**BIOGAS ASSESSMENT PROJECT**

**Site ID: 52**

**Date**: **October 1**, **2022**

**Interviewer**: Where did the digester originate from?

**Interviewee**: They did mention something like they came from Blantyre. I did not really ask them where they came from. I was just excited when they came to tell us that they were going to install the digester here for cooking. Here charcoal is expensive and does not take long to last when you use it. So, we were spending a lot of money on charcoal instead of spending the money on buying necessities for the kids. Thus, when they came we were so happy, and

**Interviewer**: Who funded it?

**Interviewee**: That I didn't ask. So, I don’t know whether the money came from the government or from an NGO.

**Interviewer**: When was it built?

**Interviewee**: I think it was built in 2018, 2019, or 2017. I think it was around those years. It’s hard for us to remember when exactly it was, because we didn’t gain anything from the digester. You know it`s easy to remember something that you feel is important or helpful because you keep in your heart. So, I don’t remember when it was built, because I don’t feel in my heart that I was assisted. And, it hurts me a lot that it came. I remember this other day around this season, I went to the farm and I was expecting to use the digester upon returning. But, when I tried to switch it on it didn’t work. Then, I asked my children to look for charcoal and they didn’t find charcoal. So, I remember the day I slept hungry because of the digester.

**Interviewer**: Who built it?

**Interviewee**: The installers advised us to source cement and bricks, so that they could line the hole. Thus, when we bought the things and they came with the digester bag and pipes. They also asked us to find manure and 3 drums (200 liters) of water. After we got that, we prepared the feedstock and fed the digester.

**Interviewer**: How many bricks did you source? Or, how much did it cost you to source the bricks?

**Interviewee**: That time a brick wasn’t expensive as it is now. I think my husband spent K50000 to source bricks and cement. I remember we didn't feel that was too much because when we compared the amount of charcoal we use in a year for cooking with K50000 for biogas, we thought it was very fair. Plus, they told us that we could use it for a very long time, so we thought that it was very helpful and that we would save a lot of money in the long term. I remember we bought the bricks and we even paid the person who carried it here. But, we didn’t really care about that because we knew we would use it for 5 years - They told us that it had a 5 year guarantee.

**Interviewer**: Oh, its guarantee was 5 years?

**Interviewee**: Yeah, they told us that.

**Interviewer**: How many bags of cement did you use?

**Interviewee**: We used 4 bags of cement.

**Interviewer**: Oh, it was a big one, right?

**Interviewee**: Yeah, it was 3 meters deep and 1.5 meters wide. And, they told us to lined up the sides and the wall was supposed to go above ground.

**Interviewer**: Oh yeah, it was a lot of bricks and cement. What was your role?

**Interviewee**: Basically, we sourced and prepared the feedstock. We also bought cement and bricks.

**Interviewer**: Who dug the hole?

**Interviewee**: We hired people.

**Interviewer**: How many were they? And, how much did you pay them?

**Interviewee**: They were 4 people. I don’t know how much they were paid because my husband was responsible for that. But, I know it was a lot of money because the hole was deep and they even reached the point where they found underground water.

**Interviewer**: You have talked about cow manure. How much did you find?

**Interviewee**: They told us to find 3 bags of fresh cow manure. And, we didn’t get all the manure in our cow house. Some of it we had to buy. We didn’t manage to get the manure from our cow house because they specifically advised us to find fresh cow manure. It was strange for us that day to see us handling cow manure that we normally feel disgusted to handle. But, we handled it that day because we wanted to use the gas for cooking. So, every day we were always at it, making feedstock without wearing gloves. After that, we were washing hands with soap, and start off the day.

**Interviewer**: Where did you get the water?

**Interviewee**: We got it from the borehole.

**Interviewer**: Is it close?

**Interviewee**: It’s close to the [location redacted].

**Interviewer**: That’s like 500 meters. Where did you get the manure?

**Interviewee**: We got it from the grassy flood plain there. It’s where herdsmen usually rest to feed cows in this community.

**Interviewer**: How far is it from here?

**Interviewee**: It’s far.

**Interviewer**: It’s far, right. I think I know the place. It might be 2 or 3kilometers from here.

**Interviewer**: How many bags did you buy?

**Interviewee**: 3 bags. We couldn’t get it from all of it from our cow house. People were even asking what we wanted to do with all the manure. It was awkward. But, we wanted it big time, so that’s why we did put it a lot of effort. And, we felt lucky that time because many people were identified, but only a few of us were picked.

**Interviewer**: For sure. In this community, we have many households, how were you selected as a beneficiary?

**Interviewee**: I think they chose us because we showed commitment. I remember a lot of people were asked you to find cement and bricks before the installers came. But, only a few people managed to source such materials because they simplified it too much and thought it wasn’t important. So, people from different villages were chosen, but that happened after people refused to buy bricks and cement. We managed to get all the requirements because we saw its relevance, so when the installers came they gave us the digesters. I remember some people were told to dig a hole and source manure, but when the installers came, they didn’t find the hole or manure, so they were omitted from the list of beneficiaries.

**Interviewer**: So that’s how you were selected. I would also like to know how people were identified including those who denied it or failed to get the requirements?

**Interviewee**: I don’t know how people were identify. But, that time they installers were coordinating with the chairperson of ADC (area development committee). And, I remember it was the ADC chairperson, who was busy going to the potential beneficiaries to see if they had managed to dug the hole or source the manure. So the people who did not manage to get the requirements were omitted. But, I can say a lot of people were approached, but they denied it because they didn’t want to handle cow manure.

**Interviewer**: We have seen that many people were approached but deny it. Apart from what you have already said, why did you accept it to be built here?

**Interviewee**: That time when we bought firewood at K500, we only used it in the afternoon and sometimes in the evening. Then, we multiply K500 by 30 days, and then by 12 months, and we found that it was a lot of money. Then, we thought about buying cement, bricks and digging a hole, and then use the digester for 5 years. So, we saw that it was far much cheaper to use a digester than firewood. We thought that the digester was a good thing and that people had denied it out of ignorance. Also, we thought we would be like people from Mozambique who don’t spend money on energy for cooking. And, if you consider a household, a lot of money is spent on a daily on food and energy for cooking. So, that’s why we sold our goats to source funds for the digester.

**Interviewer**: You have told me that you thought you were going to be like people from Mozambique. What happens in Mozambique?

**Interviewee**: The people in Mozambique don’t spend money like we do here in Malawi. If people spend money in Mozambique, then it’s probably on buying salt. The people in Mozambique if they want side dish they go to the fields and get sweet potato leaves, cassava leaves, okra. People in Mozambique don’t spend money on food items especially side dish.

**Interviewer**: (laughs) seriously?

**Interviewee**: Yeah, and it’s only people who raise chickens around the house who eat good meals like side dish of chicken there. The people in Mozambique only eat vegetables from the fields for the rest of their lives. The people in Mozambique don’t buy pigeon peas. They don’t buy that. They get pigeon peas from their fields. And, the people their live far apart, it’s not densed as it is here, so firewood is not a problem too. The people there don’t spend money on vegetables or firewood, it’s abundant there. [Leave to attend to customers]

**Interviewer**: Where were we? I think I asked you how you were chosen?

**Interviewee**: Yeah, they chose me because of my commitment. I mean, when the installers went to the houses of some of the potential beneficiaries they didn’t find the holes dug, so they through that they were serious.

**Interviewer**: How did you know that some people were identified but didn’t show seriousness and interest?

**Interviewee**: The installers asked us how we were able to buy cement and the bricks when most people didn’t. Then, we told them that we had found that firewood expensive as compared to biogas, and that’s why were committed.

**Interviewer**: Did you know anything about biogas before?

**Interviewee**: I didn’t know anything about biogas. I have only heard that some people use LPG gas for cooking. But, I have never seen that too.

**Interviewer**: What were your expectations?

**Interviewee**: We expected the digester to be beneficial and to change our daily lives. Little did we know that we would end up losing money. And, the money we lost was enough for us to use for 3 months to buy basic necessities, and it was not budgeted for that. We only spent the money because we expected to use it for 5 years. So, at the end, the whole thing saddened us.

**Interviewer**: When you say, you expected it to be beneficial, I’m thinking about you expecting to use it for cooking. Apart from this, was there anything else you expected to benefit from it?

**Interviewee**: Nothing else. I only expected to use it for cooking.

**Interviewer**: Did they tell you that you could use it for lighting?

**Interviewee**: No.

**Interviewer**: As a source of fertilizer?

**Interviewee**: Yeah, but they dwelled much on the cooking part?

**Interviewer**: What else were you told to expect from the installers? What else did they say?

**Interviewee**: When they came, they asked about us about the environment, for example, they asked us how the mountain was like back in the days. And, we told them that the mountain was full of trees and every time we glanced at the mountain, we saw trees. Now, we can’t find trees in the mountains because people have used all the trees for cooking. Nowadays, the population is high, so it’s hard for everyone to go to the mountains and find firewood for cooking. Then, they asked us how much firewood and charcoal we use. Afterwards, they told us about biogas, and we were asked if we were interested and could manage it. Then, we told them we would do what it takes to manage it because we were losing a lot of money on firewood, and our families were not developing because we spent a lot of money on firewood. Then, that’s when they came back after some time to advise us to dig a hole, find cement, bricks and cow manure. Then, they came with the digester bag and pipes. When they came, they found that we had already dug the hole and sourced manure.

**Interviewer**: What kind of training did you receive?

**Interviewee**: We didn’t receive any training.

**Interviewer**: Then, how were you able to use it?

**Interviewee**: What kind of training we received was basic and not even worth to be called training. They just called us to the stove and demonstrated to us how to switch it on. Then, they asked us to switch it on to see if we could do it on our own. Then, they demonstrated how we could regulate the intensity of the stove by controlling the control knob.

**Interviewer**: Did they tell you how to make feedstock?

**Interviewee**: Yeah, and that is why I was going to the cow house everyday to make feedstock. I was getting a bucket and then place the manure in the bucket. Then, I was filling water in the bucket to make suitable slurry. As you know, you always find the grass in the cow manure, so they advised us to take out the trash to prevent blockages. Then, they advised us to make a sieve to help us sieve out the bad stuff.

**Interviewer**: After you were told how to switch it on, how to control the intensity of the fire, and how to make feedstock, how prepared to run or operate the digester did you feel you were?

**Interviewee**: We felt everything was okay.

**Interviewer**: You didn’t feel that something was missing?

**Interviewee**: No, no!

**Interviewer**: How did you meet your energy needs before the intervention?

**Interviewee**: We use firewood.

**Interviewer**: Where did you get firewood?

**Interviewee**: People go to the mountains to fetch firewood and sell us at K500 per bundle. When we didn’t have money, we were just cutting a tree from the compound, then chop and dry it to use it as firewood. Sometimes, when we wanted to warm water fast for the school-going children, we were going to the field and pick sorghum or pigeon dry plants.

**Interviewer**: So you were spending something like K500 of wood every day?

**Interviewee**: Yeah, and that was 2017. Now, when we buy firewood of K2000, we only use it for 2 days. And, the wood doesn’t come from Malawi. It comes from Mozambique. The wood in our mountain is depleted, and now forest officials are very strict on cutting of trees. The forest officials have made it perfectly clear that there is no wood in the mountains, so when they find you in the mountains, they shoot your leg, and if you resist arrest or try to run, they shoot to kill. So, firewood is very scarce and you can’t go into someone’s field to gather dry sorghum or pigeon peas plants – every goes to their fields to get such thing. Thus, if we want to cook, we use the wood from Mozambique and it’s very expensive. They sell 3 small pieces of wood at K2000. And, charcoal is expensive too, they charge K4500 for the small bag (20kg) and that doesn’t take long too. So, wood is very expensive and hard to find too here, and it`s a struggle to cook firewood and charcoal.

**Interviewer**: You told me you had cows that time. Do you still have them?

**Interviewee**: Yeah, we still have.

**Interviewer**: How did you manage cow manure before the intervention? You just use them as fertilizer, right?

**Interviewee**: Yeah

**Interviewer**: Does it work?

**Interviewee**: It works quite okay. What we do is, after harvesting somewhere in July, we put the manure between the ridges. So, when it’s time to prepare new ridges, soil from the old ridges is tilled and moved to where the manure is placed and buries it. Thus, when we plant maize it grows well. I harvest 15 or 20 bags (50kgs) of maize.

**Interviewer**: How big is your farm?

**Interviewee**: It uses two bags of inorganic fertilizer.

**Interviewer**: How long did it take to start up after feeding it the first time?

**Interviewee**: It didn’t take long. I think it took two weeks. After feeding it, they closed the inlet and outlet pipe with a plastic bag, then the next day the bag started rising, and after a week or so we started hearing a hissing sound at the stove. Then, they came to start it up the digester. After that, they went to other beneficiaries too to start up their digesters.

**Interviewer**: Okay, you have said you used 3 bags of cow manure to start it off, how much water did you use?

**Interviewee**: We used 3 drums (200 liters) of water.

**Interviewer**: How did you work after commission?

**Interviewee**: On the first day, it worked okay and people came to see it. They were even calling one another to see it too. People couldn’t believe that cow dung could be used to produce fire. And, the fire that was coming out was very powerful that I had to reduce the intensity to prevent the food from getting burnt.

**Interviewer**: Approximately, how many people came?

**Interviewee**: 15 to 20 people came.

**Interviewer**: What was their reaction?

**Interviewee**: They were surprised. They were saying that in no way would cow manure produce fire for cooking. They were so surprised. The people couldn’t understand how cow manure produced fire.

**Interviewer**: How many people were used the gas?

**Interviewee**: We were 8 people.

**Interviewer**: Let’s discuss how it worked on the first day and beyond. On the first day, how much cooking time did you get? Or, what things did you cook?

**Interviewee**: I was able to cook nsima (30 – 45 minutes) and side dish of dry fish ( 20 – 30 minutes). The next day, I prepared feedstock and fed the digester as we were told to feed it every day. Then, I went to the farm, hoping to use it after returning. But, when I returned around 11 in the morning the digester couldn’t produce fire. So, I went to the digester bag, and I found the bag still full. I was very puzzled because I didn’t know what was wrong, and how to fix the problem too. The problem is that the installers didn’t tell me what to do when gas was not coming to the stove. As a result, I abandoned the digester.

**Interviewer**: Oh, sad. How much feedstock were you supposed to feed it?

**Interviewee**: They told us to feed it with 5 kg of cow manure daily. So, what I was doing is, I was putting the cow manure in a bucket and then mix it thoroughly with 3 or 5 liters water. Sometimes, I was put something like a fishnet on the inlet pipe as I was pouring the feedstock to sieve out lumps and trash.

**Interviewer**: How did you feel about handling cow manure?

**Interviewee**: It felt unpleasant and disgusting, as they didn’t give me gloves to use. And, even the installers didn’t use gloves to prepare the feedstock too. We couldn’t do otherwise because we still had to cook. And, we didn’t have the money to buy firewood as well, so we had to do what we had to do.

**Interviewer**: Yeah, and you couldn’t have asked for that as well since they were using bare hands too.

**Interviewee**: Yeah, you see.

**Interviewer**: So, were you soaking or pre-treating the feedstock?

**Interviewee**: Ah, no.

**Interviewer**: Who was responsible for feeding it?

**Interviewee**: Basically, I was responsible for feeding it. My boys too kept feeding it even after it stopped working on the second day, because we were optimistic that it would pick up and continue working. And, it even reached a point where when we fed it, manure was overflowing at the outlet because there was a lot of manure in it, and that’s when we stopped.

**Interviewer**: How did you feel about feeding it?

**Interviewee**: I was confusing because even though we were feeding it, we weren`t getting gas. We only kept feeding it because they gave us a guarantee of 5 years, and since we didn’t know what the problem was, we just had to keep feeding it … it was a confounding.

**Interviewer**: How many times did you feed it after they stopped working?

**Interviewee**: We fed it almost to 15 straight days after it stopped working. We didn’t miss a day because we were advised you to feed it every day. Then, when we went to one of the beneficiaries, we gathered that their digester was not working as well, but they were still feeding it on a daily basis too. The surprising thing was that the digester bag was getting full, it was also making some sound and releasing slurry at the outlet, but it just wasn’t producing gas. And, this was contrary to what they told us. The installers told us that once we get that sound in the bag, then it was automatic that it would produce fire at the stove.

**Interviewer**: How did you make the outlet?

**Interviewee**: We dug a pit just like a refuse pit. But close to that was something like a gully that turns into a river during the rainy season. So, we made a channel to release digestate into the gully. And, when it rained, the digestate was carried away by rainwater via the gully.

**Interviewer**: Were you told that you could use the digestate as fertilizer, right?

**Interviewee**: They told us, but we didn’t commit to it because we were told that the digester would produce fire, so when we saw that it wasn’t happening we had no energy to follow all that – we thought it was a lie, just like they lied about using it for cooking.

**Interviewer**: What were the maintenance requirements?

**Interviewee**: They did not tell us about that

**Interviewer**: Did they give you their numbers?

**Interviewee**: No. If they left their cell numbers, then they must have left it with the ADC chair who was coordinating with them here – and that’s a maybe too. And, even if they had left their numbers, I don’t think I would have called them because I lost faith in them.

**Interviewer**: Can you elaborate on that?

**Interviewee**: I lost faith in them because I felt like they lied to me and made me lost money for nothing. And, that’s why I didn’t try to use the digestate because I didn’t believe their word regarding the same. Frankly speaking, what had happened made me believe that the digestate couldn’t work as well. So, even if I had their numbers, I don’t think I would still have their numbers now because I have lost phones a lot. Plus, my SIM card I was using that time was blocked because I did register it during the national SIM card registration campaign.

**Interviewer**: Okay, did it meet your needs?

**Interviewee**: It didn’t meet my needs as you can clearly see, I wasn’t able to cook nsima and anything else on it.

**Interviewer**: What were the challenges?

**Interviewee**: I found the handling of fresh manure disgusting to the extent that it was affecting my appetite to eat food. I don't even have to tell you how unpleasant it is to handle cow manure. Imagine, how unpleasant you feel when you accidentally step on cow dung in the streets, so how bad do you think it might be to handle it with hands on a regular basis. So, I was only doing that because I was the one responsible for cooking. If I didn’t do that, then my husband wouldn’t have eaten – so I just accepted it.

**Interviewer**: How did the fire go off on the first day?

**Interviewee**: It worked well, and some people started talking bad against me. People were saying I’m pompous. Some people questioned how the installers installed a digester at my place and refused some of other places. Some chiefs were even angry that I was installed a digester instead of them – people did talk a lot but I did not mind. I even felt bad that people talked against me on something that didn’t work or help me in any way.

**Interviewer**: People were talking out of jealousy?

**Interviewee**: Yeah. People couldn’t understand why an ordinary person like me would get the digester. But, they forgot that the problem was theirs for failing to do what the installers asked them to do.

**Interviewer**: Did you get little fire or no fire at all on the second day?

**Interviewee**: On the second day, it didn’t produce fire. It was only producing a hissing sound.

**Interviewer**: Did you try to light it up with a matchstick?

**Interviewee**: Yeah, and we got the matchstick with confidence that we were going to cook. And, I almost finished all the matchsticks in the box because I thought I wasn’t doing it right. I was like yesterday they asked me to do this and I did this the same thing and it worked, then why is it not working today? So, I tried to light it up with matchstick, but it didn’t work, and then I gave up.

**Interviewer**: So, you only saw fire on the first day, and afterwards you didn’t see fire again?

**Interviewee**: Yeah

**Interviewer**: Did you try to tell [name redacted] about this?

**Interviewee**: I reported to him and he asked me how I was trying to light it up. Then, I explained to him and he was like he was also doing the same, and that my digester was supposed to work. I think I reached out to him on the third day, and he was like his digester was producing flames. But, I’m not quite sure if it worked for long or not. I believe, when I told him, he communicated with the installers and he told them, because they were communicating. So, I just believe they just didn’t want to come.

**Interviewer**: Have you seen something like this [table of intervention]?

**Interviewee**: No!

**Interviewer**: What do you think of the information and do you think it would have helped you?

**Interviewee**: It would have definitely helped because we could have tried to do what the information is saying. When there was a problem, we would have been going to this information to troubleshoot and solve problem. It’s sad that the installers didn't give us this kind of information. They only told us about the inlet (feeding) and outlet (digestate). They didn't tell us anything regarding technicalities of the digester bag. As such, we didn't know anything about its operation and maintenance.

**Interviewer**: Okay, if the installers could call you today to ask you about the state of your digester, how would you describe it?

**Interviewee**: I would tell them that the digester only worked on the first day as you saw it. The next day you told me to feed it and I fed it as you told me, and I went to the farm. When I returned and switched on the stove, it was only producing a hissing sound whilst the bag was full. I didn’t give up though; I kept on feeding as you advised me. Then, after some days, it started flashing out the feedstock at the outlet, so I stopped feeding it. From that time on, the bag started of shrinking up to the point it completely collapsed.

**Interviewer**: From there what happened?

**Interviewee**: Then, a building that was close to the digester hole collapsed and fell into the hole. Then, the bag stay in the hole for close to a year, and that’s when it was removed.

**Interviewer**: How did you remove it people? People say it’s difficult to do that.

**Interviewee**: Oh, it was hard work because all the manure we had fed it with dried up in the bag, so it wasn’t easy to carry. As a result, I hired 4 people to take it out, and then I decided to use it as a roof sheet for this shelter we are sitting on.

**Interviewer**: Oh, yeah. And I’ve seen you are using the green pipe as clothesline.

**Interviewee**: (laughs) yeah

**Interviewer**: We have talked for some time now and you have said a lot of things. When you look back, in your opinion, what caused it to reach this stage?

**Interviewee**: I don’t know; is it that the digester itself doesn’t have capacity to produce strong fire; or is it that the installers were trainees and missed something important on its technicality. But then again, I’m also inclined to think that when they brought the digesters here, they must have tried them somewhere regarding their capacity to produce fire for cooking and to help people. Then, why didn’t they work here and help us here? So, I think the digesters were installed by trainees. And, I think if experts installed them, I believe they would have worked. I remember the person who installed it, he was this short person, and I must say he worked very hard. But, I think he didn’t do something right.

**Interviewer**: We are going towards the end of the interview. How do you meet your energy needs now that the digester is not working?

**Interviewee**: We still use the tradition methods of cooking. We use firewood, maize stalks. Around this time, we prune bluegum trees and use the branches as firewood. The bluegum trees here are private, and most have planted them in their homes due to firewood problems, and generally because mountains are very much protected now. So, firewood is budgeted for these days, everybody is following up on their trees too – and people do not waste firewood these days, after cooking they extinguish the fire and take off the firewood to use later.

**Interviewer**: I’m seeing a lot of bluegum trees in this community, what happened?

**Interviewee**: The bluegum tree you are seeing that side, belongs to the agriculture office and ADMARC. The houses you are seeing their plant trees too during the maize planting season to replenish trees. So, you can see that a lot of people are or have planted trees because everyone has seen that sourcing firewood is a challenge these days.

**Interviewer**: How do you manage your cow manure now? Do you still use it in the farm?

**Interviewee**: Yeah, we still do that. Now, I have 15 bags that I’ll use in the next coming days.

**Interviewer**: Oh nice, how much did the reactor cost?

**Interviewee**: Mm-hmm, they didn’t tell us. Mm-hmm, we weren’t told at all. And, the way I saw things they didn’t have money too because if they had money they would have bought cement, brick sand even hired the people to dug the hole for us. So, we didn’t ask them because we saw that they were short of money too, and the beneficiary did most of the things.

**Interviewer**: Don’t you think they asked you to buy some of the things to see and get your commitment?

**Interviewee**: Yeah, it’s was pretty much that - they wanted to bring an element of ownership. They did that on purpose so that we could accept and commit to it considering that our money was spent on it thereby enhancing its sustainability. For example, the level of management differs on a piece of cloth you bought yourself and that which you are just given. For a piece of cloth, that one spent money on utmost care is taken. But, for a piece of cloth that was just given you just let, kids play with it. So, they knew that for us to take utmost care of the digesters, we had to buy the cement and handle the manure…. And, I must say we really handled cow manure, eeh! (Laughs)

**Interviewer**: It’s not that they provided everything on the digester. Some of the things you did provide. What kind of things did you contributing in kind?

**Interviewee**: I’ll just say what I contributed. I bought bricks and I paid people to transport them. I paid people money to dig the hole. That time I paid the people, I think K6000 because it wasn’t easy to dig such a big hole. I bought 4 bags of cement too.

**Interviewer**: How much was a bag of cement that time?

**Interviewee**: Now, we buy a bag of cement at K15000 here. Back then, I think we were buying a bag of cement at K7500. We did our best to do everything accordingly, so that if another digester was coming we should use the same things i.e. the hole. The hole has been intact for all these years; it’s only now that it’s damaged. So, it’s hurts me that I lost a lot of money because of the coming of the digester.

**Interviewer**: We are remaining with four questions. What special items had to be imported from another country?

**Interviewee**: It was my first time to see a digester, and I didn’t ask them where they got digesters. Is it that they got the digesters from Blantyre? Or, is it that they got it from a broad? I don’t know. So, it was a strange thing here, and that’s why many people were coming to see it. When the bag was full, people were even stopping their bicycles to go and see the bag. And, they would ask many questions about the digester and I would explain to them regarding its feeding and all that. It’s sad that it didn’t work, and that we lost money.

**Interviewer**: I wanted to ask you if the digester helped you to save money or not. But, after listening to you talking it is clear, you lost a lot of money and you are deeply hurt by it. Roughly, how much money did you lost?

**Interviewee**: It’s a lot; K30000 for 4 bags of cement, K6000 for the bricks, K1200 for starts up water; I was paying the women K50 for a bucket; and a drum was taking it 6 or 8 buckets. So multiple that by 3, that’s like K1200, and many other things. It was a lot of money.

**Interviewer**: What is your opinion of biogas?

**Interviewee**: When the digester stopped working, I was deeply hurt. Why was I hurt, I was hurt because I trusted it with my heart that it was going to solve all my cooking needs, and I thought it was going to make cooking easy for me. So, even to date, I still want a reliable, simple and easy to start up cooking technology. Essentially, I want a technology that I can use, let’s suppose at 8 pm after coming from the farm with ease, and without going around search for firewood. Now, I can`t come home after 6 pm because that can affect our supper eating time. So, a thing like biogas is good because you can cook at any time of the day. We still want it, but it has to help. So, we want a technology that can help us, and the technology has to be better than the biogas digester we had.

**Interviewer**: So, what do you think should be done to make it helpful?

**Interviewee**: Our group was given digesters, and we have had another set of beneficiaries given solar technology, and they have been trained and everything is going smooth there. I have also heard that some people have been given a technology that uses gas and the gas cylinder looks like a mortar for maize pounding (LPG gas stoves). People are speaking highly of these things. They are saying it is easy to cook on them, and they are somewhat mobile, so you can move with them easily. I don’t know this, and I have never seen it too. But, I think it is good.

**Interviewer**: Do you think biogas has a future here or in Malawi at large?

**Interviewee**: I don’t think it has a future because people didn’t like it for the simple fact it worked badly and that nobody benefited from using it. If a marriage ends, and even if the husband was beating you but he was doing some of things good, you cry over your husband. But, biogas didn’t help as in any way, so there is no way we can want it back, and we don’t cry over it.

**Interviewer**: Last question, if you could have chosen your own energy or waste Intervention, what would you have chosen instead? If feel like you have answered me this one, so if you can briefly go through it again to wrap up. You have talked of solar panel or LPG gas, so Apart from these was else could you have chosen?

**Interviewee**: I hear people use electric stoves, but I have never seen that too. So, I think it’s also a good alternative. Then, I would also consider solar panels; I think they are easy to use and effective as well. I have concerns with LPG gas because I have heard that when it runs out of gas, it doesn’t work and you need money too. So, I don’t think we can manage it. So, I think solar is better because it doesn’t need money, and it’s easy and cheap to maintain. You only need K1000 to buy the wire and the like. Another challenge with LPG gas is that it’s hard to access. For example, here if you want to get gas you go to Migowi and that needs transport as well. So, I don’t think it’s manageable. So, solar is a better solution.

**Interviewer**: Okay, do you have any last words?

**Interviewee**: My last word is, I don’t miss my ex husband [biogas]. And, I would like to have a new husband [another cooking solution other than biogas] (laughs). My ex husband [biogas] was bad – and he didn’t bear any children I can show and be proud of! [Biogas didn’t help in any way]

**Interviewer**: (laughs) Interesting! Thanks for interview!

**Interviewee**: Thanks for coming too.