

CURRICULUM VITAE

PERSONAL DETAILS

Name : **Laston P. Manja**
Permanent Address : University of Malawi, Department of Economics, P.O. Box 280,
Zomba, Malawi
Languages : English (Fluent); Chichewa (Native)
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BRIEF PROFILE

I am an Economics PhD student; an active member of the [Development Economics@Michigan](#) community; and an [African Presidential Scholars alumnus](#) at the [University of Michigan - Ann Arbor](#). I hold a position of Lecturer in Economics (tenure track) at the [University of Malawi](#). I have previously worked with various organizations and international financial institutions, including the World Bank. I completed my MA in Economics and undergraduate studies at the University of Malawi. My current research interests are within issues of development and labor.

EDUCATION ATTAINMENTS

2023 - Present : PhD in Economics
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
2016 to 2018 : Master of Arts (Economics)
University of Malawi (UNIMA) – Chancellor College
2011 to 2015 : Bachelor of Social Science (University of Malawi)

WORK EXPERIENCE

Jan 2021 – Aug 2023 : Research Assistant: **University of Michigan, Ann Arbor**
Feb 2020 - Present : Lecturer in Economics (Tenure): **University of Malawi**
Jan 2019 – Dec 2020 : Education Analyst Consultant: **World Bank**
Jan 2019 – Dec 2020 : Finance, Competitiveness & Innovation Consultant: **World Bank**
Aug 2018 – Dec 2020 : Macroeconomics, Trade & Investment Consultant: **World Bank**
2018 – 2019 : Research and Teaching Assistant: **University of Malawi**
2016 to 2018 : Part-time Lecturer: **University of Malawi (Human Ecology & Statistics Departments)**
2015 to 2017 : Associate Director: **TEREN Consulting Ltd**

AWARDS, FELLOWSHIPS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

- 2022 : University of Michigan African Presidential Scholars (UMAPS) Program
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA
- 2018 : World Bank Internship (for top of the class from UNIMA's graduate school)
Lilongwe, Malawi
- 2016 : AERC-CMAP Joint Facility for Electives Scholarship
Kenyan School of Monetary Studies, Nairobi, Kenya
- 2011-2015 : 1. University of Malawi's (Chancellor College) Deans' list awards (Multiple)
: 2. Government of Malawi National Merit Scholarship
Undergraduate Studies, University of Malawi, Zomba, Malawi

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Select (Pre-PhD) Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles

1. Tembo, D., **Manja, L. P.**, & Joshua, M. K. (2024). Faith and food in rural Malawi: An investigation into the sociocultural determinants of household food security. *Food, Culture & Society*, 1–29. Available [here](#).
2. **Manja, L. P.**, & Badjie, I. A. (2023). Does household welfare change with finance access? The case of women and the youth in The Gambia. *Review of Development Economics*, 1–41. Available [here](#).
3. Chirwa, G.C., **Manja, L.P.**, Chasukwa, M., Gunde, A., Dulani, B., Kayuni, H. & Chinsinga, B. (2023). Assessing the relationship between digital divide and citizens' political participation in Africa. *Development Southern Africa*, Available [here](#).
4. Zingwe, D.E., Banda, A.E. & **Manja, L.P.** (2023). The effects of remittances on household food nutrition security in the context of multiple shocks in Malawi, *Cogent Food & Agriculture*, 9:1. Available [here](#).
5. Salima, W., **Manja, L.P.**, Chiwaula, L.S. & Chirwa, G.C. (2023). The impact of credit access on household food security in Malawi. *Journal of Agriculture and Food Research*, 11. Available [here](#).
6. **Manja, L.P.**, & Badjie, I.A. (2022). The Welfare Effects of Formal and Informal Financial Access in the Gambia: A Comparative Assessment. *SAGE Open*. Available [here](#).
7. **Manja, L.P.**, Silumbu, E.B.D. & Chaweza, R.D.C. (2022). Determinants of Demand for International Reserves in the SADC Region. *African Review of Economics and Finance*, 1-28. Available [here](#).
8. Kambewa, P., Khangamwa, L., Masanjala, W., Chaweza, R. & **Manja, L.P.** (2022). The Impact of Ill-Health on Welfare of Rural Agricultural Households of Teuka Village in Zomba District, Malawi: An Application of the Individual Household Modelling Approach. *Malawi Journal of Economics*, 3(1): 1-13.
9. Zingwe, D.E., **Manja, L.P.** & Chirwa, E.W. (2021). The Effects of Engendered Intra-household Power Dynamics on Household Food Security and Nutrition in Malawi. *Journal of Gender Studies*, DOI: 10.1080/09589236.2021.1940110. Available [here](#).
10. Al-Hanawi, M.K., Chirwa, G.C., Kamninga T.M. & **Manja L.P.** (2020). Effects of Financial Inclusion on Access to Emergency Funds for Healthcare in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. *Journal of Multidisciplinary Healthcare*, 2020(13): 1157—1167. Available [here](#).

Working Papers

1. **Manja, L.P.** (2022). Payment Delays for Cash Transfers: The Role of Subsistence Constraints. University of Michigan African Presidential Scholars Fellowship Working Paper. Available [here](#).
2. **Manja, L.P.** & Isatou A. Badjie. (2022). The Impacts of Access to Finance on Household Welfare - A Mixed Methods Approach for Women and the Youth in The Gambia. African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) Working Paper. Available [here](#). Published paper available [here](#).

Published Reports

1. Allen IV, James, Patricia Freitag, Faustino Lessitala, Arlete Mahumane, **Laston Manja**, RyanMcWay, James Riddell IV, Tanya Rosenblat, Kwasi Tabiri, Dean Yang, and Hang Yu. 2022. "Combining Financial Incentives and Teaching to Improve COVID-19 Knowledge: A Policy Brief." Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan. Available [here](#).
2. Allen IV, James, Patricia Freitag, Faustino Lessitala, Arlete Mahumane, **Laston Manja**, RyanMcWay, James Riddell IV, Tanya Rosenblat, Kwasi Tabiri, Dean Yang, and Hang Yu. 2022.

- “Correcting Misperceptions about Support for Social Distancing to Combat COVID-19: A Policy Brief.” Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan. Available [here](#).
3. Allen IV, James, Maggie Barnard, Zach Brown, Patricia Freitag, Faustino Lessitala, Arlete Mahumane, **Laston Manja**, Ryan McWay, James Riddell IV, Tanya Rosenblat, Dean Yang, and Hang Yu. 2021. “Combating COVID-19 in Mozambique: Round 4 Summary Report.” Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan. Available [here](#).
 4. **Co-Author:** World Bank. (2019). Malawi Economic Monitor, December 2019: Strengthening Human Capital Through Nutrition. World Bank, Lilongwe, Malawi. World Bank. Available [here](#).
 5. **Co-Author:** World Bank. (2019). Malawi Economic Monitor, June 2019: Charting a New Course. World Bank, Lilongwe, Malawi. World Bank. Available [here](#).
 6. **Co-Author:** World Bank. (2018). Malawi Economic Monitor, November 2018: Investing in Girls' Education. Washington, D.C.: World Bank. Available [here](#).

Book Chapters

1. Mwale, M.L., Chirwa, G.C., Kamninga T.M. & **Manja L.P.** (2021). Trust in Election Management Bodies, Participation in Demonstrations and Willingness to Pay Taxes: evidence from Malawi. In K. Ross, A.L. Chiweza & W.O. Mulwafu (Eds.), Beyond Impunity: New Directions for Governance in Malawi (pp. 97-114).

Selected Conference Proceedings and Presentations

1. AERC-IDRC Dissemination Workshop on “Inclusive Finance for Fragile and Post Conflict Contexts in Africa”, [Banjul, The Gambia, May, 2023]
2. **Manja, L.P.** & Silumbu, E.B.D. The Comparative Potential Growth-Enhancing Effects of the AFCFTA and COMESA Trade Regimes. Paper Presented at The Seventh COMESA Annual Research Forum, 19-21 October 2020, Virtual. Paper [here](#), published in [COMESA's Key Issues in Regional Integration Vol. 9](#).
3. AERC Workshop on “Agricultural and Food Policy Analysis for Nutrition Outcomes”, [Nairobi, Kenya, October 2019]

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

University of Michigan (2024-)

1. Graduate Student Instructor

- Undergraduate : ECON 102 – Principles of Macroeconomics (FA2024)
ECON 101 – Principles of Microeconomics (WN2025)

University of Malawi (2020-2023)

1. Lecturer - Undergraduate Courses

- ECO 214 : History of Economic Thought
- DEC 313 : Development Economics
- ECO 322 : Monetary Economics
- ECO 413 : Labour Economics
- HEFC 222 : Consumer Education and Financial Management

2. Lecturer – Master’s Courses

- ECO 620 : Advanced Macroeconomics

3. Teaching Assistant

- Master’s : ECO 630 – Quantitative Methods
- Undergraduate : ECO 111 – Elementary Microeconomics
- Undergraduate : ECO 212 – Mathematics for Economists

GRANTS

1. **Co-Grantee:** AERC “Inclusive Finance for Fragile and Post-Conflict States in Africa” Project. Conducting study on “The Impacts of Formal and Informal Access to Finance on Household Welfare: The Case of Women and the Youth in The Gambia” (2021).
2. **Co-Grantee:** IFPRI’s “Enhancing the impact of agricultural extension in Malawi” project. Conducting study on “Agricultural Extension and Technical Efficiency for Malawian Smallholder Farmers” (2019).
3. **Co-Grantee:** AERC AFPON project. Study on “A Comparative Assessment of the Impacts of Malawi Farm Input Subsidy and Irrigation Policies on Child Nutrition Status” (2019).

CERTIFICATES/TRAINING

1. 2023: Africa Training Workshop in Computational Macroeconomics (AFTW2 2023)
 - Solving Dynamic Equilibrium Models;
 - Essential Numerical Tools and Perturbation Analysis
2. 2023: Africa Training Workshop in Econometrics (ATWE 2023)
 - Climate Change and Causal Inference
3. 2022: ICPSR - Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research Summer Program in Quantitative Methods of Social Research
 - Causal Inference for the Social Sciences
 - Panel Data and Longitudinal Analysis
 - Introduction to R Statistical Computing Environment
 - Introduction to Python
4. 2022: GSMA Mobile Sector Taxation
5. 2019: GSMA Internet of Things
6. 2016: IFPRI-NYU Improving Studies in Agricultural Communities

RESEARCH CONSULTANCY

1. ECD Coalition 2019-20 Budget Analysis Report
2. **Principal Investigator:** Heifer International Malawi Baseline Study (2016). Small Scale Milk Processing Business Viability Study (TEREN Consulting Ltd).
3. **Data Manager:** Care Malawi End of Project Evaluation study (2016). Echo Flood Recovery Project in Nsanje District (TEREN Consulting Ltd). Was responsible for designing questionnaires, designing and managing Open Data Kit (ODK), supervising data collection, data cleaning and data analysis.
4. **Data Manager:** Concern Universal Baseline study (2016); Project Indicators Survey for Sugar Capacity Building Project Phase III (TEREN Consulting Ltd).
5. **Data Manager:** UNICEF (2015); Assessment of Socioeconomic Life of Women and Children in Nsanje (Individual Consultancy).
6. **Data Manager:** UNICEF (2015); Socioeconomics Factors Affecting HIV/AIDS Positive Adolescents in Malawi (Individual Consultancy).

SKILLS AND ABILITIES

- Statistical: Stata | R | Julia | Python | eViews | Nvivo | CsPro | SPSS.
- Administrative: LaTeX | JabRef | Git | Microsoft Office Suite | Project Management | Project Administration.
- Survey Design: SurveyCTO | ODK | World Bank CAPI/CAWI
- Proposal writing, Data Collection, Data Analysis and Report Writing
- Research, Monitoring and Evaluation

VOLUNTEERING AND ORGANISATION DEVELOPMENT (OD)

- 2017 : Started Chirimba Youth Organization to deal with drug and substance abuse and reinstate school dropouts in school
- 2015 : Was appointed Electoral Commissioner for University of Malawi Student Leader Elections

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Economics

- Development Economics
- Impact Evaluation
- Household Behavior and Decision Making
- Labor Economics

OTHER INTERESTS

Hobbies: Playing soccer; Walking in the park; Coding; Playing with children; Maverick City Music.