

JASS in Malawi.  
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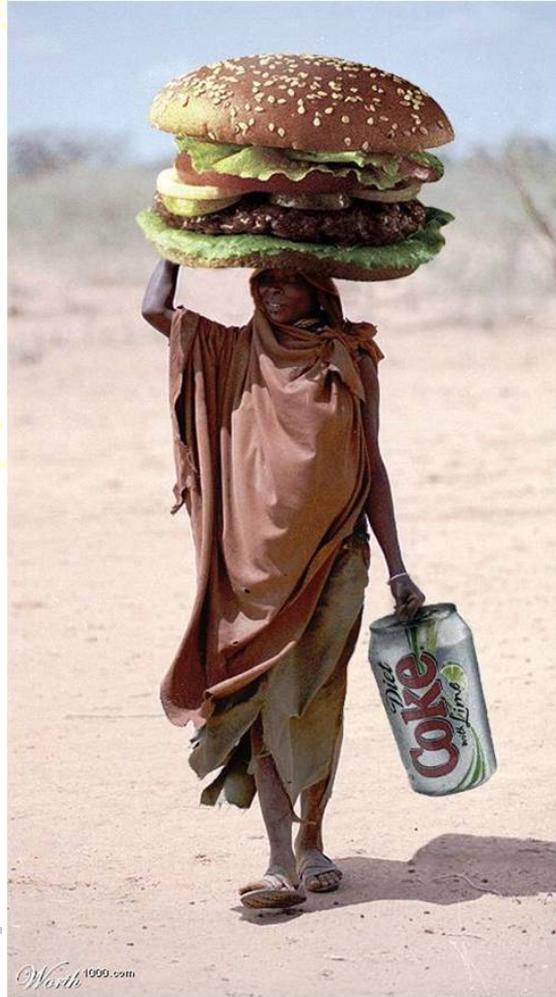
**By southern africa  
team**  
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# Why Malawi?

- ‘Imposed’ but already something to build on: HIV+ women trying to organise
- Malawi women’s movement generally not involved with HIV+ women



# Context



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# Facts and Figures

- Population: 13 million
- LDC of 164 out of 177 (2007/8 HDI)
- 88% of population lives in rural areas
- Country area: 118,500km<sup>2</sup>
- Average land holding: 0.8 ha per household
- Average arable land: 0.3 ha per family
- 40% of GDP is from subsistence agriculture
- 80% of employment is from subsistence agri.
- HIV prevalence: 14% of adult population
- Adolescent Female: Male HIV prevalence ratio is 5:1

# Background

- Natural resources are main source of livelihood
- One of the most densely populated countries in Sub-Saharan Africa
- Gender analysis of HIV/AIDS shows women are more vulnerable to HIV due to socio-cultural factors
- The National Action Framework on HIV/AIDS is the guiding national response implementation tool
- The National Gender Policy advocates for integration of gender concerns in response to the epidemic
- The Ministry of Women and Children (MoGCCD) lacks the capacity and resources to do its work.

# JASS in Malawi Goal

The overall **goal** of the work in Malawi is to build the leadership, organising and advocacy capacity of Malawian women to pressure local and national government to make development resources accessible whilst delivering on laws that support the rights of positive women and other HIV-positive people.

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# Who are the Women?

- From all Malawi provinces
- Aged 20 – 55
- affiliated to organisations



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# ...Who are the Women?

**NETWORKERS**

**ORGANISERS**

**LEADERS**

**FIGHTERS**

**CAREGIVERS**

**LOBBYISTS**

**STRATEGISTS**

**CHANGE AGENTS**



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# What do we DO?

- Mapping the current Malawian HIV/AIDS context in relation to women's rights issues
- Facilitating the building of knowledge to enable solidarity and creative strategies
- Catalysing a process that enables them to continually learn from their own experience and deepen their own thinking to become progressively more independent in their work
- Creating space



# ...What do we DO?

- Facilitating the understanding of the patriarchal ideology in an effort to end it
- Facilitating the understanding of the centrality of power-based analysis, and the primacy of collective action
- Learning about themselves as women and as activists
- Healing from personal wounds
- Document and analysing using “narrative therapy”



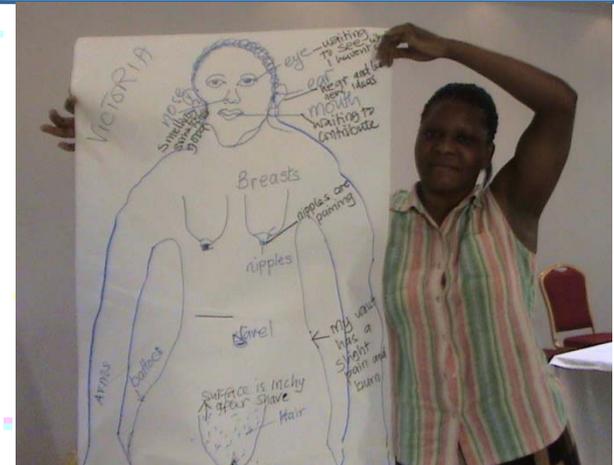
# Approaches

- Needs assessment and identifying key players in HIV and AIDS sector
- Identification of women activists
- Identification of those with a clear constituency and potential to be movement builders, visiting them in their communities to understand nature of their work
- Workshops for sharing strategies and knowledge



# ...Approaches

- Use of different creative indoor and outdoor workshop methodologies such as, **body mapping, songs, walking meditation**, and other **participatory exercises**
- More practical than theoretical sessions with space for rest and restoration, through sisterly bonding, celebration, through music and dancing
- Evening sessions with candles, flowers, drinks...well laid out to discuss self care: physical, emotional, sexual and personal

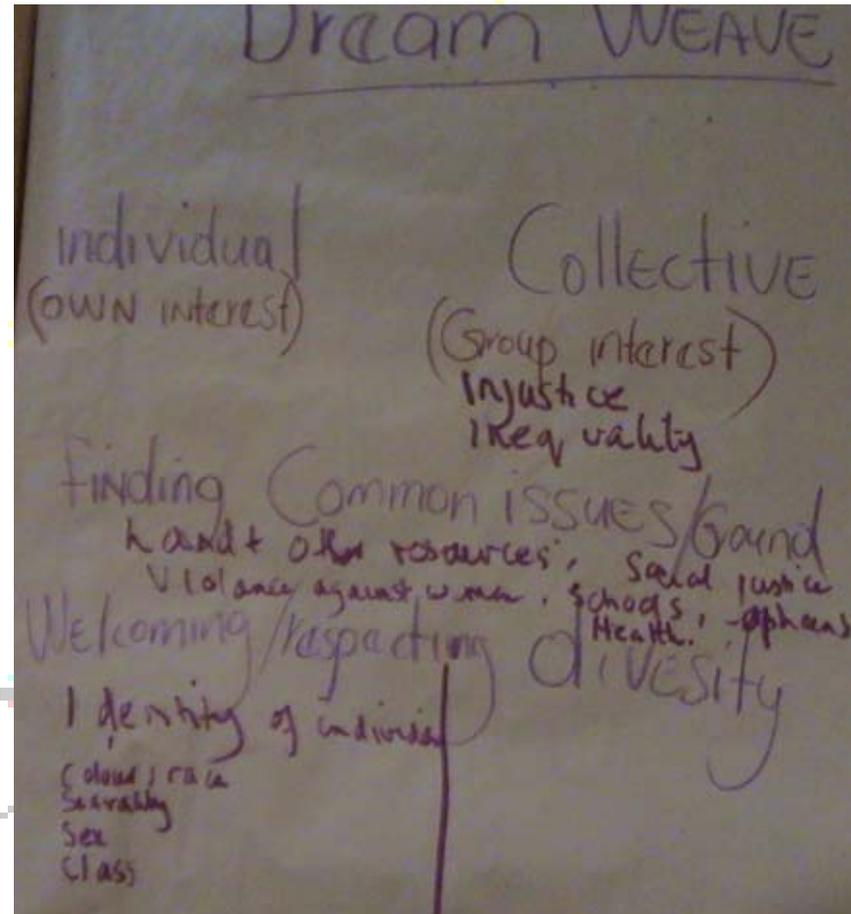


# Shifts

- Women are able to articulate what they want and what they don't want.
- Language has changed; use empowering words.
- Ability to share show how they subvert manage and use different sources of power, to advance their rights, (testimonies)
- Work plans that touch on various aspects such as health, awareness raising, outreach, justice, legal reform, nutrition, within the context of movement building have been developed

# ...Shifts

- Documentation of own life stories for the purpose of amplifying their voices (to support a culture of documentation)
- Demystifying issues related to sex and sexuality by creating a safe space to discuss openly ...
- Empowerment has spread to other aspects of life, for example fighting for land even if women are not allowed to own land
- Understanding the interconnectedness of medical, psychosocial, justice and livelihoods support



# Challenges

- Poor health
- Lack of continued support and hence lack of co-ordination of various initiatives
- Lack of co-ordinating body on the ground
- Misunderstanding on the part of other NGOs that JASS is a donor

# Insights

- Listen to the head, heart and feet
- Always look out for what is working well and analyse with the women so that they can see it
- Develop and encourage shared and distributed leadership
- Keeping simple journals throughout the day
- Build a sense of community and nurturing it
- Encourage peer support and empathy
- Remain flexible and proactive



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# Surprises!

- The number of women who talk about the power within...
- Clear presentation on what they had done since the previous workshops
- How “*crossing the line*” stuck...so many were able to indicate how they crossed the line
- Identification with JASS and understanding that JASS is not a donor organisation
- Continued condemnation of sex workers (sigh!)

**CAUTION**



**WOMEN  
CROSSING  
THE LINE**

# Risks and Mitigation

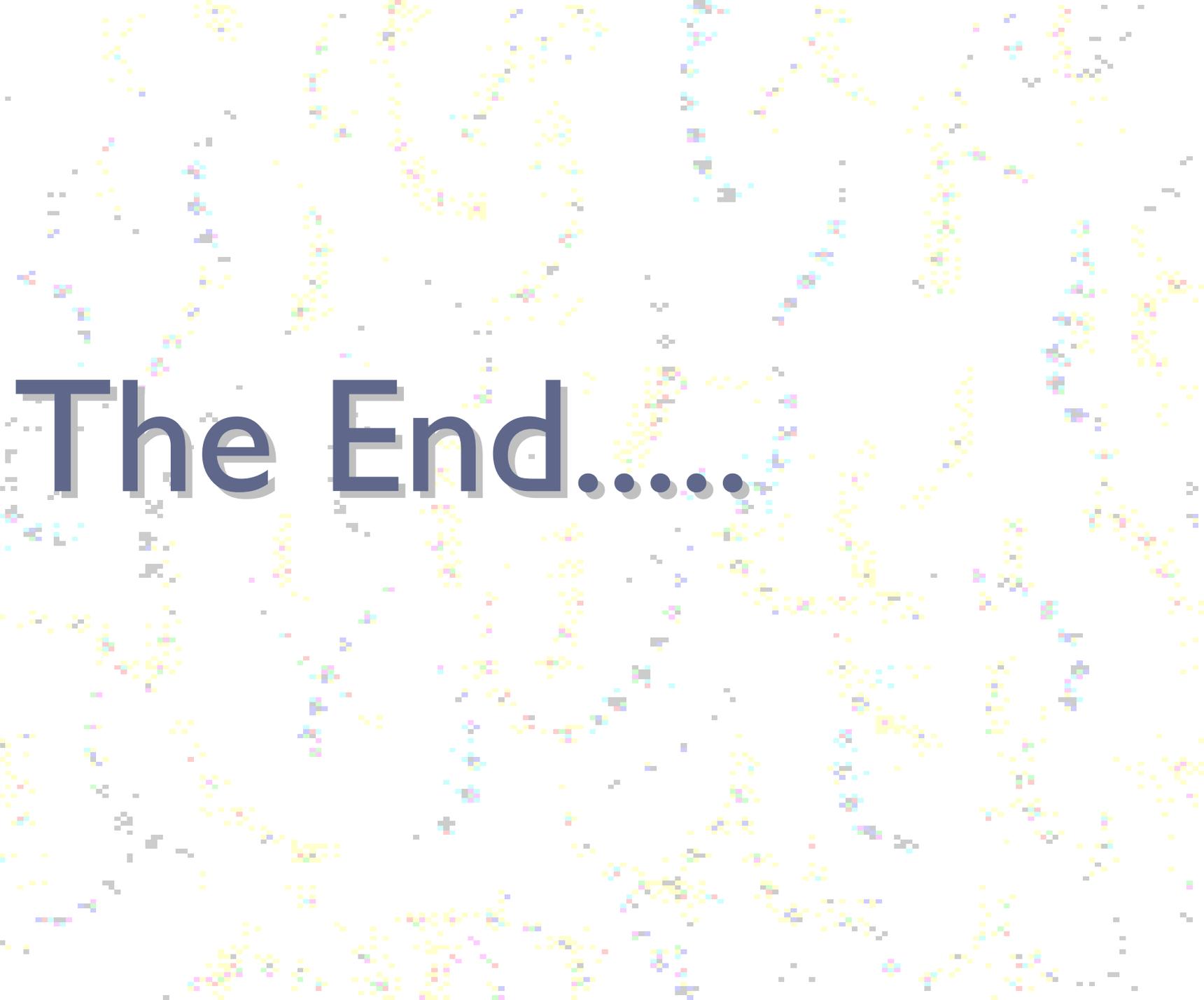
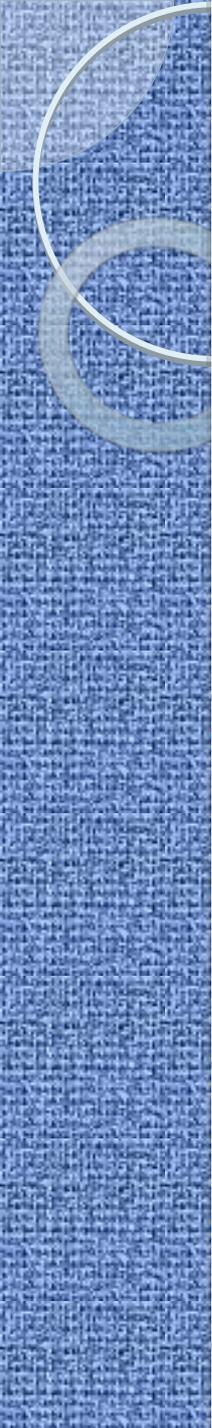
- Any start-up initiative presents opportunities as well as challenges.
- The following are a list of “birds eye view” **possible risks** for JASS, and suggestions on how to **mitigate** them.

# ...Risks and Mitigation

Risks	Mitigation
<p>Given the volume of needs on the ground, partners have very high expectations about JASS' contribution</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Clear indication to all partners about what JASS can and can't do, added value and role in movement building assistance</li></ul>
<p>Difficulty in sustaining long-term commitment and participation of stakeholders (due to lack of time, overburdened NGOs (partners), etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• JASS ensures mutual clarity on roles and responsibilities of all parties</li><li>• Identify core group of organisations to co-implement and ensure that these have funding for activities and have built JASS objectives into their respective annual plans</li></ul>
<p>Contestation around JASS' guiding values and principles (e.g. working with individual women)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure that all partners understand and agree with the guiding values and principles prior to engagement;</li></ul>
<p>Difficult to raise funds for JASS activities given that movement building is not currently included in many donor's priorities and strategies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Donor education needed</li></ul>

# Conclusion

- JASS is committed to an innovative but also realistic plan of intervention in Malawi.
- The first phase of the initiative entailed putting the JASS frameworks in place and establishing some partnerships to identify the women activists. Political awareness raising of identified women is an ongoing process.
- Phase I is over. In Phase II the first set of activity plans developed by the women will be implemented. This should take place alongside building the internal systems of JASS so that we can effectively support movement building.
- During the second phase, knowledge and information generated should be used to begin to provide assistance on the ground. At the end of this phase, we (JASS) should assess progress and any challenges in programmatic and organisational development and address these in expanding and deepening our work.
- Rigorous monitoring of change with movement building indicators.
- More mobilising of organisations/networks to support the movement builders to do have access to resources



**The End.....**