

Malawi Rural Livelihood Survey 2012/2013

Basic Information Document

The Malawi Rural Livelihood Survey (MRLS) is a panel survey of households, interviewed 4 times from November 2012-2013.

The survey was designed in order to conduct a randomized control study of Malawi's large-scale public works program (PWP) which operates under the Malawi Social Action Fund (MASAF).

Survey implementation

The MRLS was conducted in four rounds:

- Round 1 November 2012: before the PWP started and during the planting season.
- Round 2 February 2013: after the first cycle of the PWP and during the lean season.
- Round 3 April-May 2013: after the lean season PWP cycle and pre-harvest.
- Round 4 November 2013: after the completion of the 2012/2013 season and two rounds of PWP implementation in select communities.

Sample

Among the 28 districts which were included in the PWP at the time of this study, the MRLS was conducted in 12 districts which were randomly selected across the three strata of the country's three geographic regions to ensure that the study was representative of the country's population. In order to have pre-program baseline data that predated the vetting of communities for the PWP, the national Integrated Household Survey (IHS3) collected in 2010/2011 by Malawi's National Statistics Office was used as the basis for the MRLS. Within the 12 selected districts, the list of PWP-eligible (pre-screened) communities from the District Council and Traditional Authorities was compared with the 786 enumeration areas (EAs) in the IHS3. The sampling frame for the MRLS was the subset of IHS3 enumeration areas (EAs) in the 12 selected districts which were also in pre-selected communities for the PWP. This resulted in a total of 182 villages (EAs) out of the 786 EAs in the IHS3 to be included in the MRLS. In each community, the MRLS would re-survey the 16 randomly surveyed households in the IHS3.

In practice, of the 182 EAs selected for the MRLS, 23 EAs were incorrectly identified as IHS3 EAs. These non-IHS3 EAs then have no 2010/2011 data and as a result, a new household listing was conducted in these EAs in order to randomly select 16 households in each EA.

The final target sample for the MRLS was 2,912 households (16 households in 182 communities). This includes replacement households drawn at random when required. Households in EAs that were covered by the IHS3-panel survey in the fall 2013 were excluded from Round 4 field work (resulting in a smaller sample in Round 4). One can merge in those data from the IHS3 panel data (publicly available).

The 182 villages in the MRLS sample were randomly divided into five categories with regards to the PWP (four with PWP treatment and one with no PWP). Within each PWP treatment village, a random sample of households was offered an opportunity to work in the public works program. The details of this are described in Beegle, Galasso, and Goldberg (2017).¹

¹ Beegle, Kathleen, Emanuela Galasso, and Jessica Goldberg. 2017. "Direct and Indirect Effects of Malawi's Public Works Program on Food Security." *Journal of Development Economics* 128: 1-23.

Survey instruments

In each of the four rounds of the MRLS, a Household Questionnaire and a Community Questionnaire was fielded. The subsections of the household questionnaire are summarized in Table 2. The questionnaires are drawn from the IHS3 questionnaire to ensure comparability. After Round 1, modules were updated in some places to reflect improvements or capture transitions from the previous round.

Linking MRLS with IHS3

The subsample of the MRLS which is from IHS3 can be linked to the IHS3 data through the variable *case_id* in the data set *pwp_hhstatus_public.dta*.

Table 1: MRLS Sample details

(A) EAs	
North	22 (all IHS3 EAs)
Central	64 (60 IHS3 EAs)
South	96 (77 IHS3 EAs)
	182
(B) Households	
Total	2,912
All 4 rounds	2,054
Rounds 1-3	746
Rounds 1-2	38
Round 1	68
Rounds 1,2, & 4	2
Rounds 1 & 3	2
Rounds 1, 3, & 4	2
Round 1	2,912
Round 2	2,840
Round 3	2,804
Round 4	2,058

Table 2: MRLS Household Questionnaire

Module	Notes
A: Survey Details	
B: Household roster	
C: Education	
D: Health	
E. Time use and labour	
E CAL: Event calendar for casual labor and public works	Only MRLS, not present in the IHS
F: Housing	Only Round 1
G: Food consumption	
H: Food security	
I: Non Food expenditure one week	
J: Non Food expenditure one month	Shorter recall period than IHS3 which is 3 months
K: Non Food expenditure 12 months	

L: Durable goods	
M: Farm implements	Shorter recall period than IHS3 which is 3 months
Q.A: Transfers received in	Only MRLS, not present in the HIS
Q.B: Transfers given out	Only MRLS, not present in the HIS
R: Social safety nets	
S.A: Credit received in	Only MRLS, not present in the HIS
S.A Cal: Calendar credit received in	Only MRLS, not present in the HIS
S.B: Credit given out	Only MRLS, not present in the HIS
S.B Cal: Calendar credit given out	Only MRLS, not present in the HIS
U: Shocks and coping strategies	
Y: Risk and cognition	Only MRLS, not present in the HIS
AG C: Farm plot roster 2012/2013	Rounds 1,2
AG D: Plot details 2012/2013	Rounds 1,2
AG E: Input coupon use 2012/2013	Rounds 1,2
AG H: Seeds 2012/2013	Rounds 1,2
AG L: Production 2012/2013	
AG M: Sales/storage	
X1: Attitudes	Only Round 4
X2: Arithmetic and short memory test	Only Round 4
Network Roster	Only Round 1