as local men began engaging with these sex workers unprotected.

Box 5: Local Governance in Malawi

Each district is subdivided into Traditional Authorities (TAs), presided over by chiefs. These chiefs are of three ranks: chief, senior chief, and paramount chief. Below chief/TA, there is chief/sub-TA, group village headman (GVH) and then, the lowest rank, village headman (VH) (Baldwin 2016).

Roles of chiefs and headmen include mobilizing people for local development projects and resolving disputes over inheritance, marriage, land, and witchcraft accusations. More generally, they are responsible for ensuring the wellbeing of their people and maintaining peace and order (Cammack et al. 2009, United Nations Human Rights 2016, and NDI 1995). People whom they find guilty of offenses can be fined either in cash or kind (Baldwin 2016).

People become TA chiefs and village headmen in various ways. Chieftainship is hereditary in nature. However, TA chiefs can be appointed and removed by Malawi's president (Cammack et al. 2009). The posts of village headman and group village headman are also hereditary, but the TA chief has powers to appoint or remove them. Many new villages have been created over the years and some are not recognized by the central government (Cammack et al. 2009) but by the TA chief alone.

Traditional leaders work closely with the police. The Government of Malawi has established community police drawn from and appointed by the community. These police exist at VH, GVH, and TA levels and work closely with the main police in providing security and peace (African Minds 2008). Among the responsibilities of community police is to bring cases of violence, for example, against women and children, to the attention of the village headman or group village headman, who decides whether he or she will deal with it or refer it to the police station.



3. Factors that Contribute to the Negative Effects of Labor Influx

The research identified multiple underlying causes behind the many negative impacts of labor influx (Table 1). Some of these factors were offered by research participants directly, while others were deduced by researchers based on the participants' accounts. Those factors can be grouped into four categories: (1) the poverty of host communities, (2) gender in-

equality in the overall society, (3) the weakness of local institutions, and (4) power imbalances between incoming workers and community members. Table 1 summarizes these findings and how each factor manifests itself among women and girls, boys and men, and among community members in general.

FIGURE 7: Overview of Factors Contributing to Negative Effects of Labor Influx on Women and Girls



“The issue is poverty... We have no job, no business, so we depend on selling our bodies to get money.”

Woman from affected community, 25-35 years, southern region

“It is true that others leave their marriages to chase these men. But for three quarters of them, it is because of poverty and scarcity of jobs. The newcomers may offer such help.”

Man from affected community, +35 years, southern region

3.1 MOTIVATIONS AND DRIVERS FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS TO ENTER RELATIONSHIPS WITH WORKERS

Poverty and economic necessity are major drivers for women and girls entering these types of relationships (Figure 8). The limited means that women and girls have to provide for themselves and bring change to their lives are at the center of motivations for getting involved with workers. Whether young or old, women depend on men in their households for support, and that support can end at any time. Particularly in the northern region, research participants said it was common for a man to stop providing for his family after initiating a relationship with another woman. This was attributed to the practice of polygamy.

The greater deprivation that women face and social norms that treat their gender as mere objects of sexual desire help drive them toward acceptance of sexually exploitative paths. Older women in communities that researchers visited often spoke openly about women’s need to use their bodies to get jobs. Informants related that girls who got involved with workers often used the resulting money to pay for school fees, buy mattresses, or fulfill other basic needs.

Heightening the imbalances is the reality that women who do get jobs are generally paid less than men and are denied benefits such as lunch or rides to work. This imbalance does not necessarily stem from men earning more than women for the same type of work but from higher-skilled positions being dominated by men. Some research participants called this another reason why women could be enticed into sexual relations for extra cash or why male

“We leave home early and we are exposed to people with money... You may be hungry and meet someone who offers you money and because you are hungry, you may give in.”

Woman working in road project, married, southern region

“Vehicles are not common here and when they stopped for us we felt, ‘I am the lucky one to be asked out by a construction worker.’”

Woman from affected community, 25-35 years, central region

“Workers tell the girls that they will take them to town, so the girls get excited and they go to a town like Kasungu or Blantyre. They accept the ride because they want to see the place.”

Woman from affected community, 18-24 years, single, northern region

workers offered to help financially with a motive to exploit them sexually.

Women and girls internalize gender stereotypes under which a major—or the only—way to rise in social and economic status is through a “good” relationship with a man. While older women were more likely to recognize the transactional aspect of relationships with road workers, younger women often nurtured hopes of receiving a proposal of marriage. Exposure to the workers’ urban lifestyles, worldviews, and behaviors could make girls feel that a relationship would improve their life situations. In this context, to be “picked” by a worker could bring

a girl a boost of self-esteem and open the door to fundamental change in her life.

3.2 MOTIVATIONS FOR MEN’S BEHAVIOR

In interviews, some road workers at different levels of responsibility expressed a sense of superiority over members of local communities. They variously saw community people as backward, dishonest, or less intelligent. This helped create a general lack of respect for local customs and rules, and feelings of entitlement to exploit local women.

“African women are more sexual. The African woman is not a woman of just one man.”

Man working in road project, foreigner, southern region

“The guys also arrive here and get excited about being able to go out with a young girl. In their own country, they cannot even find someone their own age.”

Man working in road project, foreigner, southern region

“To have sex with a white man makes them proud.”

Man working in road project, foreigner, northern region

The study found power imbalances between foreign and local workers in the camps¹³—the first ones holding almost all managerial jobs—but also that foreigners had stereotyped views that oversexualized local women. Views of the local population as inferior may be conducive to abusive behavior towards local women and girls.

Male workers often demonstrated dismissive attitudes towards women in general: For example, a common saying in the road camps is *“mwana pa chainage iliyonse”* (“a child per kilometer”). Such sayings not only normalize

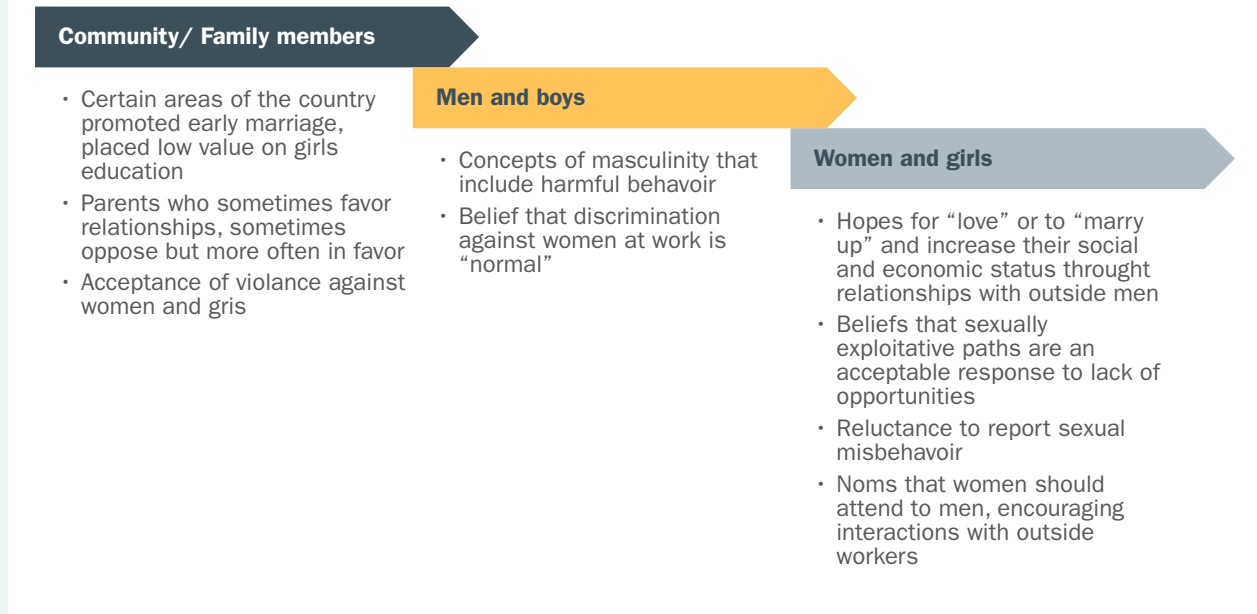
¹³ Foreign workers interviewed for the research usually held the highest positions in camps—as camp manager or head of departments. Workers from other regions of Malawi were generally in semi- or higher-skilled jobs, while workers from nearby communities were concentrated in lower or unskilled positions.

but exalt having unprotected sex with multiple women and abandoning them and the children who result from the relationships.

3.3 COMMUNITY ATTITUDES AND NORMS

Strong traditional beliefs that housekeeping is the work of women and girls can motivate their interactions with outside workers. When men come single to a community without a woman to do these chores, people in the community—and even parents—may urge young girls to go help the newcomers. If a man is seen sweeping the yard or drawing water, elders around will typ-

Figure 8: Gender attitudes and roles that contribute to exploitative relationships



ically ask a young girl to assist. Sexual relations often start through these interactions.

Most parents had negative perceptions of workers’ liaisons with local girls but felt powerless to prevent them. The main justifications for parents’ opposition, as expressed in focus groups, were the inevitably temporary nature of the relationships, after which the girl would be left unsupported; stigmatization of the family; punishment under local bylaws; and the toll on girls’ education and futures in general. Although they opposed their girls’ behavior, parents generally felt helpless to block the relationships.

In northern regions of the country, however, parents often welcomed the liaisons. In these areas, social norms accepting early marriage and placing lower value on girls’ education

shaped parents’ perceptions. In focus groups, community members remarked that some parents saw their child’s involvement with workers as a desirable path as long as the man agreed to marry the girl or to support her financially if she got pregnant. Some participants told of cases in which parents consented to such relationships, other people in the village disapproved, and the parents threatened to retaliate if the police were called in.

In a broad context, community members demonstrated beliefs and attitudes condoning violence against women and children. There was a tendency to blame women and girls for men’s negative behavior. For example, there was a strong notion in women’s focus groups

“Women go and provoke the men at the road site.”

Woman from affected community, 18-24 years, southern region

“The men come here to work. If we retained our respect as women and did not create a situation to be approached, then we could be left alone.”

Woman from affected community, 25-35 years, southern region

that men have uncontrollable sexual urges.¹⁴ Participants repeatedly cited a common saying: *“Mamuna ali ngati mwana, amakopeka.”* (“A man is like a child—he is easily taken over.”) It is therefore the role of the woman to “control themselves” and not engage with men sexually outside marriage. Women who did so anyways were seen as “offering themselves.” Another saying was *“Chigololo sichingachitike ngati mkazi sakufuna,”* meaning, “Sex cannot take place if a woman doesn’t want it.” Hence, it is often perceived to be a woman’s fault if she is physically assaulted by her husband for having an affair. Such attitudes were shared by both women and men equally. For several research

participants, physical violence seemed to be an acceptable way to deal with conflicts in the household.

Such attitudes about violence against women shaped people’s concepts of what was negative and reportable behavior. A general normalization of violence against women, combined with a perception that relationships with road workers can be beneficial to women who engage in them, raises the bar for what is considered unacceptable behavior by men. Unacceptable behavior was usually limited to extreme physical violence which “involved blood” or the worker refusing to financially support the woman or girl he had impregnated.

14 At several sites, research participants said that the role of a wife is to have sex with her husband whenever he wants. If she declines, some said, it is “violence against men” that could justify physical violence against the woman.



4. Existing Interventions Aimed at Preventing Harm to Women and Girls from Labor Influx

Communities and contractors already have a collection of interventions in place. Some of these were created specifically to address issues of labor influx, while others are long-standing social programs and services that are dealing with these issues. One group of interventions aims at *prevention*—stopping harmful effects from arising at all. A second group aims at *mitigation*—the addressing of harmful effects that do arise. These interventions operate with a variety of focus, funding, and success. The current study concludes that by and large they are insufficient for the challenges.

4.1 EXISTING PREVENTION MECHANISMS AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL

In many of the research sites, traditional leaders had implemented strategies aiming to prevent harm from labor influx. One common practice is to hold community meetings prior to the project's commencement. There, traditional leaders inform people that road work is about

to start, speak of potential risks it will bring, and provide recommendations on how to deal with these risks. In some sites, the leaders specifically warned that the incoming workers would attempt to engage in sexual relationships with locals. They touched upon risks of disease, pregnancy, and break-up of marriages and cautioned women that these relationships were normally temporary, and they should not be convinced otherwise.

All of the research communities had mother groups working to prevent young girls from dropping out of school. Mother groups are community organizations composed of older women working as volunteers. The groups attempt to keep girls in school through such means as monitoring attendance in cooperation with teachers; supporting the resolution of conflicts at school; advising girls and their parents on how to face the challenges of remaining in school; and sensitizing young girls on the importance of education and the need to avoid pregnancy and early marriage. According to key informants in schools, if a girl seems in danger of dropping out due to a relationship with a worker, teachers will typically notify the moth-

“The NGO is going into schools to talk to the girls to not be taken by the road workers but to get educated. They are also encouraging married people to not be affected by the road project.”

Woman from affected community, 18-24 years, southern region

er group, whose members will then attempt to build a dialogue with the girl.

Another traditional mechanism in some communities is bylaws (Box 4) aimed at supporting girls’ education. In some communities, if a girl becomes pregnant or drops out of school, her parents must pay a fine in kind to the traditional leader. This financial resource can then be used to pay the fees of another girl in the village to attend secondary school. The idea is to incentivize parents to keep their girls in school.

At a few sites, research participants cited non-governmental organizations that are working with women. Most of these organizations existed before road construction began. The NGOs’ interventions included raising awareness of the importance of girls’ education, financing girls’ education and basic needs, helping girls return to school after pregnancy, and setting up village saving loans.¹⁵ After the construction projects commenced, informants reported, some of these organizations stepped up awareness education on the consequences of sexual relations with workers and provided greater support for girls’ school needs.

¹⁵ Village saving loans are organized by groups of people from communities who save together and take small loans from the collective savings.

In some sites, teachers mentioned dedicated efforts to prevent girls’ drop-out. These involved monitoring school attendance, reaching out to families when a young girl stopped showing up for school, and providing counselling to the girl and family members.

4.2 EXISTING PREVENTION MECHANISMS IN THE CAMPS

Construction companies have codes of conduct for workers. The codes generally address performance and safety on the job. They include, for example, restrictions on alcohol, mandatory use of protective clothing, and ways to end conflicts in the workplace. In some sites, rules prohibit workplace sexual harassment and discrimination as well. Other regulations govern who can come into campsites. Workers generally are not allowed to bring family to the camp to live or temporarily bring in partners or outside women.

No work site was found to have broad and comprehensive rules concerning interactions

“I remember they just warned us as workers that if anyone comes from outside and claims that you as a worker, you have impregnated them, we will dismiss you.”

Man working in road project, national, northern region

with local people off the job and covering such issues as sexually transmitted diseases or gender-based violence (Box 4). For the most part, contractors viewed the workers' behavior after hours as their own business.

Only in one site, contractors were said to sanction workers for getting involved with young girls – but only if the police were involved. The police's involvement was seen to damage the reputation of the company and workers would be fired if such cases happened.

Box 4: What Are Contractors in Malawi Obligated to Do and What Are They Not?

In 2008, Malawi's Roads Authority developed the Environmental and Social Management Guidelines for the Road Sector, laying out requirements and responsibilities for actors involved in road construction, maintenance, and development. These guidelines are currently being revised to include measures to prevent and mitigate the impacts of labor influx. When this research was conducted, the guidelines and actual practices of the industry included the following:

- Contractors are not required to do a social impact analysis prior to commencing works, unless the project is financed by an international donor. For government-funded projects, contractors are required to do a Resettlement Assessment followed by payment of compensation to any families displaced by the project.
- In preparation for projects, contractors are required to conduct HIV/AIDS and safety awareness activities with employees.
- At least 30 percent of a project's staff must be women. Nevertheless, most contractors do not reach the mark.

- Contractors usually hire a safety, health, and environmental officer who also handles social issues. Currently it is not mandatory to have a social specialist on site, but plans call for including this requirement in the revised guidelines.
- For government-financed projects, contractors are not required to have a Code of Conduct for employees. This will become a requirement in the revised Guidelines.
- Contractors are not required to have a sexual harassment policy but must abide by all national laws. The laws of Malawi bar sexual harassment in the workplace or any other setting, making it punishable by law.
- Contractors are not required to establish grievance redress mechanisms for affected communities or workers. However, workers are covered by labor and trade union laws that mandate procedures for filing complaints with the employer and procedures for resolving them.
- If an employee does something unlawful as part of official duties, the company is liable. If the employee does something unlawful after hours, he or she is personally liable. Moreover, the employee may be subjected to disciplinary measures. The Roads Authority can issue a warning to the contractor or consultant concerning the employee's offense, and if the situation is not resolved, the contract can be terminated.
- The Roads Authority, consultants, and contractors all share responsibility to enforce acceptable behavior by workers in line with expected norms of behavior. Any deviant behavior should be questioned and reprimanded. Contractors are expected to dismiss non-compliant staff. It is Roads Authority policy that all people engaging in negative behavior must be investigated, disciplined, or arrested applying national rules and those of state agencies.

4.3 MITIGATION MECHANISMS AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL

When people make formal complaints about negative effects of labor influx, traditional leaders at the village level are usually the first entry point. Traditional leaders are expected to

deal with such issues themselves (hold hearings, resolve family conflicts, or approach the contractors) or refer the complainants to governmental service providers such as the police or a hospital. Influx-related cases that traditional leaders usually handle include the exposure of extramarital affairs and related requests for divorce; defilement; unintended pregnancies;

school dropouts; and domestic violence in its physical forms.

Depending on the case, a traditional leader can convene a community committee to discuss the situation. These committees generally consist of leaders or volunteers from villages. They may also include people from mother groups and the local child protection committee (CPCs).¹⁶ Apart from discussing the case and supporting traditional leaders' decisions, these committees serve as links to the community and to social welfare officers or police by triggering action on specific cases.

Police typically get involved only in cases of violence that “involve blood.” A physical abuse case that is formally reported to police typically involves serious injury. According to informants, this reporting may take place only because most hospitals require it in order to treat injuries caused by another person. Community leaders may refer victims to the police or, in some cases, the victims may start by going to the police on their own to report violence. However, in cases where individuals reach out to the police directly, officers will often contact traditional leaders for information on the case and for help in calling in the alleged perpetrator for questioning. In cases that “involve blood,” an investigation should begin and the suspect may eventually be prosecuted.

¹⁶ Children in communities and community members will report to the CPCs cases of child abuse, including: violation of a child right by not sending a child to school; not giving a child enough food or forcing a child into marriage. The CPC's will liaise with authorities to help ensure that children have their rights protected.

4.4 LIMITATIONS TO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF EXISTING INSTITUTIONS AND INITIATIVES

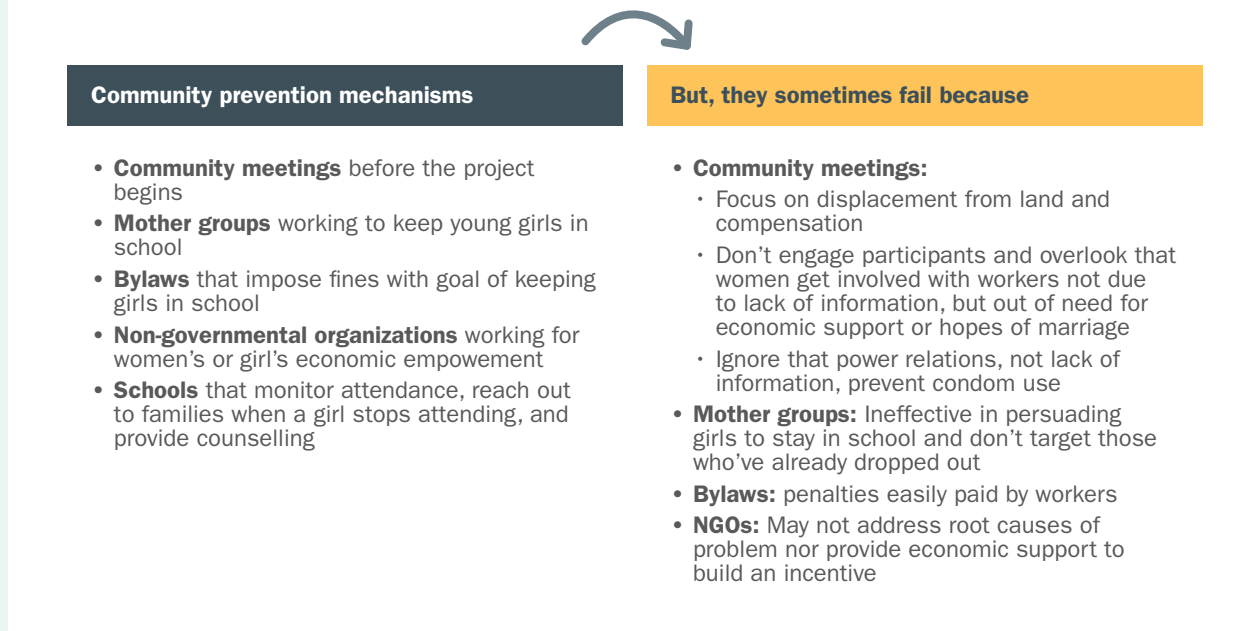
All told, researchers found that existing interventions were falling short of what the problems require.

Shortcomings in Prevention Efforts at the Community Level

Many existing mechanisms for countering the negative effects of road construction had clear limitations (Figure 9). Existing interventions were mostly the work of traditional structures or non-governmental organizations. Formal governmental institutions—such as school, police, and health units—and road contractors were not mentioned by research participants as significant actors in preventive efforts. Most organizations that work to stop school dropout do not address issues such as gender-based violence, alcohol abuse, and poor reproductive health. Although school staff cited their own efforts to prevent school dropout, community members in focus groups did not, suggesting they may have had very little impact.

Community members generally see existing awareness-raising efforts as ineffective, because they often do not address the root of the problem. Women and girls engage with workers generally not because they're unaware of potential risks, but because they have hopes of

Figure 9: Risks to effectiveness of interventions



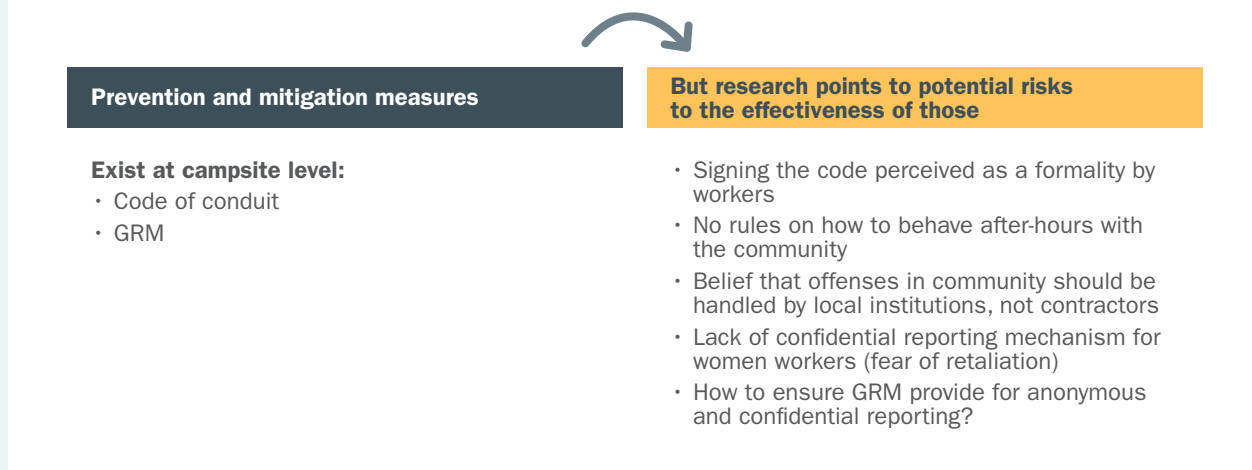
getting married and escaping economic deprivation. Yet, exhortations to avoid consorting with workers, delivered by a male traditional leader in a non-interactive community meeting, may ignore these realities and fail to resonate with the audience. The leaders' warnings may do little to help girls reflect on their own views and make informed choices when approached by workers.

Education programs that do address sexual issues directly also fall short in appreciating real-life considerations. For instance, some community meetings discussed the risks of contracting STIs from the workers and the need to abstain or have protected sex. However, during focus groups, young women shared they were well aware of the need for condoms but were unable to negotiate their use. This

demonstrates that the problem is not informational but rather rooted in men's opposition to protected sex and in the economic and power inequality between men and women.

Although mother groups can be important in keeping young girls in school, there are major limitations to their effectiveness in dealing with labor influx. First, they are active only in certain communities. In many locations, research participants did not mention mother groups when asked to list mechanisms already in place. When probed about them, participants and key informants said that these groups were not very active, particularly in the northern region. Even in places where mother groups were praised as important community organizations, they were called ineffective in preventing girls

Figure 10: Risks to effectiveness of measures taken at campsites



from dropping out due to relationships with workers. Young women in that situation were perceived to be unreceptive to advice and willing to drop out anyway.

In addition, mother groups do not work with girls who have left the school system. The intervention thus overlooks girls who may already be involved with construction workers, have been impregnated by them, or have been infected with sexually transmitted diseases. These girls may be left alone to navigate the consequences of entering unequal relationships at a young age.

Bylaw fines aimed at discouraging girls' dropouts from school are easily paid by the workers who cause the drop-outs. In cases where a worker financially supports the girl and her family, community members and traditional leaders might not seriously follow up on the issue of drop-out beyond the fine. In other words, if a girl gets pregnant and leaves school, the

fine is paid but the man who defiled her and made her pregnant has no case to answer.

NGO interventions may miss the target by focusing on education, not the particular dynamics of labor influx, destitution, and gender norms. Few organizations specifically target women and girls affected by road construction work and tailor activities to their needs. For example, many organizations help girls with their material requirements for school, such as books and uniforms, but such support may be ineffective if girls are dropping out to try to fulfil the role of wife or mother.

Ineffective Prevention Efforts in the Camps

Road construction typically revolves around a camp that the contractor builds and operates for the duration of the work (Figure 10). Equipment and materials are stored at the site,

“Once you leave the gate, you are on your own.”

Man working in road project, national, northern region

which serves as a staging area for construction. Workers may receive basic housing in the camp as part of their employment. In other cases, they are left to rent accommodations in the local community.

While several camps that the study surveyed had codes of conduct for employees, few of the codes addressed after-hours behavior outside the camp. Most contractors took the view that offenses committed by employees in the community after work were not their concern. Such cases should be handled by police, they said. In their view, “double punishment” would be unfair. In some cases, the company would take action against an employee for an offense in the community only if it is reported to police.

According to research participants, enforcement of codes of conduct can be strong for rules related to work performance and safety, but generally not for work ethics. Certain rules—for example, consuming alcohol on the job—garner serious penalties such as immediate dismissal. Other rules that set general behavioral standards for the workplace seem less well enforced and, therefore, are less respected. Many employees flouted rules of ethical behavior during work hours, participants said. For example, during their shifts, workers often used

company cars to pick up women along the road for sex.

Sometimes rules are applied—or not applied—arbitrarily, making it difficult for workers to understand and respect them. Rules and benefits are often seen as flexible and negotiable, generally favoring those in senior positions. At some sites, management overrides rules that govern who lives in the camp; workers can get permission to bring in spouses or girlfriends overnight. But there seems to be no written and clearly stated procedures concerning who qualifies for such benefits or how to request them. This makes some workers feel they are facing discrimination.

In the rare cases where contractors try to establish rules for after-hours behavior, they may face resistance from employees. In one site, the contractor had newly hired staff sign a code of conduct laying out several rules of behavior, including forbidding sexual relations with community members. In addition, a local NGO was charged with training employees on the code of conduct. Many employees later admitted to having signed the code without reading it—for some it was due to low literacy. When discussing the code, workers also expressed opposition to parts of it. For example, prohibitions of violence against women led some men to state

Interviewer: “Okay, so if a girl falls pregnant, what do people in the community do?”

Informant: They don’t do anything.

I: For example, does the traditional leader do anything about the situation?

P: I don’t know about that one, honestly.

I: How about mother groups? Are they present in this area?

P: I am not aware if they are present or not.

I: So in your opinion, the community doesn’t do anything for the girls?

P: Honestly, I am not aware.”

Secondary school teacher, northern region

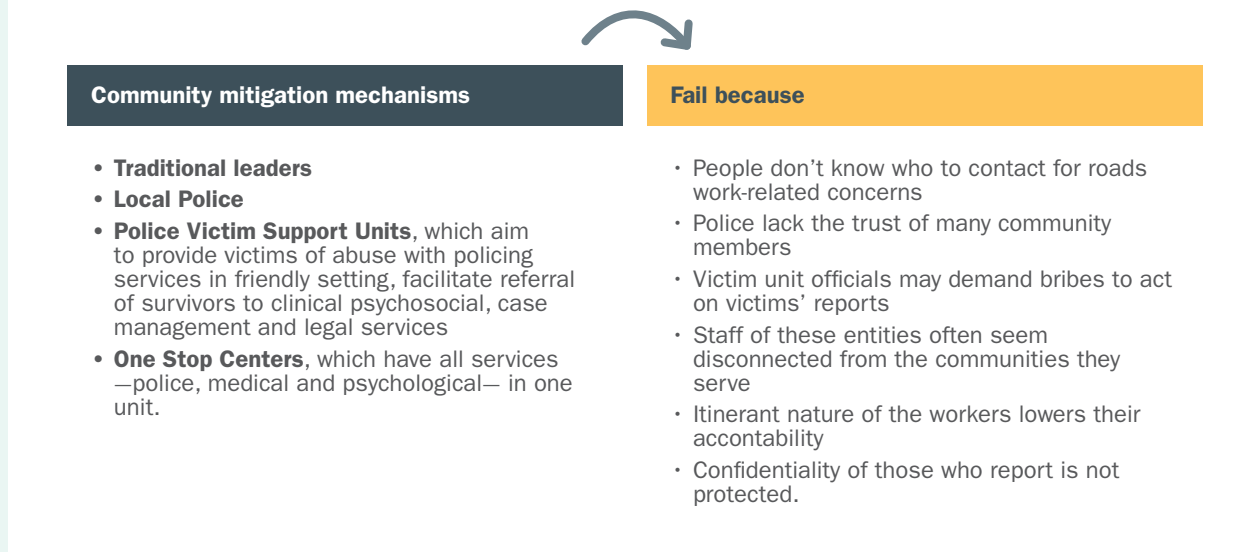
that men were suffering injustices and that “violence against men” was ignored as an issue.

Another camp reality that seems to foster sexual harassment is the lack of clear recruitment procedures and transparent hiring processes. Hiring can take place by personal discretion, with no oversight or transparency. This clears the way for bribery and demands for sex. For example, research participants said it was common for workers—often ones who had no role in recruitment—to promise local women and girls employment in exchange for sex. Because local women had no information about how hiring was conducted, they could be enticed into these relationships with the hope of getting a job.

Governmental Services that Seem Disconnected with the Community

Governmental service providers such as schools, police, and health units were not mentioned by informants as important actors in preventive efforts. In many research sites, these groups seemed quite disconnected from their communities. When asked about specific issues that local people face, officers were often unable to provide a clear and detailed response, at times admitting they knew little because they were not from the community themselves. In Malawi, public service officers such as police officers and teachers are rotated regularly among communities and therefore are generally not local people. In some sites, there was also a clear separation by social class, with officials living

Figure 11: Risks to effectiveness of mitigation measures at community level



in different neighborhoods than the population they were serving. Their lack of connectedness with local structures, customs, and issues seemed to hamper their ability to tailor services to the needs of the community. In addition, their social distance generated distrust.

Mitigation Initiatives that Also Fall Short

When asked what the procedure was for dealing with negative effects from labor influx—

such as defilement and pregnancy—participants often responded with silence (Figure 11). Based on follow-up conversations and further inquiry, the research team interpreted this to mean that people felt there were no clear procedures or that what was in place was ineffective. Participants felt generally helpless against this problem. They felt they had nowhere to take their complaints. Though they could theoretically seek help from traditional leaders or the police, those channels seemed closed for problems concerning road construction.

“We have nowhere to go [with our complaints].”

Woman from affected community, 25-35 years, southern region

“If the offended person or a parent takes action to report the case,... even the chief wouldn’t do anything about it. As someone said earlier, because we are in a village here, we don’t know where to go or who to report to. We just sit on it.”

Man from affected community, +35 years, southern region

“We don’t really use the help from the police Victim Support Unit because of the corrupt practices that take place there. I should say in our area here people have lost trust in the police.”

Man from affected community, +35 years, southern region

Concerning defilement, a redress procedure exists only if an unintended pregnancy results and the father refuses to financially support the mother and child. In those situations, the mother’s parents will typically take the issue to the village head who will try to reach out to the contractor, identify the man, and make him accountable. If this fails, the issue will variously be taken to the group village headman, to the traditional authority, or to NGOs, and, if the issue remains unresolved, the police.

Most contractors have no systems in place to help members of the community address camp-related problems. According to research participants, contractors do not provide any information on how local people can report issues and, in some cases, do not even have lines of communication with the village chiefs. This can lead aggrieved people to desperate measures

such as standing for hours outside a campsite to demand to be heard.

Women working for the contractors have no effective way to report sexual harassment. When contractors do have policies against harassment, a woman has to take the issue up with her male supervisor, who may be the perpetrator of her harassment. For obvious reasons, women don’t trust that this reporting channel will be fair.

Women workers expressed lack of trust in the police and lamented that there were no social services to help them in times of need. In focus groups, women workers described how hard it is for them to seek justice for violence in the workplace. For instance, one specific case was mentioned, in which a female worker experienced physical violence at work. The survivor was instructed by her employer to go to the

hospital but was promised money if she would keep quiet about where or how the violence occurred. When the victim later on decided to report the situation to police, she was told by local police that she would have to pay a “fee” for her case to be investigated, an apparent request for a bribe.

The temporary and itinerant nature of road work employment nurtures a lack of accountability for inappropriate behavior. Work contracts typically last only three months. The worker arrives in a new location not feeling bound by its social rules or accountable to consequences. Usually living without his family, he will lack familiar relationships that could check bad behavior and may simply disappear in the

face of pregnancy. It will be difficult to track him down. In any case, the police seem generally reluctant to investigate such cases.

Finally, none of the reporting routes entirely ensured the confidentiality of survivors. Traditional leaders who received reports of GBV could call a village meeting that exposed the identity of those involved. Reporting mechanisms within companies, where they existed, sometimes involved making an identified complaint. Exposure of survivors’ identity goes against any form of survivor-center approach to GBV care provision, in which confidentiality is considered essential throughout the process to avoid risks of retaliation and loss of security.



5. Ten Issues for Priority Attention

The study concludes that, in all surveyed regions, road construction projects pose significant risks to female workers and to women and girls living in nearby communities. These risks include physical and psychological violence at home and in the workplace; sexual exploitation and abuse; school dropout; teenage marriage; pregnancy; parental abandonment; sexually transmitted diseases; and unsafe abortion practices.

These risks result not only from the influx of the road workers, but from the money and perceived high status that they bring with them. These allow them to entrap local women, defy local rules and customs, pay fines intended to reduce school drop-out by girls, and turn local traditional structures to their own interests or override their power altogether.

But workers' involvement with local women and girls cannot be understood simply as a story of coercion. The motivations of the girls and women are complex, ranging from the hopes of finding a significant other and the excitement of getting together with someone perceived to be a powerful man, to seeking means to provide fi-

nancially for themselves or their families. These motivations are informed by local cultural and gender norms as well as the women's generally dire socio-economic situations.

Though the research identified interventions, both formal and informal, aimed at preventing and mitigating this harm, it also found serious limitations to their effectiveness. In many cases, these limitations can be traced to insufficient understanding of the complex sets of motivations—and their drivers—that underlie the creation of these relationships.

In this final section, we summarize 10 specific risks brought by road construction and rehabilitation projects identified in this study. We then explore ways by which efforts to prevent and mitigate them might be strengthened (see Annex 3 for the full set of recommendations for project stakeholders).

Thorough GBV assessments as part of project preparation must be informed by and comply with institutional safeguard rules and standard GBV research practices (see also methodological Annex) to ensure they reflect ethical standards that ensure research participants and re-

searchers are protected from any harm and that their safety and confidentiality can be guaranteed. Such assessments need to identify cultural and social elements that allow the design of adequate prevention and response measures.

5.1 SEXUAL MISCONDUCT BY MALE WORKERS

Issue #1: Employee codes of conduct are variously non-existent, poorly disseminated, or unenforced—and rarely address sexual behavior at all.

Many contractors and consultants did not have codes of conduct. Codes that did exist did not include specific rules and protocols for dealing with gender-based violence and sexual exploitation and abuse. Nor did the codes apply to employees' behavior outside the workplace. The study also found that workers had a superficial understanding at best of the codes' contents and either were not required to sign them or signed without fully reading them. Workers generally found that enforcement was limited to behavior that impacted work performance (for example, being under the influence of alcohol or arriving late to work). Behavior involving gender-based violence and sexual exploitation generally drew no sanctions.

An Approach to Consider: Codes of conduct would be more effective if they spelled out acceptable sexual behavior, and contractors re-

quired all workers being hired to understand and sign them.

A good code of conduct would detail what is appropriate and inappropriate behavior, whether on the job or off it. It would address issues of gender-based violence and sexual exploitation and lay out clear penalties for violation. The code would be written in the workers' language and be explained verbally to them. Specialized NGOs might hold training sessions to sensitize workers on health, safety, sexual exploitation, and other relevant issues.

5.2 INSTITUTIONAL FAILURES IN THE PREVENTION AND MITIGATION OF GENDER-RELATED HARM

Issue #2: Preventing GBV risks associated with the incoming of the project gets generally low priority.

The study found that local stakeholders—contractors, consultants, service providers, and community leaders—often have little grasp of their responsibilities in this regard, and no organizational platform from which to launch coordinated efforts. Important service providers such as schools and clinics are often disconnected from what goes on in the communities around them.

An Approach to Consider: A well-funded and committed task force of local stakeholders could bring focus and real results, targeting incoming workers as well as local men and women.

Measures against sexual misbehavior and gender-based violence would see greater success if coordinated by a local taskforce that began its work before the start of construction and remained in operation until the project finished. It might consist of local government officials, service providers (police, health, school), managers of consulting and contracting companies, traditional leaders, and a local NGO specializing in gender issues. Both incoming workers and local men can perpetrate GBV induced by road construction projects and, therefore, both groups should be targeted for preventive activities.

A kick-off workshop for taskforce members could familiarize them with risks associated with labor influx, the legal framework, and procedures for dealing with problems that arise. Periodic meetings over the course of the construction work would allow members to monitor and evaluate project status and craft ways to address new challenges as they arise. As the study documented that harmful impacts can occur independent of project duration, even short-term projects should design measures to prevent and mechanisms to respond to GBV induced by projects.

Issue #3: Contractors lack capacity, knowledge, and staffing for enforcing social safeguards.

Researchers generally found that project managers had a superficial understanding of gender and sexual issues and were unprepared to develop effective prevention and mitigation strategies. Projects often did not have on-site social specialists—employees tasked with addressing the issues raised in this study. The few social specialists whom researchers did encounter expressed fear of making mistakes and not knowing the best course of action for situations that were new to them.

An Approach to Consider: The Roads Authority could provide templates to help contractors and consultants develop effective programs against sexual and other abuse.

These documents might offer detailed guidance on codes of conduct, grievance redress mechanisms, checklists for compliance with social safeguards, and training materials for workers and community members. Greater effectiveness would result if contractors and consultants conducted local assessments prior to the start of construction and adapted their documents to local contexts, in partnership with local NGO members of the taskforce. Frequent consultation between the Roads Authority and contractors would speed the adoption of these protocols. So would periodic audits of the contractors' compliance.

Issue #4: Inappropriate sexual behavior tends to go unreported.

Constraints to reporting include lack of awareness of what is reportable behavior; lack of information on legal rights; the non-existence of direct or anonymous reporting mechanisms; fear of retaliation from workers or companies; and concern that reporting would cause the project to stop.

An Approach to Consider: Providing culturally appropriate and continuous sensitization to community members would empower them to step forward and report infractions.

NGOs specializing in gender and masculinity issues might team up with contractors to develop awareness-raising activities for affected communities. These could sensitize people not only about risks associated with labor influx, but give them a firm idea of their legal rights, what is reportable behavior, and how to report that behavior. Through these efforts, people might also come to appreciate that reporting will not cause the project to stop but rather to improve.

Issue #5: Many communities lack clear, trusted, and responsive channels for filing grievances.

Researchers repeatedly heard that people in the community feel they have nowhere to turn. Existing reporting mechanisms fail to keep complainants' identities secret and are often run by the very people who are accused of the misdeed.

An Approach to Consider: A robust, independent grievance redress mechanism with multiple points of entry would help assure that infractions are identified and dealt with.

Clear protocols on how to report problems to local authorities and follow up on each type of situation would help bring just resolutions. Dissemination of the protocols in the local language would assure that all stakeholders and individuals involved with the construction work and affected communities understand it. Trust and anonymity are crucial. Complainants need to be confident that their names won't become known and they will face no retaliation. Having an independent body run a whistleblowing hotline would go a long way to building that kind of trust.

5.3 HARM TO WOMEN WORKERS

Issue #6: Women workers battle negative perceptions by community members and male co-workers.

Women workers can be called "prostitutes" and become targets of vilification in the community, violence by partners at home, and harassment in the workplace. Men workers often have attitudes that objectify women co-workers as open to sexual advances.

An Approach to Consider: A national campaign by the Roads Authority portraying women

workers as equal professionally to men would help normalize women's participation in industry.

For example, posters might include pictures of men and women conducting diverse types of work tasks including operation of heavy machinery. These campaigns could be mounted in camps and strategic places in affected communities, such as trading centers, clinics, and police stations.

Issue #7: Women workers lack means to report abuse in the workplace.

Companies rarely have specific rules and procedures for reporting. In any case, women are reluctant to formally complain because their superiors are male—and often the perpetrators themselves. Women also suffer unequal power dynamics because they are fewer in number and hold lower-skilled jobs.

An Approach to Consider: Improving women's representation, power, and social networks in organizations would discourage sexual misconduct.

The situation might look up if women workers had the same pay and benefits as their male counterparts and equal representation at all levels of the organization. Training on GBV, harassment, rights in the workplace, and how to report infractions would also help. Having an outside NGO receive reports would address concerns that in-company channels lead nowhere. Women-only social event/activities, in a format that is fun and culturally appropriate, could promote bonds between women workers and women from the community.

5.4 HARM TO COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Issue #8: Women and girls may get sexually involved with workers in hopes of short-term improvements in their economic situation such as gifts or a job.

The study found this motivation to extend from women's lack of financial resources and work opportunities; unequal power dynamics in the households; and low transparency project-hiring procedures that result in male workers promising jobs in exchange for sexual favors.

An Approach to Consider: Empowering local women and girls economically could help them resist these pressures.

Women's groups at the community level could work to strengthen women's economic capacity through such steps as raising gender awareness and teaching of business planning and financial literacy. Contractors could play a role too: employing more community women in skilled or clerical positions could reduce power imbalances in the road construction workplace. Initiatives should pay attention also to minor girls' parents, because they sometimes support their children's involvement with workers in hopes of economic gains.

Issue #9: Girls in communities may become sexually involved with workers in the hopes of getting married and improving their lives in the long term.

This is why projects tend to trigger an increase in teenage pregnancies and school dropout for girls. Although mother groups attempt to prevent such outcomes, they are active only in certain locations and do not work with girls who are already out of school. Although there are governmental programs that try to help girls to return to school after giving birth, they are not implemented effectively in most schools.

An Approach to Consider: Greater resources and a broader mandate for mother groups could slow the drop-out rate.

NGOs might work with mother groups to target both girls in and out of school and raise awareness on issues of sexual and reproductive health, general based-violence, and, in view of some worker's willingness to approach under-aged girls, violence against children. The groups might discuss the consequences of early motherhood and promote activities that build self-esteem.

Issue #10: Unsupported pregnancies, parental abandonment, and STIs leave women destitute.

Outside workers often disappear after impregnating community women and girls. In addition, community men who are hired by the project and gain new income sometimes are emboldened by their new status to abandon spouses and children. Increased sexual activity translates into more sexually-transmitted disease infections. Unequal power dynamics render women unable to negotiate safe sex.

An Approach to Consider: Interventions on sexual and reproductive health would be most successful if conducted by partnerships of contractors, hospitals, and local schools.

Providing educational information regarding transmission and safer sex practices could advance this goal. So could free condoms and free HIV/AIDS testing. It is important that the many actors in a community coordinate their efforts, share resources and best practices, and apply measures that fit the local culture.

* * * * *

Infrastructure assets will always be important engines of development. But people who live near them deserve protection from the many social ills that can arise as side effects of the construction process. When large numbers of outside men take up temporary residence in communities, local girls and women are vulnerable in particular.

This study documented this danger in four road construction sites, and found that underlying it is a complex set of social and economic dynamics, many of them traceable to the reality that in Malawi women lag in wealth, influence, and social standing.

The multiple risks in play, combined with the multiple stake-holders on the scene, require a comprehensive response with simultaneous actions. It is our hope that this report will help Malawi—and other countries as well—craft this type of effort and address the problems at their source. Construction of infrastructure should leave behind no trail of social harm.



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Annex 1: Methodology

Qualitative and quantitative research represent different research paradigms. Quantitative methods are valuable for drawing conclusions that are valid for the broader population under study. They are particularly suitable for measuring the frequency of a problem and its distribution in a population. In contrast, qualitative methods allow for understanding nuances and details of complex social phenomena from the points of view of those who experience them. Although findings cannot be generalized for the entire population, they reveal multiple layers of meaning for a particular group of people, which is important when studying human behavior, beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions. Findings from qualitative research should be understood and used in ways that are different from quantitative findings. The objective is not to test causalities and generalize findings. It is precisely by studying the conditions, meanings and practices found in specific contexts that qualitative research can provide deep insights that serve to build and refine theories, and also help understanding limitations in the application of general theories to specific contexts.

This research aimed to assess the impacts of temporary influx of workers induced by road construction on poor communities in Malawi, focusing on the rights of girls and women. It had four specific objectives:

1. Understand the impacts of road construction on different social groups through the voices of workers and affected communities;
2. Identify potential sources of vulnerabilities and existing formal and informal institutions in the researched communities;
3. Identify strategies and mechanisms of resilience or positive coping among community members and workers;
4. Contribute to the development of interventions to prevent and mitigate negative impacts from road construction on local communities—specifically on women and girls—to be implemented in the Southern Africa Trade and Transport Facilitation Program project, at the national level, and in other regions where the World Bank operates.

The study was conducted in four phases, with the first consisting of learning and engagement through a review of existing litera-

ture and interviews with government agencies and NGOs. Our team consulted with 24 governmental and non-governmental institutions in Malawi through August 2017 with a goal of collecting information on the impacts of road construction works on local communities and on the rights of women in particular; identifying local stakeholders, regulations, and interventions aimed at protecting women's rights; and gaining recommendations about the most appropriate research design.

Following initial support from the Roads Authority, District Council Offices facilitated researchers' entry into communities. DCOs identified villages within the projects' area of influence and their respective chiefs. Villages were selected randomly from the list provided, after which the research team contacted local chiefs and explained to them the study's objectives and purpose. Chiefs then assisted in recruiting participants based on the criteria that the research team provided.

During the second phase, we finalized the research proposal and fieldwork plan. The preparation of the research proposal took into consideration field notes from the exploratory phase, literature consulted to date, a mapping of local service units handling cases of gender-based violence and violence against children, and notification of officials of the District Social Welfare Office at each site. We consulted on content with World Bank experts and on methodology with an external firm specializing in qualitative research and analysis.

In order to improve the project's relevance from the outset, representatives of govern-

ment and non-governmental organizations working in gender and human rights or involved in the roads sector in Malawi were invited to join an Advisory Committee for the study. The role of the committee was to (1) make recommendations for research design and implementation; (2) discuss findings from the research and their implications for policy programming; and (3) support the meaningful use of research findings¹⁷. During this second phase, a local research team was hired. It consisted of two interviewers (one male and one female), one on-site interpreter, and one on-site counsellor specializing in handling gender-based violence situations.¹⁸ The finalized research proposal was submitted to an Ethical Review Board.¹⁹

Phase three consisted of data collection and field work. Field work started with team training that covered objectives of the study; data collection methods; simulated recruitment of research participants; methods of seeking consent and assent; guidelines for conducting focus groups and individual interviews with key

17 The following organizations were represented on the advisory group: World Bank, Roads Authority, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Ministry of Transport and Public Workers, Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, Ministry of Labor, Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare, Malawi Institute of Engineers, University of Malawi, the Polytechnic, Malawi Police, National Construction Industry Council, UN Women, UN Population Fund, Youth Network and Counseling, Malawi Human Rights Commission, and Eye of the Child.

18 The counselor's main responsibilities were to (1) provide inputs to research instruments and protocols based on knowledge of stakeholders and specialized services for survivors of gender-based violence and violence against children; (2) help train research team members on how to deal with situations of gender-based violence and violence against children encountered during fieldwork; and (3) support the implementation of field work and provide on-site emergency psychological support to interviewees and team members, when needed.

19 This research was approved in June 2018 by the National Committee for Research in Social Sciences and Humanities of Malawi's National Commission for Science and Technology.

Table A1.1: Questions Posed during Focus Groups and Individual Interviews

Questions Related to Communities	Questions Related to Workers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are different groups in the communities affected directly and indirectly by the labor influx? How are women and girls affected? • Which contextual factors may exacerbate or mitigate the observed impacts? • Which mechanisms and strategies (formal and informal) do community members use to deal with these impacts? • Which entry points can be created or strengthened to promote positive and reduce negative impacts from the labor influx on communities? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which factors contribute to workers' behaviors that may negatively impact other groups? • What could be entry points to incentivize more positive behaviors? • What are the observed benefits and challenges facing female workers in road construction? • What could be entry points to mitigate risks and promote opportunities for female workers in road construction?

informants; the ethics of conducting human subjects research; writing transcripts and general data management principles; and proper ways to respond to disclosures of gender-based violence, violence against children, and human trafficking. With training complete, field work began. Data were collected through 19 key informant interviews and 28 focus groups with female and male community members and road workers at four sites: one in the southern region, one in the central region and two in the northern region of the country. Data were collected over a period of four weeks between June and July 2018. During this phase, the team regrouped frequently to re-align on key objectives and gaps of information and to conduct quality checks.

Data collection was guided by a set of questions (Table A1.1) related to the communities and another set related to workers. Research instruments in full can be found in Annex 2.

Phase four was dedicated to data analysis and validation of findings. This consisted of in-depth analysis of field notes and transcripts by different researchers (team, local partner, and research firm). A detailed report on the study's results was prepared and revised by representatives of the Roads Authority and the World Bank. Validation by stakeholders at different levels included a meeting of the Advisory Committee to present results and collect inputs from different entities involved in the issues covered by the research. The meeting also served to develop concrete suggestions and actions to improve current practices in road construction. Finally, a quality enhancement review was held, and comments received were addressed in the final version of the report.

Field Sites and Samples

Research sites were selected with the support of the Roads Authority with criteria of one site

per region (north, central, south)²⁰ and road projects in different phases of the project cycle (commencing, ongoing for 10 months, completed). The rationale behind those criteria was to assess the heterogeneity of impacts based on regional differences while accounting for short- and long-term impacts. To preserve confidentiality, the exact research sites were not revealed in the report. At the site in Karonga in the northern region, a World Bank-financed project had started several months before the research field work. In contrast to other sites, in Karonga only a limited set of key informant interviews was conducted.

Altogether, 20 focus group discussions were conducted with male and female community members to discuss their experiences with road construction and labor influx in particular. In order to consider the heterogeneity of those impacts, the team grouped participants according to different (gender, age and marital situation) (see Tables A1.2 and A1.3). In all groups, the team aimed to include at least one participant with disabilities. In addition, 12 key

informant interviews were conducted with traditional leaders, secondary school principals, and local service providers.

In the two sites where road projects were still active, data were also collected through eight focus groups with male and female road workers, with a goal of better understanding their attitudes and experiences working in road sites and identifying entry points for later interventions. Focus groups were organized according to participants' gender but also marital status and nationality. In some camps, labor influx originated not only from within Malawi but from neighboring countries. Given language barriers and differences in behaviors of those different groups, we organized focus groups by nationality wherever relevant. In addition to workers, we conducted seven key informant interviews with camp managers and contractors' social specialists.

In the two sites where road construction was ongoing, the recruitment of respondents happened in two stages. First, the team recruited male and female road workers living in camps or villages near the road works. Second, males and females in villages affected by the road construction were recruited. In one of the sites with ongoing work, community members were recruited from villages in which road work had occurred 10 months or more before, aiming to assess longer-term impacts of the project and labor influx. We recruited men and women community members from separate villages to help protect confidentiality and ease the discussion of sensitive topics. See tables below for more detailed information about the sample.

20 This was suggested by stakeholders during the initial learning phase in order to capture the different effects that matrilineal and patrilineal systems may have on communities' gender norms, attitudes, and power differentials.

21 Participants in this group were initially recruited solely on the age criteria. However, at the first site, the team perceived that putting married and single young women together in focus groups created discomfort among participants. The apparent reason grew from the fact that married and single women alike could become involved with workers. Single young women seemed uncomfortable sharing their views and experiences with workers before their married peers, while married ones did not appear happy taking part in a discussion where certain topics (e.g. extramarital affairs) could arise. From the second site on, the group was split in two: women who were single and did not have children and women who were married or had children. We included children in the criteria because of the perception that either getting married or having children marked women's transition into adulthood and brought certain social expectations regarding their behavior.

Table A1.2: Data Collection Episodes in Communities

Communities	Interviews	Focus groups
Traditional leaders	3	
Secondary school principals/teachers	4*	
Local service providers	4*	
Women 36+ years		3
Men 36+ years		3
Women 25-35 years		3
Men 25-35 years		3
Women 18-24 years ²¹		5
Men 18-24 years		3
TOTAL	12	20

* Conducted in WB project site

Table A1.3: Data Collection Episodes for Workers in Active Road Sites

Camps	Interviews	Focus groups
Supervisors	3*	
Social specialists	4*	
Malawian men		2
Foreign men		2
Married women		2
Single women		2
TOTAL	7	8

* Conducted in WB project site

Ethical Considerations and Protocols

The protocols of this research were guided by principles for the protection of human subjects. We gave specific consideration to risks associated with interviewing survivors or pepe-

trators of gender-based violence and violence against children.²²

22. Guidelines which informed the research protocols include the Belmont Report (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects in Biomedical and Behavioral Research 1978); guidelines for conducting research established under Malawi's National Commission for Science and Technology Act (2013); *Putting women first: ethical and safety recommendations for research on domestic violence against women* (World Health Organization (WHO), 2001); *Researching violence against women: a practical guide for researchers and activists* (Ellsberg & Heise, 2005); and *Ethical and Safety Recommendations for Research on the Perpetration of*

Consent as a process: Prior to all interviews and focus groups, we gave participants consent forms stating the broad objective of the research and its confidential nature; the sponsor of the study; the length of time that the focus group or interview would last; major themes that would be covered; costs and benefits of participating in the study; their right to withdraw their participation at any point—before, during, or after the research, and to choose not to answer any question. Participants had the opportunity to ask any questions before signing the forms. In addition, researchers informed participants verbally of potential limits to their confidentiality under Malawi law,²³ after which consent was sought again and recorded with an audio device. Concerning illiterate participants, the informed consent form was read to them in the presence of a witness and they thumb-printed on the form to signal assent.

Privacy: All interviews and focus groups were conducted in spaces that ensured participants' privacy. Interviewers changed the subject if the interview was interrupted by bystanders.

Confidentiality and Data Handling: All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. We stored transcripts in a protected database managed by the research coordinator, along with observation sheets, audio files, sociodemographic data, and consent forms. To ensure confidentiality, consent forms with participants' names made no direct link to the data, which

was anonymized and stored under unique identifiers. No names were written on instruments or observations notes filled out by fieldworkers.

We took special steps to mitigate risks associated with interviewing survivors or perpetrators of gender-based violence (GBV) or violence against children (VAC). Research that may touch upon these issues raises important ethical and methodological challenges in addition to those that arise in any research (WHO 2001). Although research participants were asked no direct questions about gender-based violence or violence against children, team members were prepared to deal with these issues if they came up. The following measures addressed these special risks:

- **Team training:** All field workers had prior experience with research that touched upon situations of GBV or VAC. But they also received specialized training and on-going support by a counselor during fieldwork. This training included introduction to domestic violence issues and an orientation on the concepts of gender and gender discrimination and inequality; principles of conducting human subjects research; how to recognize survivors of GBV and VAC; how to avoid disclosure during an interview to protect participants from harm; what to do if a disclosure occurs—what to say and not to say to participants, and which cases should be reported; procedures to refer participants to a team counsellor; and how to recognize and deal with vicarious trauma experienced by the research team members themselves. A specific protocol was developed for responding to

Sexual Violence (Jewkes, Dartnall, & Sikweyiya, 2012).

23 Malawi has laws requiring reporting in certain situations. Individuals—including researchers—are obliged to inform the police of any criminal activity that they come to learn about if either the victim or perpetrator is identified.

situations of human trafficking.²⁴

- **Disclosure to participants:** The research was introduced as “a study that aims to investigate the impacts of road works on the lives of community members and workers.” However, during the consent procedure, participants were fully informed of potential sensitive issues that might be discussed. This gave participants the option to prepare for or opt out of interviews as desired. In addition, only one woman was interviewed per household and women and men were recruited from separate villages to protect participants’ confidentiality.
- **Disclosure of mandatory reporting laws and reminders during interviews and focus groups:** Malawi has mandatory reporting laws for cases of GBV and VAC. During the consent process, the team informed participants that if certain information were disclosed (such as the identity of perpetrators or victims), this would trigger mandatory reporting. During interviews, researchers were trained to be continuously mindful of the need to avoid particular types of information that might trigger mandatory reporting. If the interviewer felt the participant was about to disclose such information, the interviewee was reminded of the mandatory reporting regulations. The rationale was that interviews and focus groups were not the proper forum for a formal accusation of this kind of violence, that participants could not be aware of the consequences of reporting

to the police, and that reporting could lead to retaliation by the perpetrator. Participants were offered on-site counselling and referral to the District Social Welfare Officer when necessary.

- **Responding to disclosures of victimization by GBV:** The research teams were trained how to recognize signs of victimization; how to self-examine and deal with their own preconceived ideas and attitudes on GBV that can affect responses to interview questions; how to respond to disclosures in a way that avoids re-victimization of participants; what is appropriate to ask, and how to stop or change the topic to protect participants from distress.
- **Responding to disclosures of victimization by VAC:** There is no consensus internationally about how to handle cases of child abuse because children are generally considered more vulnerable and less able to act on their own behalf. The WHO requires teams to develop local protocols for handling cases of child abuse that interviewers come to know about. The guiding principle of these protocols is to act in “the best interests of the child,” based on local conditions and advice from key agencies about prevailing conditions (Ellsberg and Heise 2005). Team training included discussions of different forms of child abuse, including cultural practices that are condoned in Malawi but violate the rights of children. The team was trained to refer cases of violence against children disclosed during interviews, even those that might be considered culturally acceptable, to on-site

²⁴ No current cases of human trafficking were encountered during the field work.

counsellors who jointly with the local Social Welfare Community Child Protection Officer would decide on the best way to deal with the situation.

- **Liaising with service providers:** During the initial learning phase of the study, the research team met with potential providers of support for the research to identify their capabilities and obtain their agreement to assist in the research. In each district, the team drew upon a list of professional counsellors drafted with the help of the District Social Welfare Offices (DSWOs) and District Health Offices (DHOs). These lists were shared with the research teams to use in case respondents needed such counseling.
- **Provision of an on-site counsellor:** This person had experience working with survivors of gender-based violence and violence against children and provided psychological support and coordinated the referral of participants to other services when needed.

Data Management and Analysis

Interviews and focus groups were conducted in local languages were transcribed directly into English. Different team members conducted, transcribed and coded each interview/FGD with the objective of quality checking each research segment and facilitating feedback processes between team members. Each field team member was instructed to keep daily field notes containing detailed observations, informal conversations, key quotations, and themes arising

from interviews and focus groups. These data were analyzed by the research coordinator in parallel to field work and guided subsequent episodes of data collection. The rest of the analysis unfolded as follows:

- Episode profiles²⁵ were prepared for each data-collection episode highlighting quotations and themes emerging from each question of interviews or focus group protocols;
- A matrix containing quotations and themes organized by sample group and topic was prepared and then analyzed for the write-up of a draft version of the report;
- Draft study findings were discussed with the Advisory Committee and additional clarifications and feedback were sought.
- The final write-up was completed.

References

- Ellsberg M, Heise L (2005). *Researching violence against women: a practical guide for researchers and activists*. Washington DC, United States; and World Health Organization, PATH. Available at: www.path.org/files/GBV_rvaw_front.pdf
- Jewkes R, Dartnall E and Sikweyiya Y, 2012. *Ethical and Safety Recommendations for Research on Perpetration of Sexual Violence*. Sexual Violence Research Initiative, Medical Research Council, Pretoria, South Africa.

25 Episode profiles are an analytic tool of the Sort and Sift, Think and Shift analysis approach of the software package ResearchTalk. They permit "vertical" analysis of each transcript—a holistic story of what is learned from each data document.

National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research. (1978). *The Belmont report: Ethical principles and guidelines for the protection of human subjects of research*. [Bethesda, Md.]: The Commission.

World Health Organization. (2001). *Putting women first: ethical and safety recommendations for research on domestic violence against women* (No. WHO/FCH/GWH/01.1). Geneva: World Health Organization. Access online at: http://www.who.int/gender-equity-rights/knowledge/who_fch_gwh_01.1/en/

Annex 2:

Research Instruments

In this annex we present the five research instruments used to guide key informant interviews and focus group discussions in the study. These instruments were developed based on inputs of local stakeholders and with the specific features of the Malawian context in mind. We do not recommend that they be applied to other contexts without proper stocktaking and prior consultation with local stakeholders.

INSTRUMENT: KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS WITH TRADITIONAL LEADER AND HEAD TEACHER OF A SECONDARY SCHOOL

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. With this conversation, I would like to discuss with you the changes brought by the road construction project which was/is being implemented close to this community.

1. How has the road construction project affected the community?
 - a. How about the effects on your village/school?
 - b. Are there different impacts on different groups (Probe: men and women, boys

and girls, people from outside the community)?

- c. What do you consider is your organization's role in dealing with changes that result from the roadwork project?
2. During the road construction project, there may have been/there are many people, men and women, who come from outside the community who work or participate in the project activities.
 - a. Can you describe the people that have come to the community?
 - i. Where are they from?
 - ii. Where do they stay?
 - iii. How do they interact with the community?
 - b. Let's take some time to discuss changes in the community as a result of the roadworkers presence and the outcomes of these changes. What changes have you seen in the community after the roadworkers arrived? Feel free to discuss issues that may be positive, negative or neutral.

- c. We also want to understand how the influx of workers may impact the lives of women and girls more specifically. Do incoming workers interact with women and girls of the community?
 - iv. In which ways and where?
 - v. What positive interactions/outcomes are there?
 - vi. What concerns/negative interactions are there?
3. You have mentioned some changes arising from the road construction project in this community. How does the community deal with these situations? *[ask about each of the changes mentioned in Q1 and Q2].*
- i. Probe: fathers' groups, mothers' groups, traditional leaders
 - ii. How effective are the methods used?
- a. Are you aware of any reporting mechanisms made available by construction companies to deal with these issues?
 - i. How do they work?
 - ii. How effective do you think they are?
 - iii. How can these mechanisms be improved?
 - b. Are you aware of any local services that could help individuals and families dealing with these issues? *[probe for police, one stop centres, social welfare office, others]*
 - i. How do they work?
 - ii. How effective do you think they are?
- iii. How can they be improved?
- c. Are there other groups/organizations in existence that can help community members adapt to those changes?
 - i. Which ones?
 - ii. How effective do you think they are?
 - iii. How can they be improved?
4. Prior to commencement of road works, was anything done in order to help the community and its members prepare for the road-work and its effect on the community? *[ask openly, then probe for different actors; gov-/n'govt/community initiatives]*
- a. What were the programs?
 - b. Who did these programs and where?
 - c. What are your views on each of these programs?
5. You mentioned several changes arising from the road construction.
- a. What do you think could have been done in order to better prepare the community before the road works? *[ask openly, then recall the changes mentioned and use that for probing further]*
 - b. What do you think can be done now that this project has already started? *[ask openly, then recall the changes mentioned and use that for probing further]*
 - c. What do you think do you think needs to be done after the road construction is completed? *[ask openly, then recall the changes mentioned and use that for probing further]*

6. We are reaching the end of our conversation. Is there anything else you would like to add or any question you would like to make to wrap-up?

We thank you immensely for your participation. The information you provided will be very helpful in helping us think about ways to improve the impact of road construction projects on the wellbeing of local communities and workers.

INSTRUMENT: FGDS MALES AND FEMALES AGED 18-24 YEARS/ 25-35 YEARS / +35 YEARS

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. With this conversation, we would like to learn from you about the changes brought by the road construction project which was/is being implemented close to this community. First, we would like to ask about the overall impacts of the projects and then we will ask specifically about the changes that may have arisen from the incoming of road workers.

1. How has the project affected the community and your lives?
 - b. How similar or different do you think your experience was to that of other women/men (same gender)?
 - c. How similar or different do you think your experience was to that of men/women (opposite gender) in this community?
2. During the road construction project, there may have been/there are many people, men and women, who come from outside the community who work or participate in the project activities.

- a. Let's take some time to discuss changes in the community as a result of the road-workers presence and the outcomes of these changes. What changes have you seen in the community after the road-workers arrived? Feel free to discuss issues that may be positive, negative or neutral.
 - b. We also want to understand how the influx of workers may impact the lives of women and girls more specifically. Do incoming workers interact with women and girls of the community?
 - i. In which ways and where?
 - ii. What positive interactions/outcomes are there?
 - iii. What concerns/negative interactions are there?
3. You have mentioned some changes arising from the road construction project in this community. How does the community deal with these situations? *[ask about each of the changes mentioned in Q1 and Q2].*
 - i. Probe: fathers' groups, mothers' groups, traditional leaders
 - ii. How effective are the methods used?
 - b. Are you aware of any reporting mechanisms made available by construction companies to deal with these issues?
 - iv. How do they work?
 - v. How effective do you think they are?
 - vi. How can these mechanisms be improved?

- c. Are you aware of any local services that could help individuals and families dealing with these issues? [probe for police, one stop centres, social welfare office, others]
 - iv. How do they work?
 - v. How effective do you think they are?
 - vi. How can they be improved?
 - d. Are there other groups/organizations in existence that can help community members adapt to those changes?
 - iv. Which ones?
 - v. How effective do you think they are?
 - vi. How can they be improved?
4. Prior to commencement of road works, was anything done in order to help the community and its members prepare for the road-work and its effect on the community? *[ask openly, then probe for different actors; gov-/n'govt/community initiatives]*
- a. What were the programs?
 - b. Who did these programs and where?
 - c. What are your views on each of these programs?
5. You mentioned several changes arising from the road construction.
- a. What do you think could have been done in order to better prepare the community before the road works? *[ask openly, then recall the changes mentioned and use that for probing further]*
 - b. What do you think can been done now that this project has already started? *[ask openly, then recall the changes mentioned and use that for probing further]*
 - c. What do you think do you think needs to be done after the road construction is completed? *[ask openly, then recall the changes mentioned and use that for probing further]*
6. We are reaching the end of our conversation. Is there anything else you would like to add or any question you would like to make to wrap-up?
- We thank you immensely for your participation. The information you provided will be very helpful in helping us think about ways to improve the impact of road construction projects on the wellbeing of local communities and workers.
- INSTRUMENT: KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS WITH LOCAL SERVICE PROVIDERS
1. Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. With this conversation, I would like to get to know about more about the work that your organization does and discuss the changes the road construction project may have brought to the community and to your work. I would like to start by asking you to introduce yourself and this organization.
- a. What is your role here?
 - b. Describe a typical day of work for you.
 - c. What is the profile of the individuals who access this unit?
 - d. What do people expect when they come here/reach out to you?

- e. What challenges do people have to access this unit/reach out to you?
2. Are cases of GBV/VAC are prevalent in this community?
 - a. What types of cases of GBV/VAC are there?
 - a. Who are the perpetrators of these different forms of violence?
 - b. Who are mostly the victims of these different forms of violence? [*probe for each type of violence*]
 - c. What do you see as the main contributing factors to these issues?
 3. Apart from this service, what other structures exist to address issues related to GBV/VAC in these communities? [*ask openly, then probe for governmental, NGO, contractors, community structures. For each mentioned, ask:*]
 - a. Who is responsible for these mechanisms/organizations/services/interventions?
 - b. How effective are they?
 - c. What challenges do they face?
 - d. How can they be strengthened?
 4. Has the road construction project affected your work in any way? Explain. [*if not mentioned, probe for cases of GBV/VAC, sexual exploitation related to the road construction*].
 5. What do you think could be done in order to:
 - a. (i) prevent GBV/VAC related to the road construction project?

- b. (ii) deal with situations of GBV/VAC related to the road construction project once they happen? [ask about interventions targeting each of those involved – workers, women, girls, families, men – and different spaces – schools, community governance structures, local services].

INSTRUMENT: KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW WITH ROAD CONSTRUCTION CAMPSITE MANAGER / SOCIAL SPECIALIST AT THE SITE

1. Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. With this conversation, I would like to get to know more about the work that your organization does, how you manage this site and discuss the changes the road construction project may have brought to the community.
 - a. I would like to start by asking you to introduce yourself and tell me a bit about this project.
 - b. What is your role and responsibilities in this project?
 - c. How many workers have been employed for the project, what are their roles and profiles (origin, gender, level of qualification, marital status)?
 - d. What sort of benefits do workers have access to (income, time off/vacation, free transport)?
2. We are interested in understanding how the campsites are organized.
 - a. Who stays in this camp? Are there any workers who do not stay in this camp? Where do they stay?

- b. What rules govern people who stay in this camp? [*probe: both men and women? Married and single workers? Dependents of workers?*]
3. I would like to discuss your impressions on the impacts the project may have had on workers' lives.
- a. How do you think working and living in road sites can affect workers' lives and wellbeing?
- b. Do you think these effects are different for different profile of workers (origin, gender, level of qualification, marital status)? How?
- c. Which strategies do you see male and female workers using to cope positively with the challenges related to working on these sites?
4. Considering your experience managing workers in road construction sites:
- a. What strategies and mechanisms do managers use to monitor workers' wellbeing?
- b. What strategies and mechanisms do managers use to monitor workers conduct both in the camp as well as wider community?
- Probe:
- Do you have any code of conduct for your workers?
 - What does this code of conduct say and how is it enforced?
- Does the code of conduct differentiate between men and women? Explain.
 - What happens if any worker breaks this code of conduct?
 - Can you give examples of cases of workers who have breached the code of conduct and how you have managed these cases?
 - Do you have suggestions for how these situations can be managed differently in the future?
- c. You have told me a number of approaches that are used to manage road workers. How effective do you consider these approaches? Explain. [*ask about each of them*]
- d. What procedures exist to deal with grievances by your workers as well as people from the community? Explain.
5. Prior to commencement of road works, were any measures taken by the community, the government or the construction company to prepare community members or workers for the road work and its effect on their lives? What were the programs and how effective were they? Explain.
6. Thinking changes in the community arising from the labor influx, what do you think could be done in order to better prepare the community and workers before, during and after the road works?

We thank you immensely for your participation. The information you provided will be very help-

ful in helping us think about ways to improve the impact of road construction projects on the wellbeing of local communities and workers.

INSTRUMENT: FGDS WITH MALE/FEMALE MARRIED/SINGLE WORKERS

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. So just to remind you, the objective of this study is to understand the impacts that road construction sites may have on the lives of both workers and the people that live in the areas surrounding the project. With that, we aim to identify strategies to promote more positive impacts and avoid any negative impacts on all those involved.

1. So let's start with a general question [*be playful*]. How has it been for you the experience of working in a road construction project? We can talk about negative, positive and new aspects – please feel free. [*ask openly and let them guide. Then probe for the positive/negative aspects, if those have not been mentioned*].
 - a. How do you think your experience was similar or different to that of other women/men [*ask for the same sex, but other sample group*]?
 - b. How do you think your experience was similar or different to that of women/men [*ask about the opposite gender*]?
 - c. Thinking of the challenges men/women can face through this work, which strategies do they use to male/female workers use here to deal or cope with them? [*ask openly first, let them talk, then refer to*

specific issues mentioned in the previous questions].

2. We are interested in understanding the views of people regarding the work that is being done here in the camp.
 - a. What are the views of your family regarding your work here?
 - b. What are the views of community members regarding your work here?
 - c. How do these opinions affect your lives? [*ask openly, then probe specifically for family/community*]
3. We are interested in understanding rules that exist for workers here.
 - a. As workers of this road construction company, are there any rules that you have to follow? And if so, which ones? [*ask general, then about specific ones related to having relationships*].
 - i. [*If so*]: What are your views regarding these rules?
 - ii. [*If so*]: How effectively are these rules enforced?
 - b. And for those living in the campsite, are there any specific rules that they have to follow? And if so, which ones? [*ask general, then about specific ones related to having relationships*].
 - i. [*If so*]: What are your views regarding these rules?
 - ii. [*If so*]: How effectively are these rules enforced?

4. We understand that some of the people who are working here in the site may not be from the region and have come from other places. We are interested in understanding how those who have arrived interact with those who are from the villages around here.
 - a. In which places do these interactions take place?
 - b. How do you think the community perceives these interactions?
 - c. What are positive aspects of these interactions?
 - d. What challenges are from these interactions?
5. Prior to commencement of road works, outside of technical training, what other training programs did your company offer to prepare you for the road work? Talk about the pros and cons of these training programs.
6. Thinking about your experience as workers in a road construction project, what do you think can be done in order to promote more positive impacts on the lives of:
 - a. Workers of such projects? *[ask openly, then recap on the issues mentioned earlier in the interviews]*
 - b. People who live in the villages surrounding these projects? *[ask openly, then recap on the issues mentioned earlier in the interviews].*
7. We are reaching the end of our conversation. Is there anything else you would like to add or any question you would like to make to wrap-up?

We thank you immensely for your participation. The information you provided will be very helpful in helping us think about ways to improve the impact of road construction projects on the wellbeing of local communities and workers.

Annex 3: Recommendations for stakeholders

Risk identified	Current initiatives and action in place	Ways to enhance current initiatives and actions	Additional initiatives to consider
Sexual misconduct of workers	Code of Conduct	<p>All workers could be required to sign a code of conduct as part of the employment contract that details appropriate behavior during work and non-work hours, including sanctions for noncompliance (e.g., termination), with versions in the languages pertinent to the workers' origins.</p> <p>The code of conduct should explain the rationale for including such rules (such as forbidding sexual relationships with community members). Given that many workers can be illiterate, the content of the code of conduct should be explained verbally to all workers.</p> <p>Codes of conduct are often limited to working hours and environment but must be amended to include how laborers are expected to behave outside of work context, including forbidding relationships with underage women.</p> <p>Rules related to behavioral standards should be enforced as well as those related to safety standards.</p>	<p>The study found that projects generally lack a dedicated social specialist that has been trained on how to address GBV cases. Both contracting and supervising firms must have social specialists trained on GBV and such provisions should be included in Terms of References. In high risk contexts, it is important for the supervision consultant could have a GBV specialist.</p> <p>Workshops providing a detailed and culturally appropriate training on the code of conduct need to be offered to all contractors and supervising consultants. Contractors and supervisors need to be sensitized regarding the full spectrum of their responsibilities relating to social and environmental safeguards, including gender-based violence and sexual exploitation and abuse.</p> <p>The Code of Conduct should be widely disseminated to show a zero tolerance policy.</p> <p>For workers, half day or day-long events should be organized by the implementing agency, involving all stakeholders (contractor, subcontractors, resident engineer, service provider, and district authorities) to sensitize them on health, safety, sexual exploitation and abuse, and other relevant issues. The project's environmental and social management plan should require this as a mitigation measure.</p>

26 The WBG has recently launched a Good Practice note: "Addressing Gender Based Violence in Investment Project Financing involving Major Civil Works" prepared to assist Task Teams in establishing an approach to identifying risks of GBV, in particular Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) and Sexual Harassment (SH), that can emerge in IPF with major civil works contracts and to advise Borrowers accordingly on how to best manage such risks. The GPN builds on World Bank experience and good international industry practices, including those of other development partners. While World Bank Task Teams are the primary audience, the GPN also aims to contribute to a growing knowledge base on the subject.

The specific recommendations presented in this Annex are direct reflections of the context and challenges encountered in Malawi as part of this research. They do not serve as blue-prints for other contexts or projects but may potentially inform those.

Risk identified	Current initiatives and action in place	Ways to enhance current initiatives and actions	Additional initiatives to consider
			<p>These training events could occur with regular frequency given the ebb and flow of influx of workers to ensure new workers receive the same information prior to commencing work.</p> <p>Include provisions in the contractors' contracts for time off for non-resident workers on pay-weekends so they can travel back to their original places to be with their families. Contact with their families could serve as protective factor for not engaging in risky and harmful behavior.</p> <p>The study found that workers can often approach local women and girls by luring them with company vehicles and sometimes even using vehicles as meeting place for these encounters. Contractors and supervision companies could put in place strict rules and monitor vehicle use to eliminate opportunities for such behavior.</p>
	GRM	<p>A clear protocol for how to report and follow-up on a case of GBV must be established. This protocol needs to guarantee that the information about a potential case can be shared confidentially and anonymously across the various entities responding to the case and that the safety of the survivor is protected. This protocol should be disseminated in the local language with all stakeholders and individuals involved with the project and affected communities.</p> <p>Local monitoring committees may be established with the responsibility to monitor that the GRM is functioning. This institution can function as a link between community, social welfare officers and other service providers. Committees should be able to accept reports directly, and should be comprised of women and youth, in addition to the other core members, to ensure victims/survivors feel comfortable sharing sensitive information, and that are more likely to come forward.</p> <p>The GRM response timeline should ensure that survivors receive services as soon as the case is reported, even if the formal response timeline might be more extensive.</p>	<p>The GRM for GBV cases should be integrated into the standard GRM to ensure that systems of reporting grievances are not duplicated.</p> <p>The study showed that lack of trust and confidentiality are important barriers for individuals to report cases of GBV. It is important to conduct capacity building and awareness raising efforts to traditional leaders on GBV and the need for confidentiality.</p> <p>It is recommended that projects provide survivors with multiple entry points to report cases. Projects could map and coordinate with service providers in the project area. These providers could be trained to receive reports directly and also serve as a place to which projects could refer those who report. Information on these centers should be constantly disseminated to community members and workers.</p>

Risk identified	Current initiatives and action in place	Ways to enhance current initiatives and actions	Additional initiatives to consider
	Consultation and awareness raising with Communities	Ensure that voices of different groups of the community are heard and not 'silenced' by more powerful local actors.	<p>Raising awareness and sensitizing the communities and contractors about the risks associated with labor influx is critical.</p> <p>The study shows that attempting to raise awareness using traditional leaders as disseminators may not be effective in changing behavior. Instead, specialized NGOs working on gender and masculinities should work together with contractors to develop specific activities around these issues, disseminate information about the risks associated with labor influx, and educate communities on the process for handling potential cases.</p>
Girls drop out of school due to (sexual) involvement with workers	Mother Groups	<p>The methods used by Mother Groups to work with at risk girls should be expanded more evenly across different areas of the country. In addition, this work may potentially be enhanced to ensure effective measures are used in preventing drop-outs in light of labor influx.</p> <p>Ensure Mother Groups are targeting girls who have already dropped out.</p>	In coordination with the methods used by Mother Groups, the projects should work directly with teachers, school administrators and families to educate on gender sensitization and generate discussions of opportunities for transitioning into adulthood that go beyond motherhood/ marriage.
Sexual involvement of minors with workers		<p>Awareness raising activities on legal implications as well as overall consequences of early motherhood could be done on an ongoing basis. These could target both community groups including secondary school students, and workers.</p> <p>Encourage workers to bring their families to live at work sites where possible.</p>	
Spread of STIs		<p>Provide educational information and material regarding transmission and safer sex practices, as well as codes of conduct around sexual relationships.</p> <p>Provide free access to condoms.</p>	

Risk identified	Current initiatives and action in place	Ways to enhance current initiatives and actions	Additional initiatives to consider
Sexual harassment at the workplace		<p>Encourage workers to bring their families to live at work sites.</p> <p>Establish clear and transparent rules and procedures for hiring new staff.</p> <p>Establish clear policy on sexual harassment and provide on-going training to all staff.</p> <p>Employ more community members—particularly women—in skilled or clerical positions to reduce power imbalances in the road project workplace.</p> <p>Provide safe and confidential ways of reporting sexual harassment by ensuring there are women in positions to receive and respond to reports of cases of sexual harassment.</p>	Form worker committees, and nominate female worker representatives to be the point persons for workers to forward sexual harassment complaints.
Women get involved with workers due to economic necessity and lack of local opportunities.		<p>Link project with other initiatives that operate locally to enhance women's economic opportunities and other empowerment initiatives. These initiatives must include a component of how gender power dynamics are impacted by labor influx.</p> <p>Provide specific incentives for contractors to hire local women across all levels of the firm.</p>	
Increase in gender-based violence against women and girls, and intimate partner violence		<p>Advocate for stronger gender-based violence laws and strengthen enforcement of existing laws.</p> <p>Raise awareness around the normalization of violence against women and girls. Include a rights-based perspective and the legal implications in awareness raising activities with communities.</p> <p>Inform community members about services available for victims of violence and other forms of gender-based violence including psycho-social, medical, and legal services.</p>	
Unwanted pregnancies		<p>Education for communities (targeting women and girls, men and boys) and contractors regarding risks of sexual activity.</p> <p>Free access to condoms.</p>	

Risk identified	Current initiatives and action in place	Ways to enhance current initiatives and actions	Additional initiatives to consider
Reluctance to report inappropriate sexual behavior and sexual harassment	GRM	Existing methods of reporting potential incidents need to be evaluated to ensure that reporting can be anonymous and confidential. Communities need to be informed on the proper reporting protocol and procedures for responding to a case.	Sensitization on the normalization of violence and harassment against women and children need to be provided to address existing beliefs that such behavior is acceptable.
Low responsiveness and capacity of service providers			<p>The study found that service providers (police, health, schools), were often not trusted or were disconnected from community members. Prior to the project, training and sensitization should be done with these providers, including the development of protocols on how to deal with cases of GBV.</p> <p>Support local medical facilities for “rape kits” as well as helping in providing the necessary support and evidence facilities for survivors to report crimes that can survive the burden of proof in court.</p>

Annex 4: Other Negative Effects of Labor Influx

This study focuses on gender-related problems of labor influx. However, depending on place and circumstances, labor influx can cause important challenges that are not necessarily related to gender.

- *Environmental harm:* This can include slipshod disposal of solid waste generated by workers; wastewater and latrine discharges that pollute nearby waters; pressure on local natural resources, such as fresh water and timber; illicit farming, hunting, and fishing; trade in endangered species; the take-over of land for camp use and access roads; and noise and lighting that affects local wildlife.
- *Social conflict:* Conflicts may arise between the local community and the construction workers over religious, cultural, or ethnic differences, or over competition for local resources. Tensions may also arise between different groups within the labor force. Ethnic and regional conflicts may increase if workers from one group are perceived as moving into the territory of another.
- *Increased crime:* The influx of workers and service providers into communities may increase the rate of crime or stoke feelings of insecurity in the local community. Illicit behavior can include theft, physical assaults, substance abuse, prostitution, and human trafficking. Local law enforcement may be unprepared for the temporary increase in population.
- *Influx of additional population, or “followers:”* Especially in projects with large footprints and a long-time frame, people other than the workers may migrate to the project area. These can be people who hope to get a job with the project, family members of workers, traders, suppliers, and sex workers.
- *Increased burden on public services:* Construction workers can create unsustainable heightened demand for public services such as water, electricity, medical care, transport, and education.
- *Child labor and school dropout:* Increased opportunities to sell goods and services to the incoming workers can lead to child labor to produce and deliver these goods and services, which in turn can raise school dropout rates.

- *Inflation:* A significant increase in demand for goods, services, and accommodations due to labor influx may drive up local prices and crowd out community consumers.
- *Increase in traffic and related accidents:* Delivery of supplies for the project and the

transportation of workers can increase traffic and accidents, as well as put additional burden on the local transportation infrastructure.

Annex 5: Matrilineal versus Patrilineal Cultures in Malawi

Two customary systems of inheritance—the matrilineal and the patrilineal—are found in Malawi society. Under the matrilineal system, the position of chief is handed down through the female line, as is land and other property. Women tend to have primary rights to land. A man's rightful heirs to his land are his sister's children (Pachai 1978). This system governs land transfers in the central and southern regions (Ng'ong'ola 1982, Pachai 1978, and Peters 2010), with the exception of Chikwawa and Nsanje districts in the south.

There are two types of marriage in matrilineal societies. One is *chikamwini*, in which a man moves to his wife's village of birth at marriage and lives with her relatives, and lineage is traced through women. The other is *chitengwa*, where a woman leaves her natal village and lives in the man's but the children belong to the woman's lineage (Ngwira 2002 and Place and Otsuka 1997). *Chikamwini* is practised among the Yao, Nyanja, and Lomwe peoples of southern Malawi (Peters 1997, Mtika and Doctor 2002, Peters and Kambewa 2007, and Takane 2007). A husband does not have any decision-making powers on the wife's land rights. Upon the

death of the wife or divorce, the husband loses the right to his wife's land and returns to his natal village while his children remain in his wife's village (Takane 2007). *Chitengwa*, meanwhile, tends more to be practised in the central region among the Chewa people.

Under the patrilineal system, a woman who marries leaves her village and relatives and joins the husband in his natal village, and children from this marriage belong to the husband and his lineage. In such societies, bride-wealth in the form of cattle or cash equivalent is paid by the man and his family. If it is not paid, the woman and her children belong to her family. If the woman dies before the husband pays bride-wealth, she may not be buried until bride-wealth is paid or her family decides to bury her in her natal village. The patrilineal system is found in the northern region, for example, among the Ngoni of Mzimba and the Tumbuka of Rumphu (Naomi 2002 and Place and Otsuka 1997) and the Nsanje and Chikwawa in southern Malawi. In patrilineal systems children, especially sons, have access to their father's wealth including land (Mtika and Doctor 2002).

Research conducted in nine districts in Malawi regarding women and property inheritance rights revealed that in both matrilineal and patrilineal systems of marriage women have few or no independent rights to land property. This is due to the mixture of traditional customs and women's unequal access to legal services, flaws in administration, and adjudication of

women's inheritance claims at the local level (Ngwira et al. 2002 and Chiweza 2005). This is also reflected in the fact that most land is still inherited, owned, and worked by men. According to the 1993 Agricultural Census, the percentage of female landholders in 1993 was just 32 percent (FAO Gender and Land Rights Database).

Annex 6: Advisory Committee for this Study

Stakeholder

Roads Authority

Ministry of Transport and Public Works

Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare

Ministry of Education, Science and Technology

Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development

Ministry of Labour, Youth, Sports and Manpower Development

Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning Department

Malawi Police Service

Female Contractor

National Construction Industrial Council of Malawi

University of Malawi, The Polytechnic

Malawi Institute of Engineers (MIE) - Women's Chapter

UNICEF

UNFPA

UN Women

CONGOMA

NGO Gender Coordination Network - MEGEN

Malawi Human Rights Commission

YONECO

Malawi Human Rights Consultative Committee

Eye of the Child

National Human Rights Council of Malawi

Center for Human Rights and Rehabilitation (CHRR)
