



# UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI

## DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS



**BOOK OF ABSTRACTS**

# Does household welfare change with finance access? The case of women and the youth in The Gambia (Manja, LP., & Badjie, I.A.)

## Review of Development Economics

### form of finance access



### youth



### women



### Abstract

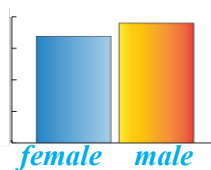
Poor access to finance remains one of the key challenges faced by households and businesses in The Gambia in the face of an underdeveloped financial market. Yet, women and the youth are further disadvantaged as they are reported to face peculiar challenges in finance access, in spite of efforts taken by different stakeholders, including the government. Therefore, this study examines the impacts of various forms of finance on welfare for these marginalized groups by supporting quantitative analyses of the Integrated Household Survey data with some qualitative information. Adopting Lokshin and Sajaia's (2004) endogenous regime switching estimator, due to the nonrandomness of access to finance, the study finds that women households significantly benefit from informal finance through improved food consumption expenditure, and from formal finance through improved income amidst a growing business culture. For the youth, estimates of treatment effects show that informal finance is significantly welfare-degrading, but formal finance improves almost all measures of welfare

# Complex and Multifaceted Sociodemographic Depression Correlates in Malawi During COVID-19 {Daniel Chikatentha, Edister Jamu, and Gowokani Chijere-Chirwa)

## COVID-19 and Psychological Distress in Africa's Communitarian Perspective



*respondents*



*female*

*male*



*less depression*

### Abstract

This chapter analyses socioeconomic factors associated with depression during the COVID-19 pandemic in Malawi. There are many mental health disorders - ranging from anxiety to depression, all the way to phobias. The after-effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have been detrimental to citizens' social and economic welfare at both national and household levels. Socially, the containment measures and restrictions directly affected access to social services, such as child health care and education, religion, and culture. Economically, the pandemic has slowed down the global economy, the national economy, and household income by losing jobs and businesses. The current study used the sixth wave of the 2021-2022 High-Frequency Phone Survey on COVID-19 produced by the Malawi National Statistical Office. The survey had 1,584 respondents. The current study found that males (19%) were more likely to be depressed than females (17%), indicating that gender-specific factors may contribute to depression. Further, the older age group (55+ years) seemed to have less depression, which suggests that certain protective factors may develop with age. In addition, the effect of wealth status on depression was heterogeneous, suggesting that dealing with depression may require a multifaceted approach that considers factors beyond financial resources

# Assessing the potential of syn-rift sediments for geochronological dating and its implications for the development of Makanjira-Shire basin in south Malawi Rift {Zuze Dulanya, Aayush Srivastava Tim C. Kinnaird, Blackwell Manda, Dalitso Kafumbata, Edister Jamu, Alick Bwanali, Winford Masanjala}

## Quaternary Science Advances

### Abstract

The Upper Shire River basin, located within the zone of progressive interaction and linkage between the southern Malawi Rift and Shire Rift Zone, East Africa, presents an early-stage rift setting where rapid denudation processes take place and have profound influence on the geomorphological evolution of the region. The basin is key to the understanding of mechanisms involved in propagation and growth in young rifts. Although the tectonics in the region are well studied, lack of age constraints due to well-dated strata poses challenges in the understanding of the timing and mechanisms of rift evolution in this section of the south Malawi Rift. We used syn-rift sediments

deposited from the rift shoulders to test the applicability of OSL and radiocarbon dating techniques in a poorly dated data-constrained region of the Malawi Rift. Our results suggest that proper sampling strategy is paramount in using the OSL technique for dating in areas of high dosage such as the one under consideration. However, the technique offers potential for use in these areas. Furthermore, we conclude from these findings that the evolution of the Upper Shire basin was triggered by tectonic movements along the Makongwa scarp that were responsible for redirecting the Likwenu River into the in the Zomba Graben through the Upper Shire at least during the Upper Pleistocene

# The effects of remittances on household food nutrition security in the context of multiple shocks in Malawi {David Eddings Zingwe, Akuzike Ellinah Banda & Laston Petro Manja}

## Cogent Food and Agriculture

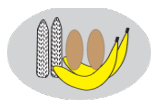


### Abstract

The increase in the incidence and intensity of multiple shocks emanating from various fronts has left households vulnerable to various upheavals, case in point, food shortage-a prerequisite of food insecurity and poor nutrition. In analysing the nexus between remittances and food security and nutrition in the context of shocks, the paper adopts and links the household utility framework to the insurance hypothesis from the new economic labour migration theory. Using the coping strategy index, food consumption score, and household dietary diversity, we assess the effects of remittances on food security and nutrition in the context of shocks. The novelty of this paper is the creation of a shock index that captures the intensity of correlated multiple shocks that affect households. We concomitantly capture overall remittances, and disaggregated the remittances based on form and location. By employing integrated household survey round 5 data, and various econometric techniques, the paper finds that remittances are only effective in improving household food and nutrition security for households facing more intense multiple shocks but have no effect on dietary diversity. The paper therefore reveals the importance of remittances as a strategy in combating food insecurity and poor nutrition in the context of household shocks

## Effect Of Nutrition On Children Reading Ability (Chikondi Maleta, Eldrine Kayambazinthu ,Patrick Kambewa, Anthony Chigeda)

International Society for Education Planning



Nutritious food



Child's ability to read

### Abstract

Early nutrition supplementation's effect on children's reading ability was assessed during the conduct of the study. The study methodology followed children who participated in an early nutrition supplementation intervention and conducted a reading test to measure how well the children read. The effect of school resource endowment on student read-

ing ability was assessed. School resources as a lead effect on variations in reading performance through a fixed effect regression model was discounted and confirmed that early nutrition supplementation explains variations in reading performance. However, it was found that school resources accessibility on factors such as library availability and access to reading textbooks post classroom lessons to children complements the acquisition of reading skills in children. The policy implication from the findings calls for the domestication of reading curricula and leveraging the children's nutrition to sustain reading gains.

## Education Development Programming: Responsiveness and Adaptability of the Implementation of the Malawi National Reading Programme in Lungwena, Mangochi District {Chikondi Maleta, Eldrine Kayambazinthu ,Patrick Kambewa, Anthony Chigeda)

Education Quarterly Reviews

### Abstract

The study assessed the implementation of the Malawi nation reading Programme's theoretical grounding and its localisation based on context. The methodology included a standardised reading assessment that tested the ability of children to read and regressed contextual factors to examine how they contributed to the reading skills of pupils. Results showed that the programme was well grounded in theory but lacked awareness of the implementation context. Therefore, the study recommends a balance of effort and investment in the implementation of reading programmes for optimal and sustained reading skill gains by pupils

## Assessing the relationship between digital divide and citizens' political participation in Africa {Chirwa, G.C., Manja, L.P., Chasukwa, M., Gunde, A., Dulani, B., Kayuni, K. & Chinsinga)

Development Southern Africa,



Political Participation

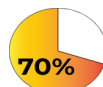


### Abstract

The proliferation of access to digital technology has raised remarkable interest regarding its various effects on everyday life, with recent studies largely focusing

49896

afrobarometer survey respondents



70% interested in public affairs and took part in political discussions

36

countries under afrobarometer survey

on financial inclusion. This study examined the influence of digital inequalities on political participation in Africa's nascent democracies using the sixth wave of Afrobarometer data covering 36 countries and involving 49 896 respondents. The descriptive analysis



shows that nearly 70 per cent of the respondents voted, were interested in public affairs, and took part in political discussions. Furthermore, digital inequalities were found to be geographically correlated, with the highest prevalence in Southern Africa Using the OLS regression technique, we observe that access to the

internet and mobile phones and usage thereof have strong positive relationships with various aspects of political participation, among others. Our results suggest the need to promote policies directed towards reducing digital inequalities, including internet usage subsidies, to engage citizens in political participation

## Smooth Transitioning Growth in Malawi: The Role of Economic Policy Ronald Mangani {Mangani R.)

### African Review of Economics and Finance

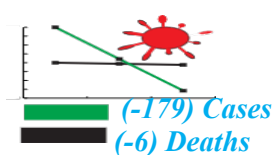
#### Abstract

Abstract Malawi adopted orthodox neoliberal economic policies in 1981 to replace Keynesian-based demand management, developmental state, and protectionist policies. However, the sub-period from 2004 to 2012 witnessed some reversion to elements of the pre-liberalisation period. This paper analyses the response of the Malawian economy to the critical economic policy shifts experienced since 1960. A smooth transition regression (STR) model is estimated to explain the country's real output, setting its trend as the threshold variable. Augmenting the model with proxies for labour and capital is found

to be unrewarding, but the heuristically determined logistic STR model fits the data well. The transition process is subsequently used to explain the response of economic growth to policy changes. We find that Malawi's growth did not transition until after 2004, and the change was practically fully accomplished by 2011. Real output growth was significantly faster during this transition period. The findings of this study imply that the appropriateness of orthodox neoliberal economic policies is questionable in Malawi. This should motivate astute policy-makers seeking to adopt post-neoliberal economic management policies, *mutatis mutandis*.

## Effects of government intervention in relation to COVID-19 cases and deaths in Malawi {Gowokani Chijere Chirwa, Joe Maganga Zonda, Samantha Soyoyo Mosiwa & Jacob Mazalale)

### Humanities and Social Sciences Communications



#### Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic affected the world in various ways. In response to this, countries set up various interventions such as lockdowns, physical distancing, and mandatory face covering, among others. Governments also put in place measures to ensure compliance. However, the extent to which the various responses impacted the deaths and confirmed cases remains debatable. This paper explores this question by looking at how government stringency measures impacted deaths and cases in Malawi. We employ an instrumental variable (IV) approach to assess the impact of government action on confirmed COVID-19 cases and deaths. We measure government policy by the stringency index. By leveraging the IV approach, we circumvent potential endogeneity concerns between our main policy variable and the outcome variables. Our data comes from the University of Oxford COVID-19 project and spans a daily frequency from 20 February 2020 to 25 April 2022, covering multiple waves of the pandemic. Overall, the findings show that despite Malawi never having implemented a full lockdown, the government policies may have helped to reduce both cases and deaths related to COVID-19. Specifically, the IV shows that a unit increase in the government stringency index results in a drop of 179 cases and 6 deaths. All the results are statistically significant at 1% level and remain robust to the use of the ordinary least-squares method. This study demonstrates the efficacy of non-pharmaceutical tools implemented by the government to fight COVID-19. Thus, policymakers need to place more emphasis on the need for the public to adhere to these stringency measures in the event of new waves of the pandemic or similar outbreaks

## **“Is it bulletproof?” Correlates of perception on the protective effect of male circumcision in Malawi {Gowokani Chijere Chirwa, Maureen Luba Milambe and Peter Ntenda)**

**Malawi Journal of Social Sciences**

### **Abstract**

Voluntary male medical circumcision (VMMC) is a highly cost-effective intervention in the fight against new HIV infections. However, despite efforts to scale up VMMC in Malawi uptake remains below the intended target. One potential contributing factor to this issue is a lack of correct understanding regarding the protective benefits of VMMC. This paper is the first to use nationally representative data to find the correlates of understanding the VMMC protective effect. We used data from the Malawi Population-based HIV Impact Assessment (MPHIA) of 2015. The findings show that a large proportion of respondents still lacked a clear understanding of the protective benefits of VMMC. These findings highlight the need for increased efforts to disseminate correct information regarding the protective benefits of male circumcision. Furthermore, integrating this information into the school curriculum could be another effective way of increasing knowledge. Overall, this paper underscores the importance of improving public knowledge and awareness of the benefits of VMMC in Malawi as part of a comprehensive approach to reducing the transmission of HIV



*Lack of knowledge on protective benefits of VMMC*

## **COVID-19 vaccine inequity in African low-income countries {Chifundo Annessia Kunyenjel, Gowokani Chijere Chirwa, Sebastian M. Mboma Wingston Ng’ambil, Emmanuel Mnjowe, Dominic Nkhoma, Lucky Gift Ngwira, Marlen Stacey Chawani, Ben Chilima, Collins Mitambo, Amelia Crampin, Joseph Mfutso-Bengo)**

**Frontiers in Public Health Policy**

### **Abstract**

Equitable access and utilization of the COVID-19 vaccine is the main exit strategy from the pandemic. This paper used proceedings from the Second Extraordinary Think-Tank conference, which was held by the Health Economics and Policy Unit at the Kamuzu University of Health Sciences in collaboration with the Malawi Ministry of Health, complemented by a review of literature. We found disparities in COVID-19 vaccine coverage among low-income countries. This is also the case among high income countries. The disparities are driven mainly by insufficient supply, inequitable distribution, limited

production of the vaccine in low-income countries, weak health systems, high vaccine hesitancy, and vaccine misconceptions. COVID-19 vaccine inequity continues to affect the entire world with the ongoing risks of emergence of new COVID-19 variants, increased morbidity and mortality and social and economic disruptions. In order to reduce the COVID-19 vaccination inequality in low-income countries, there is need to expand COVAX facility, waive intellectual property rights, transform knowledge and technology acquired into vaccines, and conduct mass COVID-19 vaccination campaigns.

## **Agricultural input subsidy, food price shocks and malnutrition in Malawi. {Novignon, J., Chirwa, G.C., and Frempong, B.R. {2023). In Mkandawire, T., Chavula, H.K., et al {eds).)**

**Oxford Handbook of the Malawi Economy**

## Abstract

The study examined the impact of Malawi's Farm Input Subsidy Programme (FISP) on nutrition. Household panel data from the Malawi Integrated Household Panel Surveys for 2010 and 2013 was used. Using a Poisson and Two-Stage Least Square (2SLS) regressions models, results suggest a generally positive impact of the FISP programme on household nutritional status. A gender-disaggregated analysis indicates that while there was no difference in the direction of impact, the magnitude was higher for female-headed households than male-headed households. There was also evidence of a positive impact of food price fluctuations on nutritional outcomes. The findings emphasise the relevance of farm input subsidy programmes in reshaping agricultural and nutritional outcomes in developing countries

## An evolution of socioeconomic inequality in health care access in Malawi (Gowokani Chijere Chirwa. In Mkandawire, T., Chavula, H.K., et al {eds}.) Oxford Handbook of the Malawi Economy



*wealthier individuals have more access to healthcare than the poor*

### Abstract

This article explores the evolution of socioeconomic inequalities in healthcare access in Malawi. Data for the paper comes from three rounds of the nationally-representative Integrated Household Surveys of 2005, 2010 and 2016. Concentration curves and concentration indices were used to assess the socio-

economic inequality in healthcare access. The findings indicate that the concentration curves show more health care use by the wealthier individuals. This is also supported by the concentration indices for healthcare access, which were positive and increasing in value. These findings mean that universal health coverage may not be achieved as many people are already being left behind due to a lack of access to health care. Therefore, there is a need for policies such as intensifying mobile clinics health cards for the less privileged to address the factors that contribute to this disparity in health care access.

## The impact of credit access on household food security in Malawi {Wezi Salima, Laston Petro Manja, Levison s. Chiwaula, Gowokani Chijere Chirwa} Oxford Handbook of the Malawi Economy

### Abstract

This observational study examines the impact of access to either formal or informal credit on household food security in a credit-constrained developing country context of Malawi. Using the



fifth Integrated Household Survey (IHS5), the study employs the Endogenous Regime Switching (ERS) approach and the Tobit regression model, in light of potential endogeneity between credit access and food security. Regression results show that key determinants of access to formal credit include education attainment and household size, whereas determinants of informal credit access include access to extension services, landholding size, household size and exposure to shocks. The study finds that although access to formal credit improves household food security, access to informal credit worsens food security within the context. Various policy implications are drawn from these result

# **Estimating the cost of HIV services for key populations provided by the LINKAGES program in Kenya and Malawi {Marjorie Opuni, Jorge Eduardo Sanchez-Morales, Jose Luis Figueroa, Andrea Salas-Ortiz, Louis Masankha Banda, Alice Olawo, Spy Munthali, Julius Korir, Meghan Dicarlo & Sergio Bautista-Arredondo}**

**BMC Health services Research**

## **Background**

Data remain scarce on the costs of HIV services for key populations (KPs). The objective of this study was to bridge this gap in the literature by estimating the unit costs of HIV services delivered to KPs in the LINKAGES program in Kenya and Malawi. We estimated the mean total unit costs of seven clinical services: post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP), pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), HIV testing services (HTS), antiretroviral therapy (ART), sexually transmitted infection (STI) services, sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services, and management of sexual violence (MSV). These costs take into account the costs of non-clinical services delivered alongside clinical services and the pre-service and above-service program management integral to the LINKAGES program.

## **Methods**

Data were collected at all implementation levels of the LINKAGES program including 30 drop-in-centers (Dies) in Kenya and 15 in Malawi. This study was conducted from the provider's perspective. We estimated economic costs for FY 2019 and cost estimates include start-up costs. Start-up and capital costs were annualized using a discount rate of 3%. We used a combination of top-down and bottom-up costing approaches. Top-down methods were used to estimate the costs of headquarters, country offices, and implementing partners. Bottom-up micro-costing methods were used to measure the quantities and prices of inputs used to produce services in DICs. Volume-weighted mean unit costs were calculated for each clinical service. Costs are presented in 2019 United States dollars (US\$).

## **Results**

The mean total unit costs per service ranged from US\$18 (95% CI: 16, 21) for STI services to US\$635 (95% CI: 484, 785) for PrEP in Kenya and from US\$41 (95% CI: 37, 44) for STI services to US\$1,240 (95% CI 1156, 1324) for MSV in Malawi. Clinical costs accounted for between 21 and 59% of total mean unit costs in Kenya, and between 25 and 38% in Malawi. Indirect costs-including start-up activities, the costs of KP interventions implemented alongside clinical services, and program management and data monitoring-made up the remaining costs incurred

## **Conclusions**

A better understanding of the cost of HIV services is highly relevant for budgeting and planning purposes and for optimizing HIV services. When considering all service delivery costs of a comprehensive HIV service package for KPs, costs of services can be significantly higher than when considering direct clinical service costs alone. These estimates can inform investment cases, strategic plans and other budgeting exercises.

# **The Cost of Providing Comprehensive HIV Services to Key Populations: An Analysis of the LINKAGES Program in Kenya and Malawi {Marjorie Opuni, Jose Luis Figueroa, Jorge Eduardo Sanchez-Morales, Andrea Salas-Ortiz, Luz Edith Ochoa-Sanchez, Mariana Morales-Vazquez, Louis Masankha Banda, Alice Olawo, Spy Munthali, Julius Korir, Meghan Dicarlo, Navindra Persaud and Sergio Bautista-Arredondo}**

**Oxford Handbook of the Malawi Economy**

## **Introduction:**

Timely data on HIV service costs are critical for estimating resource needs and allocating funding, but few data exist on the cost of HIV services for key populations (KPs) at higher risk of HIV infection in low- and middle-income countries. We aimed to estimate the total and per contact annual cost of providing comprehensive



HIV services to KPs to inform planning and budgeting decisions.

## Methods:

We collected cost data from the Linkages across the Continuum of HIV Services for Key Populations Affected by HIV (LINKAGES) program in Kenya and Malawi serving female and male sex workers, men who have sex with men, and transgender women. Data were collected prospectively for fiscal year (FY) 2019 and retrospectively for start-up activities conducted in FY2015 and FY2016. Data to estimate economic costs from the provider's perspective were collected from LINKAGES headquarters, country offices, implementing partners (IPs), and drop-in centers (DICs). We used top-down and bottom-up cost estimation approaches.

## Results



*Kenya's proportion cost in IPs and DICs*



*Malawi's proportion cost on IPs and DICs*

Total economic costs for FY2019 were US\$6,175,960 in Kenya and US\$4,261,207 in Malawi. The proportion of costs incurred in IPs and DICs was 66% in Kenya and 42% in Malawi. The costliest program areas were clinical services, management, peer outreach, and monitoring and data use. Mean cost per contact was US\$127 in Kenya and US\$279 in Malawi, with a mean cost per contact in DICs and IPs of US\$63 in Kenya and US\$104 in Malawi.

## Conclusion:

Actions undertaken above the service level in headquarters and country offices along with those conducted below the service level in communities, comprised important proportions of KP HIV service costs. The costs of pre-service population mapping and size estimation activities were not negligible. Costing studies that focus on the service level alone are likely to underestimate the costs of delivering HIV services to KPs.



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