

Communities that may appear similar at a broad scale in reality face very different challenges on the ground. Planning for sustainable landscapes must take this into account.

Under the AGORA project, CIAT is working with communities in four neighbouring villages within four km² in Ntcheu district, Malawi, to identify appropriate sustainable land management (SLM) solutions to address problems of land degradation.

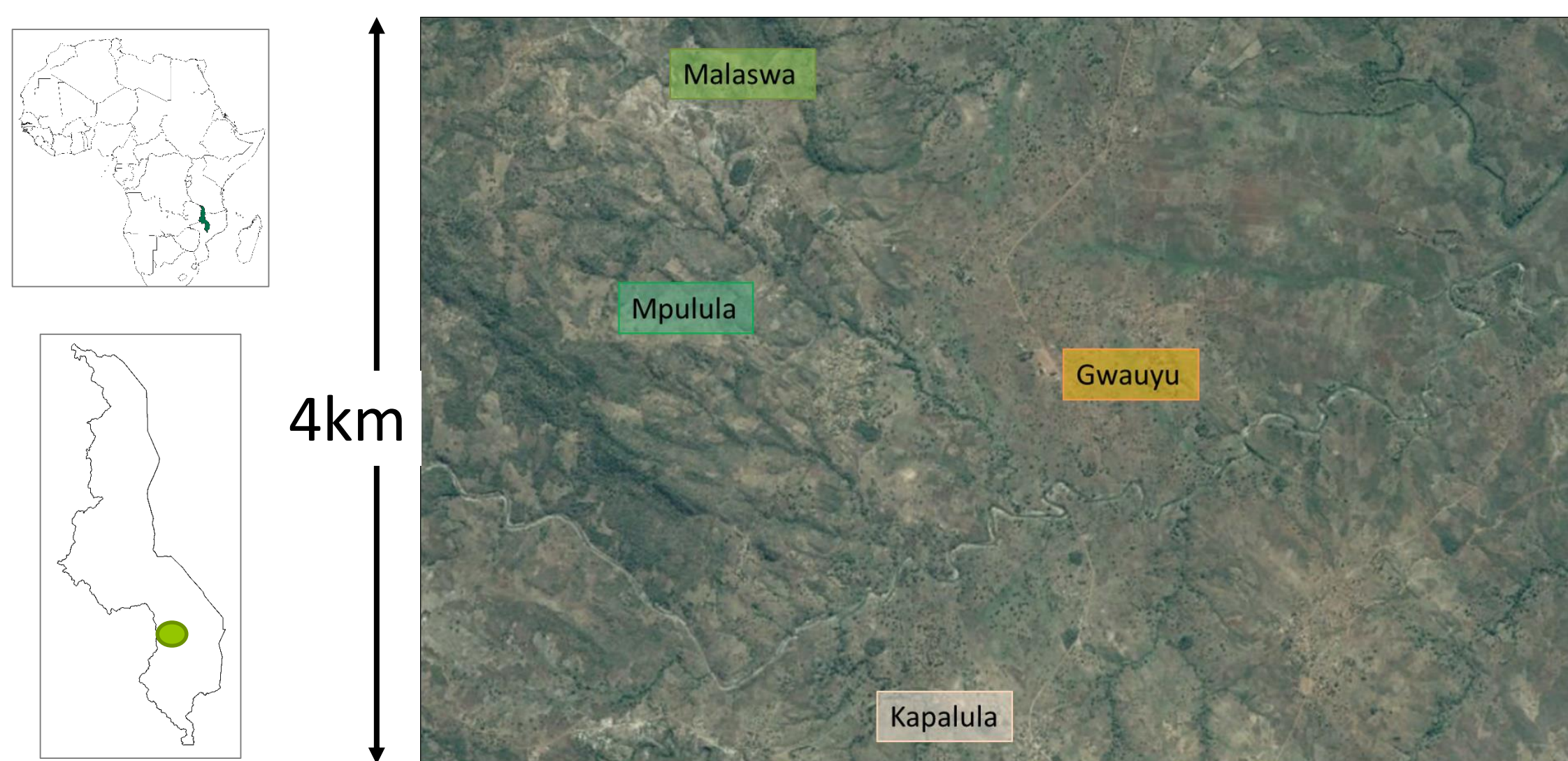
Using **participatory mapping**, we asked each community how they use their landscape, the natural resources they rely on and their perceptions of the state of their land and resources.

While the villages are very near each other, their access to resources and experience of land degradation is very different, which impacts differently on their available livelihood options and food security.

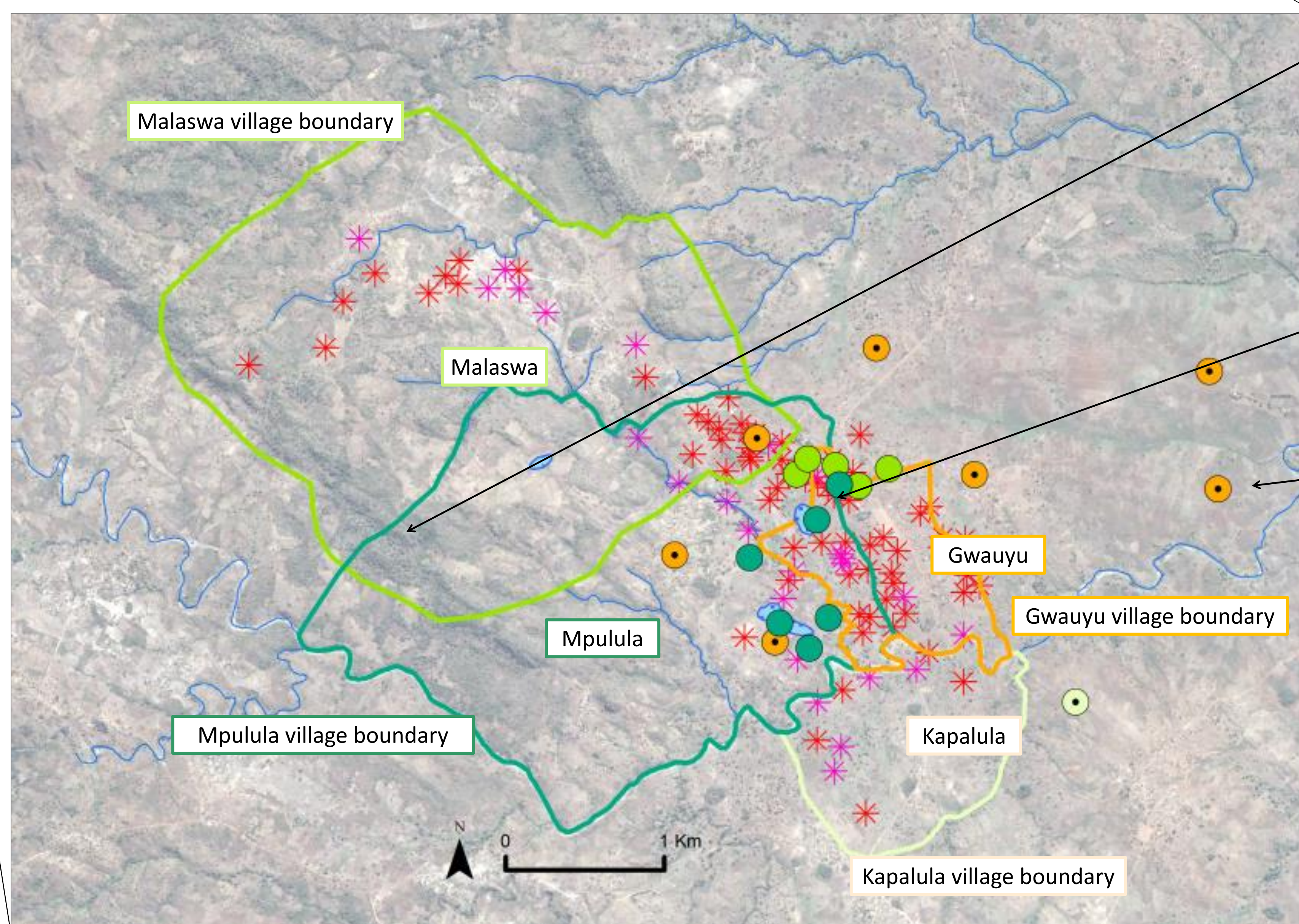
The map below illustrates how land ownership (or lack of) amongst the four villages may impact SLM solutions aimed at addressing land degradation.



Community members use Google Earth Pro images to map how they use the land including resources and the state of those resources.



- Legend
- Mpulula renting out
 - Malaswa renting out
 - Kapalula renting from
 - Gwauyu renting from
 - * Soil erosion hotspots
 - * Termite hotspots
 - Waterlogged soil



Malaswa and **Mpulula** villages own uncultivated forest land.

- They can cultivate new areas if land becomes scarce or to supplement low yields on fields with poor soil fertility.
- Availability of new land might mean the incentive to invest in SLM is low.

Land leased out by villagers in **Malaswa** and **Mpulula** villages is often waterlogged, eroded or infested with termites.

Gwauyu does not have enough land so farmers have to rent from surrounding villages.

- Fields are further away and harder to farm.
- Land is likely to be of poorer quality leading to lower yields.
- Farmers are less likely to invest in SLM because landowners often take back their land to grow tobacco if productivity is high.
- The additional cost of renting land means they have less money available to invest in SLM.

WHAT DOES THIS MAP SHOW? The areas where each of the four communities in Ntcheu district, Malawi (Malaswa, Mpulula, Gwauyu, Kapalula) either rent land to others (solid circles) or rent land from others (solid circles with centre dots) as indicated by each community during the mapping exercise. It also shows areas that are waterlogged, have soil erosion and have termites.

Photo credits: Juliet Braslow

Our partners in the AGORA project



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