

MULTI-FUNDER INITIATIVE

Cultivate Africa's Future (CultiAF)

Improving fish post-harvest management and marketing in Malawi and Zambia

In Malawi and Zambia, researchers will evaluate post-harvest fish processing practices to improve their effectiveness, reduce losses, and promote greater equity among the men and women who work in the fisheries sector.

The challenge

Sub-Saharan Africa has the lowest fish supply per person of any global region, with supply predicted to fall by 20% in the next two decades. Poor processing and management are major factors, resulting in losses worth up to US\$5 billion each year. These losses also have an important gender dimension: women are often little involved in fish processing and marketing. This further weakens the economic and nutritional value of fish at household, community, and regional levels.

In the Barotse floodplain, Zambia and the Lake Chilwa basin, Malawi, such issues have resulted in substantial economic losses, reduced fish nutrient content, and unfair distribution of benefits among women and men. Both areas depend heavily on fish for income, food, and nutrition. However, they differ in fish value chain structure, post-harvest technologies, and social and cultural contexts, offering strong opportunities for lesson learning and sharing.

The research

Working with fishing communities in Barotse and Lake Chilwa, and other partners, the project will analyze fish value chains, including the differing roles of men and women, to understand how losses occur in fish volume, nutrient content, and economic value. The research team will then develop and pilot interventions to reduce these losses, while also addressing issues connected to gender and power. These interventions will include improved processing methods, such as parboiling, solar drying, and kilning. Gender training and behavior change communication activities will address the gender and social relations in the fisheries value chain. The team will work with policymakers to increase recognition of the importance of fish production and gender equality in national and regional policies.

Men and women from the Malawian and Zambian communities will participate in the analysis and in developing innovations. Partnerships between researchers, private sector representatives, local community members, and government staff will help to build strong links with those responsible for fisheries governance in Malawi and Zambia.

Expected outcomes

- Reduced fish and nutrient losses during fish processing and marketing
- Increased use of improved fish handling and processing methods
- Increased incomes for men, women, and youth within the fish value chain
- Fairer sharing of benefits among men and women in the project sites
- Increased awareness at local and national level of improved fish processing technologies

Implementing partners:

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Other partners:

WorldFish and Nono Enterprises

Countries: Malawi and Zambia

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Cultivate Africa's Future Fund (CultiAF) supports research to achieve long-term food security in Eastern and Southern Africa. Learn more at www.idrc.ca/cultiaf.



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