

7. Draft Recommendations

- a. Knowledge and resources required to inform equitable, sustainable and gender-sensitive post-COVID-19 public health and climate policy (this also includes: 5.3 Policy and programmatic needs of vulnerable groups to ensure climate resilience)
- i. Malawi (Baxter, Michael)
- ii. Rwanda (Beth, Alfred, Michael)

Policies and programs required for building climate resilience

In the view of practitioners, vulnerable individuals mostly did not possess the necessary financial and material resources (average score of 3.7 out of 10) or knowledge and skills (3.9 out of 10) to deal with the effects of climate change. When asked about the kind of support that was needed to build vulnerable groups' climate resilience, 92% said it was crucial to focus on agriculture and food security, followed by environmental protection (78%), supporting or creating jobs (27%), and education (19%). In terms of who should provide the funds and material resources to further these goals, 65% indicated the national government, 24% chose aid agencies, 22% - NGOs, while 19% mentioned that households should cope on their own. When it comes to providing the necessary knowledge and skills, 51% indicated the national government, followed by local government (43%), NGOs (35%) and aid agencies (19%). The domination of the national government as the main provider of financial assistance and knowledge/skills is evident, reflecting interviewees' relatively high confidence in the national government's capacity to develop equitable, sustainable and gender-sensitive policies and programs to address climate impacts in the country (average of 6.5 out of 10).

Two thirds of respondents believed that out of the three goals of equity, sustainability and gender sensitivity, sustainability is the most difficult to achieve when planning policies and programs to address climate impacts in Rwanda. This was followed by equity (19%), while 9% said none of these were difficult to achieve. Only 3% choose gender-sensitivity.

A similar set of questions was asked about the support needed in the context of the pandemic. Again, the average score for the extent to which vulnerable individuals had the required financial and material resources to deal with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic was 3.7 out of 10. The key sector that should be targeted when dealing with the effects of the pandemic was agriculture and food security (84%), as well as creating and supporting jobs (59%), safeguarding physical health (27%) and the provision of government programs, broadly defined (19%). This support, in the view of participants, should come from the national government (65%), aid agencies (32%) and local governments (24%). Again, the level of confidence in the capacity of the national

government to develop equitable, sustainable and gender-sensitive policies and programs to address the COVID-19 pandemic was relatively high, at an average of 6.7 out of 10.

Interview participants were asked for examples of support needed post-COVID-19, and their responses included various suggestions for economic, health, and education policies, programs and other measures, which are summarized in Table XXX below. Overall, these support higher public spending in the aftermath of the crisis while at the same time recognizing the importance of education, training, environmental protection and health awareness.

Economy	Health	Education	Other
Job creation	Provision of free healthcare for the most vulnerable	Climate change education at various levels of government and in local communities	Support local government capacity to carry out work on the ground (increasing mobility, covering communication fees, ensuring stable salaries and adequate resources)
Public works programs (including those focused on environmental restoration and protection)	Widening access to vaccines	Delivery of climate data and Early Warning Systems for forecasting future disasters	Increased foreign aid for the above
Promoting domestic industries (pharmaceutical, agricultural input manufacturing)	Widening the availability of testing	Ensuring gender inclusion across all initiatives	Financial incentives to protect forests locally
Provision of food aid (including child nutrition programs), agricultural inputs, and livestock to those vulnerable	Investment in new health facilities and hiring more healthcare staff	Education and training (“mobilization”) on the following: agricultural and livestock management practices, saving, land use, public health	Promotion of entrepreneurship
Lowering taxes for small businesses	Mental health support for victims of gender-based violence (related to extended periods of lockdown)	Guaranteeing free public education (including civic education) for all	Promoting vulnerable individuals’ membership in cooperatives
Tax exemptions on livestock and agricultural inputs	More lax curfew rules for healthcare workers	Ensuring new knowledge is easily accessible by future users	Relocation of communities in high-risk zones
Providing of low-interest loans and grants to small businesses	Provision of masks and other protective materials in workplaces free of charge	Making use of existing national forums to spread knowledge and widen the skill base	“Modern” urbanization

Ensuring electricity access in rural areas			Prevention of erosion through local nurseries (in every cell) and agroforestry
Using the funds from public pension programs			Need for transparency to prevent corruption
Household recovery grants			
Increased social protection programs			

The dominant view was that while the required skills and knowledge is often already available at the national level and often also at the local level, the lack of financial and material resources makes it difficult to implement development objectives locally (though there were also views that both were needed).

- b. Lessons from COVID-19 that can be learned for addressing the climate crisis
 - i. Malawi (Baxter, Michael)

- ii. Rwanda

Lessons to be learned from COVID-19 for building climate resilience

Interviewed practitioners offered a number of lessons from the pandemic that the country should consider in planning its climate policy and programs in the future. These are listed below:

1. **Saving:** The highest number of interviewees mentioned the need to foster a culture of saving or avoiding overconsumption/overspending - be it of money, crops, food or other resources. It was observed that households that had savings or “rainy day” funds when the pandemic hit fared much better than those who did not. Promoting savings through assisting communities in opening savings accounts was one of the more practical suggestions in this context. Importantly, this lesson applies to both local communities and civil servants or decision-makers.
2. **Long-term planning for uncertainty:** A related lesson is the need for Rwandan households and public entities to develop plans for the long term impacts of disasters, the lack of which was laid bare by the pandemic. Long term planning can mean accumulating resources to be mobilized during times of crisis, and developing the skills and knowledge that will be necessary to address it.
3. **Education:** The pandemic demonstrated that rapidly educating the public on an urgent issue is both necessary and possible. In this context, some interviewees noted how climate knowledge and education can also follow this trajectory, which is in line with the widespread view that more progress on this front should be made, especially at the level of local government and rural communities. Relatedly, education in this context including fostering collaboration among citizens and underscoring the importance of following government guidance.
4. **Capitalize on the possibilities offered by communication technology:** As elsewhere in the world, the pandemic demonstrated the benefits and possibilities of remote working. Some participants noted that significant resources had been saved by holding meetings remotely (and thus not having to spend financial resources on transport, venue hire, catering, etc.). Other mentioned the benefits of remote education.
5. **Information transparency:** A key suggestion was learning the importance of transparency when sharing information about disasters or crises with the public. The rapidly developing public health situation caused by the virus made it necessary for the government to update

the public on a regular basis - and a similar approach was suggested for mitigation and adaptation goals.

- c. Any other recommendations by project participants (Eilidh)
- d. Any other recommendations by the project team (Michael)
- e. Future research directions
- f. ...

Gender inequalities were exacerbated in both Rwanda and Malawi by COVID-19. Rwanda's and Malawi's lockdown measures...

The drivers of these vulnerabilities were...

These same drivers also undergird climate change vulnerabilities as well...