Strengthening VAA in Malawi

Chronic Vulnerability and Social Protection

MALAWI Vulnerability Assessment Committee

SADC FANR Vulnerability Assessment Committee

Government of the Republic of Malawi

Save the Children ®

World Food Programme

FEWS NET

DFID

Some History…

- The Malawi 'VAC' began life in 1996 as the Malawi 'VAM'
- Collaboration of FEWS-NET, WFP, FAO, MoA, NEC
- Approach: collect a comprehensive range of indicators, weight them, combine them into an index and map them
- The result was…

…a Quilt or Patchwork

Different indicators did not match nor did they compare, e.g. malnutrition was worst in areas with better production, etc.

The quilt would change completely with different weightings

History, continued…

- 'Quest for Causality', identified asset holdings, production and dependency ratios as leading factors behind vulnerability
- Zoning –different weights on the indicators
- Study on household income recommended → Integrated Household Survey (IHS)
- VAM lapsed…
- CY 2001-2002 famine resulted from food shortages and extremely high prices
- After 2003 harvest, newly-constituted MVAC (chaired by the Ministry Economic Planning & Development) decided to adopt present LBVA based on HEA (TS from FEWS-NET, SC)

Malawi Vulnerability Assessment Committee (MVAC)

- Structure
  - Agencies:
    - Government (8 agencies) – MEP&D (Chair), MoAFS, MoF, NSO, MoLG, DoPDMA, OPC, MoH
    - UN and IGO's (UNDP, FAO, WFP, UNICEF, FEWS-NET)
    - NGOs (SC, CRS, CWW, WVI, AAH, Oxfam)
- Scope of Work
  - Vulnerability to acute hunger – forecasting
  - Vulnerability to poverty-induced shocks "chronic vulnerability"
  - Information management
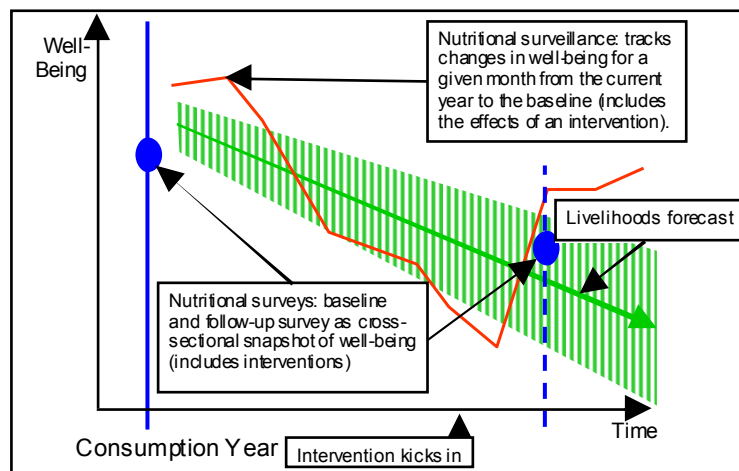 - Institutionalisation
  - Training

Relief

"Predictable" Transfers

The Existing System: EW

- Baselines completed in 2004. Exhaustive look at how people:
  - Meet their food needs
  - Get their incomes
  - Spend their money
  - Meet other basic needs
- Enables the MVAC to model the impact of hazards on people's entitlements
- Construct scenarios to forecast missing entitlements
- Expressed in food terms or in cash terms

Timeline Sketch

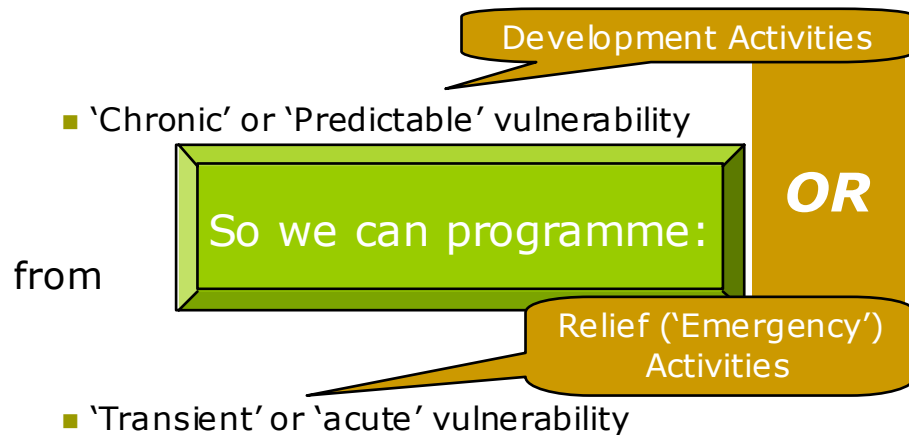How entitlement forecast, nutrition and surveillance info works

Well-Being

Nutritional surveillance: tracks changes in well-being for a given month from the current year to the baseline (includes the effects of an intervention).

Livelihoods forecast

Nutritional surveys: baseline and follow-up survey as cross-sectional snapshot of well-being (includes interventions)

Time

Consumption Year

Intervention kicks in

The Problem…

□ We know that even in areas that do not experience a hazard, significant numbers of people are unable to meet all their basic needs
  - Where are they?
  - How many?
  - How much is the shortfall?

Our Point of View

Operationally, we like to separate

Development Activities

- 'Chronic' or 'Predictable' vulnerability

So we can programme: **OR**

from

Relief ('Emergency') Activities

- 'Transient' or 'acute' vulnerability

This distinction is artificial to a poor villager!!

The Villager's Point of View

Many villagers often (in most years) spend at least part of the year:

1. Unable to meet their needs
2. This varies from extreme years of deprivation (due to a severe shock)
3. To years of grinding difficulty when still many needs go unmet

MVAC Scoping Study: User needs

- **General Requirements**:
  - Greater geographical resolution within livelihood zones.
  - Greater discrimination between households.
  - Household characteristics useful for targeting interventions.
  - Information on the timing of need.
  - Developmental issues i.e. why communities are in poverty and the interventions which would reduce this.
  - The relationship between nutritional status and household economy.
  - Demographic information: age and gender.

User needs

- **Information on Sectors/ topics. Information on or relevant to:**
  - social protection/ cash transfers.
  - HIV/AIDS.
  - Urban poverty.
  - savings and loans, the poverty impact of adding value to production
  - market information.
  - Asset holdings.
  - crop types by area; bird 'flu; school attendance rates.
  - health, water and sanitation. environmental issues.
  - disaster mitigation (floods).

User needs

- **Improved presentation/ technical quality**
  - Resolve conflicts between MVAC data and other data e.g. MoAFS.
  - Present output in terms relevant to poverty rather than food.
  - Improve the precision of current estimates.
  - Emphasize the uncertainty attached to predictions.
  - Resolve conflicts between geographical areas used by different sectors e.g. Education, Agriculture, MVAC, census.
  - The need for a unified mapping framework.
  - The need for follow up surveys after the VA.
  - Greater local involvement in the VA.
  - Standardization of terms and objectives for social protection e.g. are agricultural input subsidies included under 'social protection'.
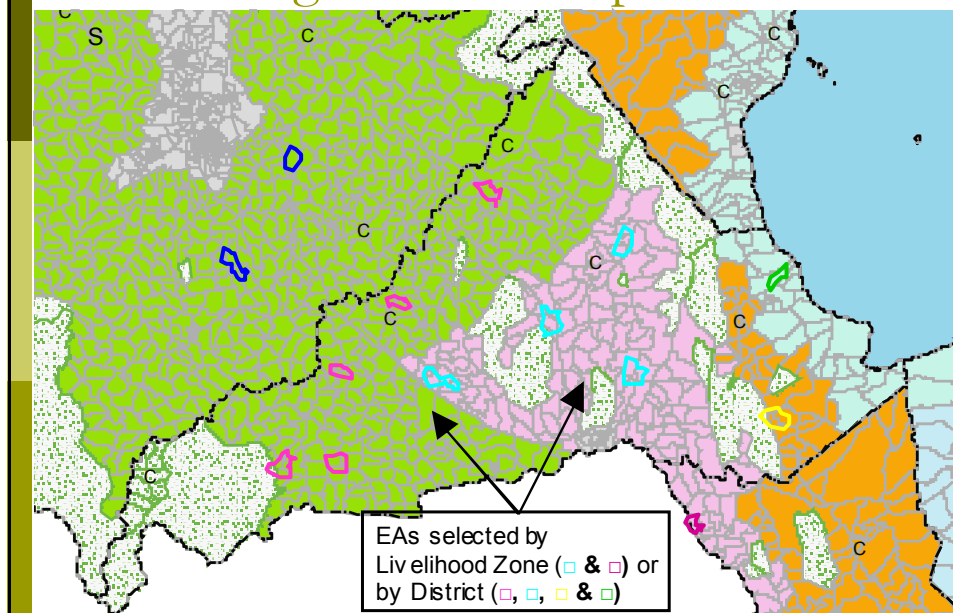 - Suggestion for the production of 'chronic' V profiles.

Options

- Idea is to build on already existing data, tools and capacity
- To be cost-effective (sustainability)
- To maintain current consensus-based analysis

Options 1

To work on our baselines: include probability-sampled data sets, e.g. IHS2, and others

1. Do comparisons, especially comparing consumption
2. Potential to obtain useful insights on some other factors vis-à-vis household income, e.g.
   - Demographics
   - Social exclusion and marginalisation
3. Provide a more disaggregated dataset than IHS2 –also factor in the effect of hazard

Combining Data Sets: Spatial

EAs selected by
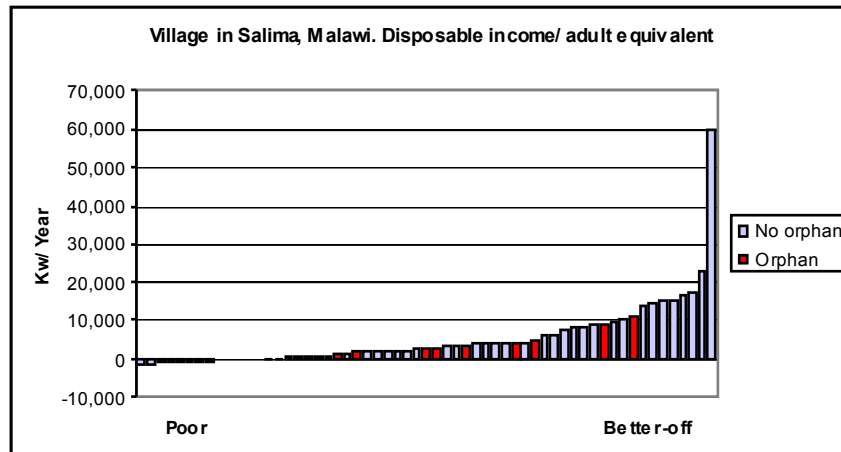Livelihood Zone (□ & □) or
by District (□, □, □ & □)

Option 2

- **Individual Household Method: to provide very detailed information on small populations**
  - 'Statistical' HEA
  - Good for small-scale (e.g. 1 district) –could be expensive for large-scale (depends on resolution required)
  - Can be used to calibrate other non-statistically derived information, e.g. option 2
  - Good for linking non-economic information and social criteria (e.g. demographic, illness, orphans, etc.) to economic status

Option 2
Discretionary income and households with orphans, Salima

Village in Salima, Malawi. Disposable income/ adult equivalent
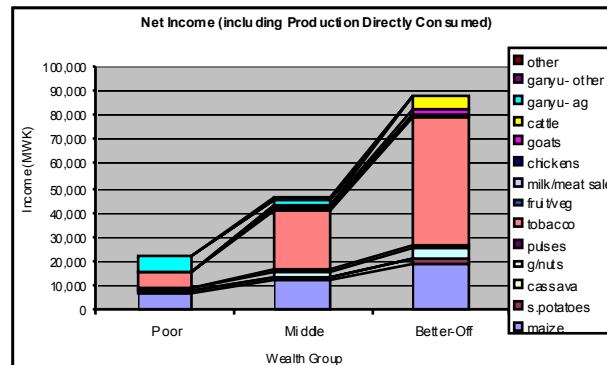

Option 3

□ **Improved poverty estimates and targeting information at modest cost**

- ■ 'HEA+'
- ■ Use existing HEA data sets but to add two bits of information
  - □ Obtain production, food, income and expenditure information of the very poor and very rich
  - □ Rapid survey of Hhs –information useful for targeting: asset holding, demography, social characteristics of Hhs, e.g. orphans, 'capacity' including employment, disability and illness
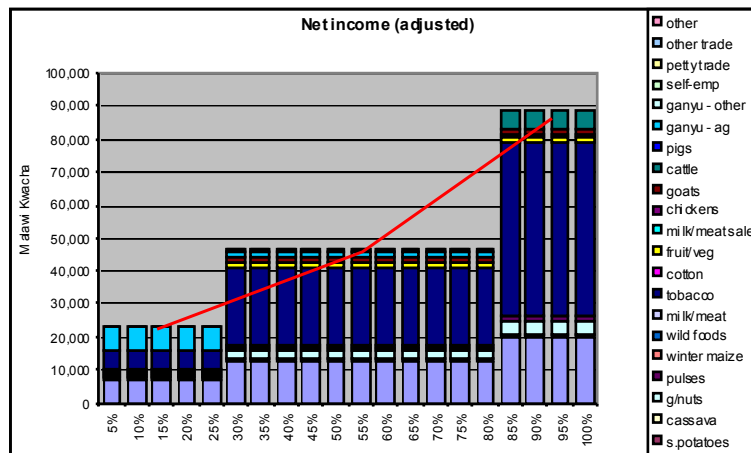
Option 3 continued...

- Obtain production, food, income and expenditure information of the very poor and very rich to build income histogram
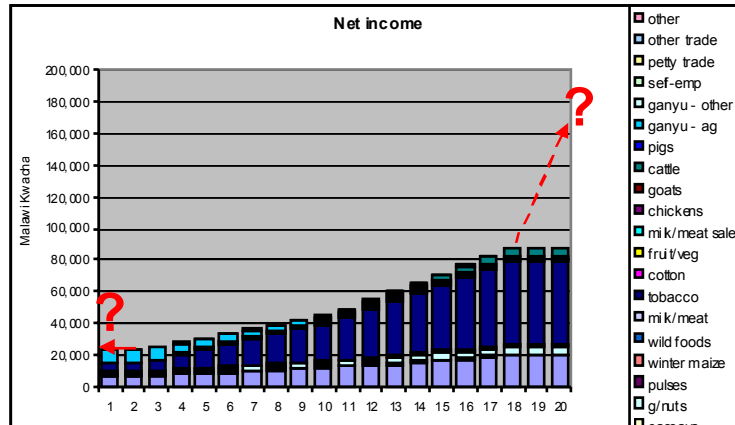
'Classic' baseline

Option 3 continued...

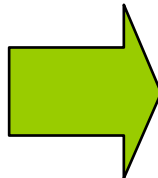### 'Classic' baseline adjusted

Option 3 continued…

'Classic' baseline improved

Implications for MVAC Operations

Currently
- MVAC analyses done 2x per year
- 'Jamborees' of technical people doing F/W and Analysis

Change
- Extra detail required means *outsourcing* pieces of work
- MVAC to be a *clearing house* for analyses

Needs

- Currently use a very basic set:
  - Staple (2100 kcal/p/d)
  - Modest non-staple food
  - Some soap, salt
  - Water
  - Minimum Health & schooling

Typical value (2003): K20,000

'Desirable' Needs

The Age of the MDGs:

- Food diversity
- Asset accumulation
- Access to Health Care: time, costs
- Water: time
- Schooling: costs (increase for 2ndary+)
- Home care: time

Value (2003): ~K60,000-K80,000

Entitlements

- The sum of all production, property and activities that Hhs can use to obtain their minimum needs
  - Assets and production, exchange
  - Idea that: 'right to life' → basic remuneration and access to services (for work or effort) that sustain life
  - Like 'property rights'

  NOT: 'what people are entitled to'

HOUSEHOLD INCOME (2003: poorest 30%): K24,000

We still have a lot to do…

- Highlights why:
  - Poverty only improving marginally
  - Chronic malnutrition rates stubbornly high
  - Repeated catastrophes
  - Predictable transfers necessary BUT unrealistic to think they can cover ALL needs

Thank you

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