

# Community-based flood risk management: experiences and challenges in Malawi

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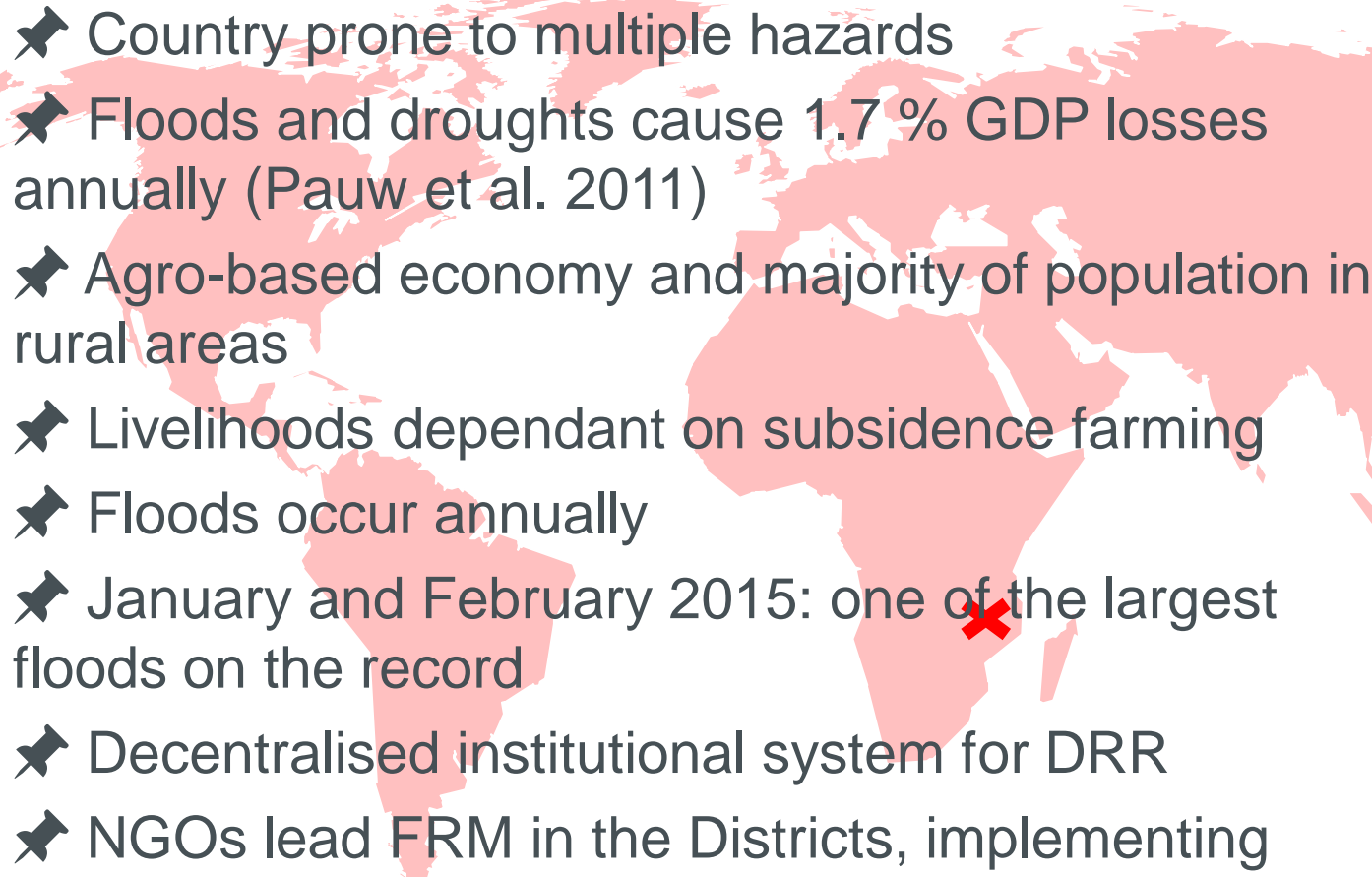
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# Presentation outline

- Flooding and Malawi
- Community-based approaches in DRR
- Research aims
- Research methodology
- Results
- Conclusions

# Flooding and Malawi

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- ✦ Country prone to multiple hazards
  - ✦ Floods and droughts cause 1.7 % GDP losses annually (Pauw et al. 2011)
  - ✦ Agro-based economy and majority of population in rural areas
  - ✦ Livelihoods dependant on subsidence farming
  - ✦ Floods occur annually
  - ✦ January and February 2015: one of the largest floods on the record
  - ✦ Decentralised institutional system for DRR
  - ✦ NGOs lead FRM in the Districts, implementing community-based disaster risk reduction approaches



UN, 2015

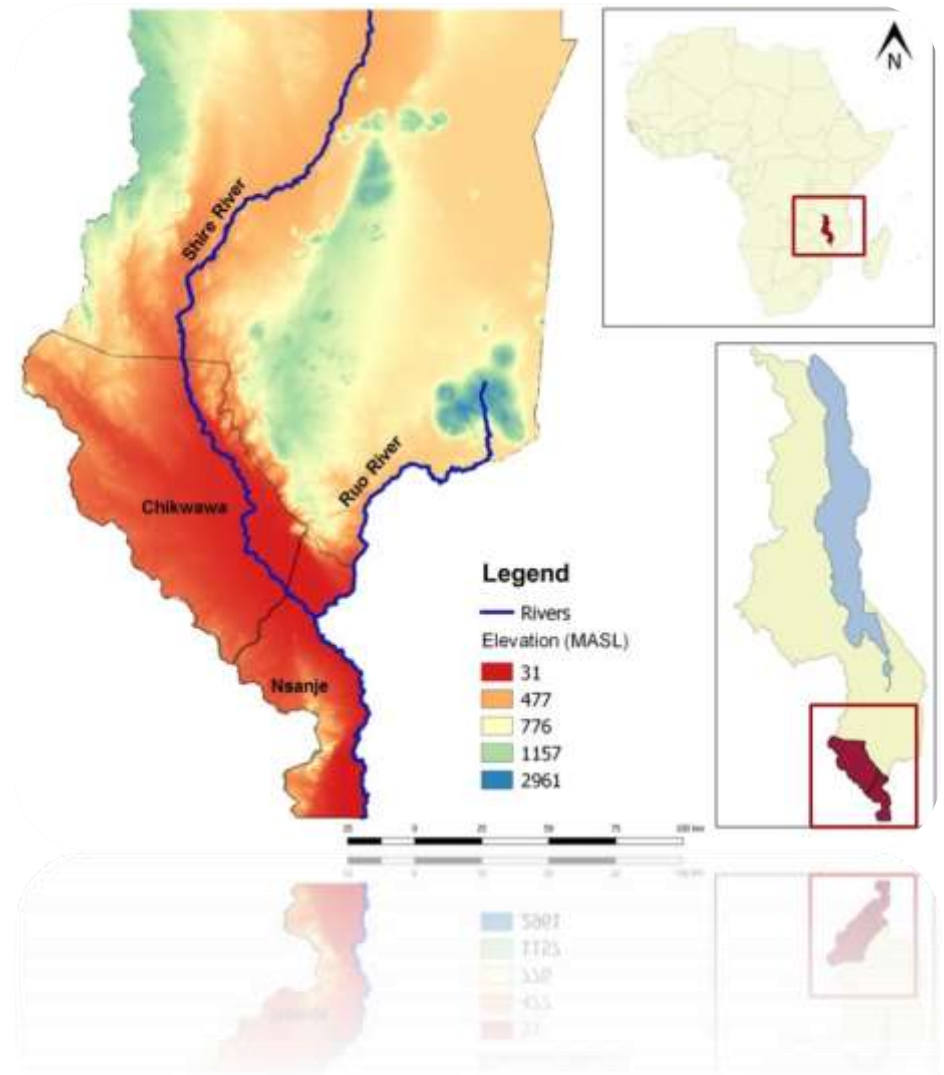


PHYS, 2015



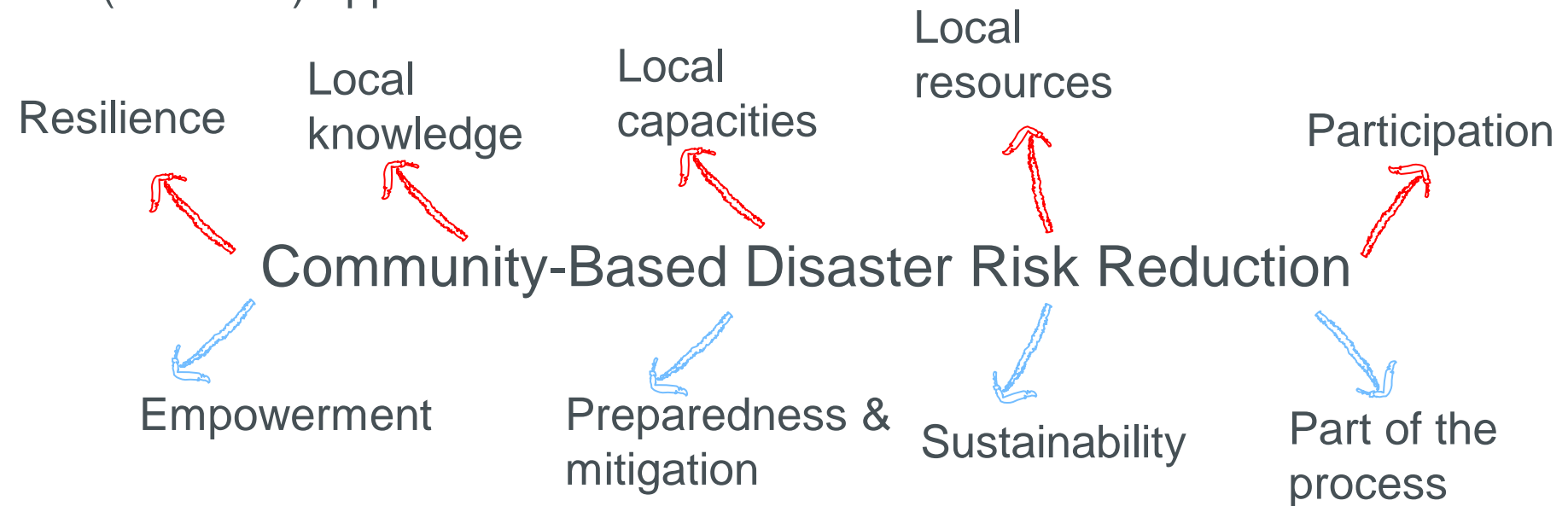
# Flooding in the Lower Shire Valley

- Chikwawa and Nsanje Districts
- Most flood prone area of the country
- River flooding and flash flooding
- Contributing factors to flood hazard: location, siltation of river beds, topography, rainfall characteristics, hydrology, soil structure, land use and land cover change
- Flood vulnerability shaped by socio-economic and environmental susceptibility



# Community-based flood risk management (CB-FRM)

- A part of the wider family of community-based disaster risk reduction (CB-DRR) approaches



- Challenges for CB-DRR: limited and/or inadequate community involvement, not incorporated in policy levels, underlying causes of vulnerability not tackled

# Examples of CB-FRM in Malawi

**PREPAREDNESS**



**MITIGATION**



**RESPONSE**



**RECOVERY**



## **RESEARCH AIM**

To explore realities and challenges of community-based flood risk management approaches in Malawi

# Methodology

- A qualitative research framework & case-study research design
- Primary data collection methods: 11 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) + Informal conversations + survey
- Secondary data through a desk study (DRR system in Malawi)
- Three stakeholder groups: rural communities, local government and NGOs





# Flood impacts

- Loss of homes

**DAMAGE TO INFRASTRUCTURE**



- Health and well-being effects (e.g. STDs, long-term trauma)
- Family members separated

# Roles of different stakeholders: Communities

- At community level, CB-FRM implemented through Village Civil Protection Committee (VCPC)



## COMMUNITY-BASED EWS

### SEARCH & RESCUE

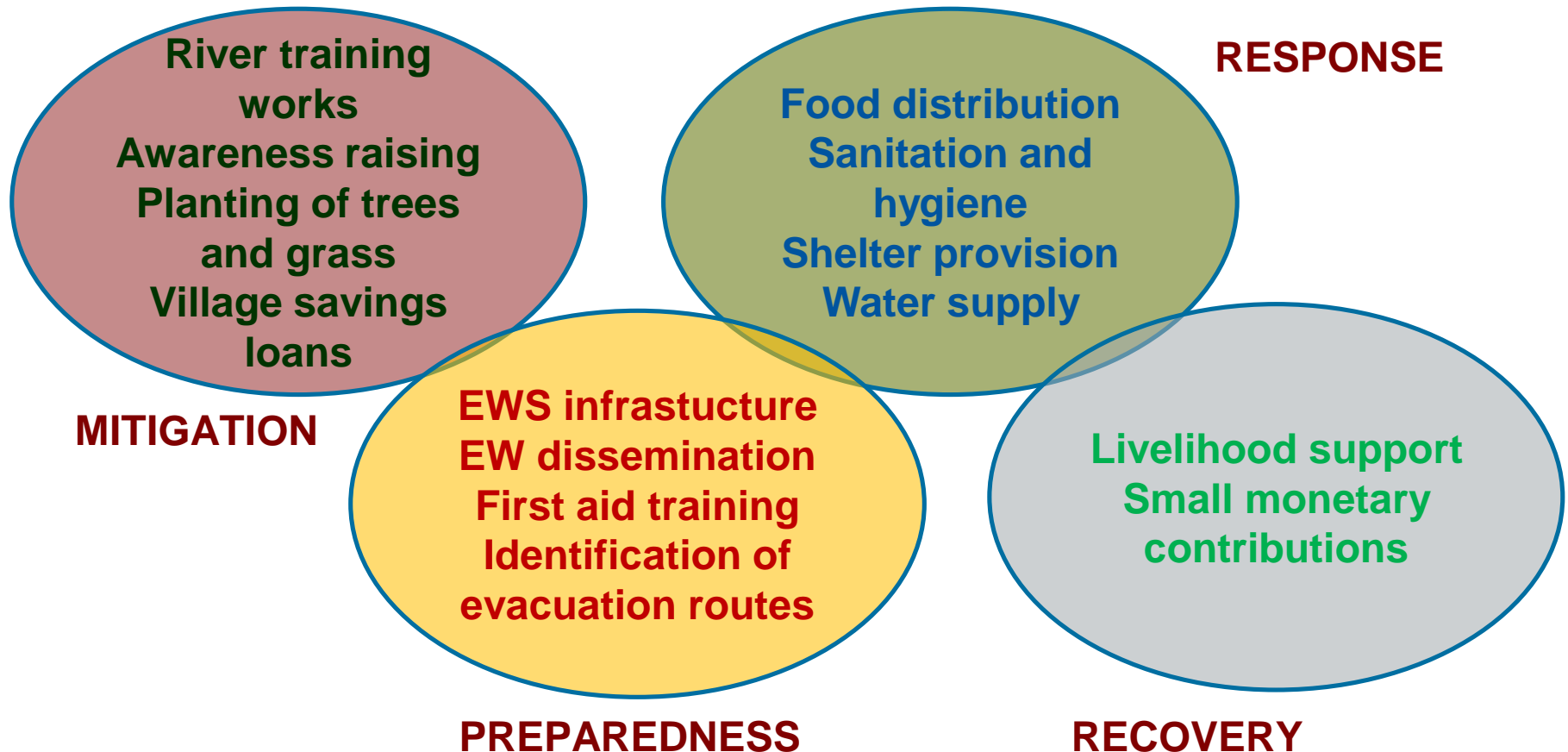
### RAINFALL AND WATER LEVEL GAUGES

### RELIEF ITEMS DISTRIBUTION

### VILLAGE CONTINGENCY PLANS AND ACTION PLANS

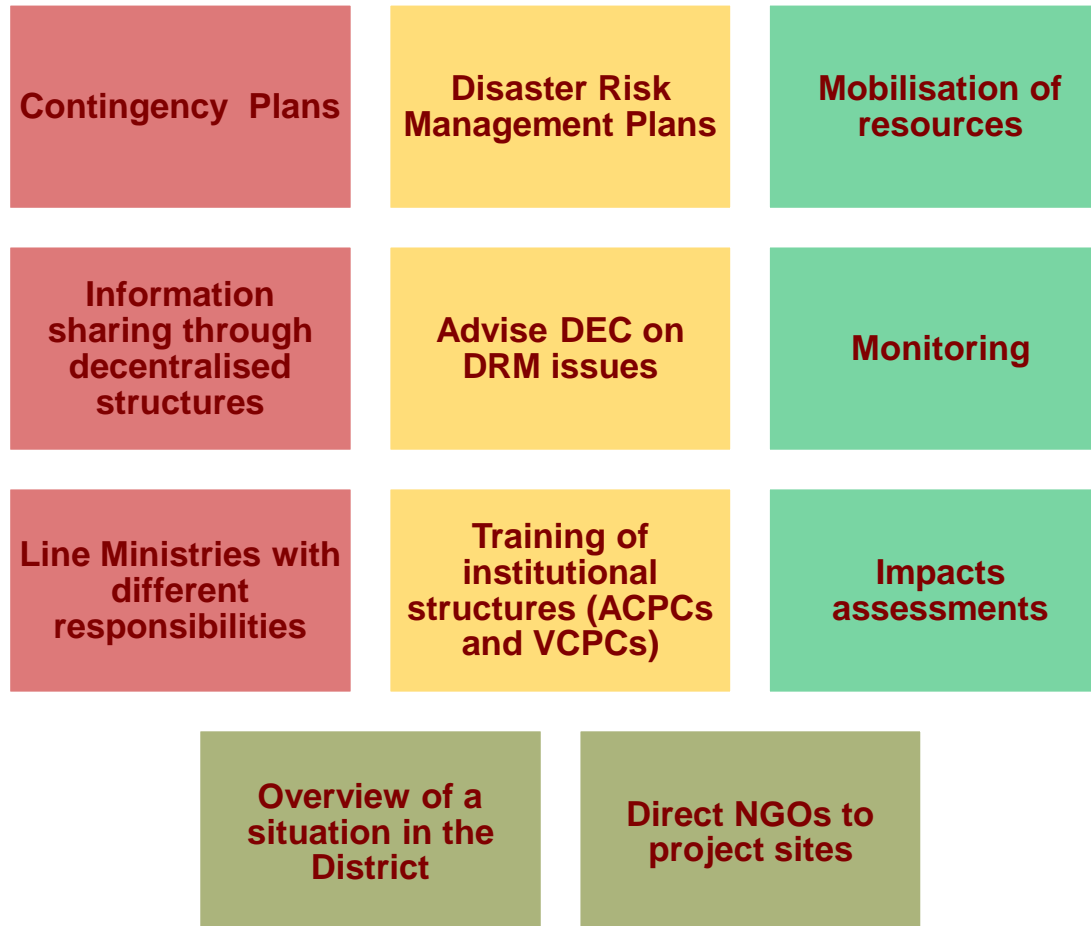
## Roles of different stakeholders: NGOs

- NGOs are main implementers of CB-FRM in Malawi
- Closely work with government and communities



# Roles of different stakeholders: Local Government

- District Civil Protection Committee (DCPC)
- Main body in charge of coordinating and overseeing DRR in districts





# Challenges for CB-FRM

## CHALLENGES FOR COMMUNITY-BASED FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT

- Aid dependency syndrome
- Lack of project ownership
- Communal activities fail
- Power relations in communities
- Problems in project allocation
- Too much focus on response and recovery
- Projects match donors requests, not local contexts
- Duplication of efforts
- Issues with projects sustainability
- Lack of exist strategies for NGOs

### NGOs

- Lack of financial resources
- Lack of funding for monitoring
- Absence of multi-sectoral approach
- Lack of project ownership
- Inadequate project sustainability
- Aid dependency syndrome
- Power relations in communities
- Issues in the operation of decentralised structures
- Duplication of efforts
- Inadequate coordination between core actors
- Lack of NGOs accountability and transparency
- Inadequate quality of projects

### LOCAL GOVERNMENT

- Lack of financial, material and human resources
- Lack of/inadequate capacity building
- Power relations in communities
- Lack of inclusion of local knowledge
- Operation & Monitoring
- Inadequate quality of projects
- Lack of transparency and accountability
- Overlapping of responsibilities
- Communication between NGOs
- Upstream practices hinder downstream efforts

### COMMUNITIES



WATER WELLS FOR AFRICA 2015



BBC UK, 2015



ALJAZIRA, 2015

# Conclusions

- Predominance of CB-FRM, led by NGOs
- Flooding in Malawi has severe impacts and a range of consequences that are overlooked
- CB-FRM in Malawi is a multi-stakeholder effort
- Mitigation & preparedness encouraged, but relief & recovery still dominant
- Challenges in terms of participation, governance, project management and cultural dimensions
- Challenges of different stakeholder groups are unique to their specific context and experiences
- Identified challenges point out areas for improvement

# Thank you for your kind attention!