

# Center for Community-Based Resource Management (CBRM)

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## CBRM Database

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<b>Case Study Name:</b>	One size fits all? Institutional design: lessons from two Malawian examples		
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<b>Region:</b>	Africa		
<b>Country:</b>	Kasungu, Malawi		
<b>Ecosystem Type:</b>	Aquatic, lakes, rivers		
<b>Social Characteristics:</b>	Rural community		
<b>Scale of Study:</b>	community		
<b>Resource Type:</b>	Ground water		
<b>Type of Initiative:</b>	Research driven		
<b>Community- Based Work:</b>	Environment, human health		
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<b>Summary:</b>	<p>This article observes two examples of attempted institutional design in Malawi's central region, Kasungu. In both cases external development actors enter local communities, and establish infrastructure to exploit two common sources of water. One is the exploitation of a river for group irrigation, the other a borehole to facilitate appropriation from a source of ground water. In both cases the infrastructure is accompanied by elaborate schemes of governance, ignoring the pre-existing social and bio-physical traits of the area. The results are two non-robust systems, collapsing under the weight of latent conflicts fuelled by the areas pre-existing institutional and bio-physical configuration. Using the framework of robustness in Social-Ecological Systems as a practical-analytical tool, the entities of the two systems are identified and their failure illustrated. The particular lessons drawn from the two cases are transformed into five general points meant to stimulate both development practitioners and future research endeavors.</p>