

## Paul Frank



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Paul, a Graduation programme participant, completed 12 Umodzi sessions over the course of a year with his wife, Jumia Yusuf. For a man in Mangochi, Paul was already quite unusual in his attitude towards gender roles in his relationship. He grew up in Zimbabwe, being taught that both men and women could farm, clean and cook. He also understood the importance of making decisions consultatively to ensure that decisions benefitted everyone involved. However, others in his community thought that he behaved in this way because his wife had bewitched him, while even his wife could not understand why he acted so differently to other men.

Participating in Umodzi has taught the other participants that “your wife is your partner”. Previously, other men had disliked the way he worked and consulted with his wife, but those who joined Umodzi have since changed their own behaviour and see him differently now. Paul believes that while men and women are physically different, when it comes to sharing household activities and chores there is no difference in what they can or should do. He said, “Men and women should move out of their boxes together”, referring to a key activity in Umodzi in which gendered behaviour is referred to as the ‘man box’ or the ‘woman box’.

For Paul, one of the most useful topics covered in Umodzi was on household budgeting which has helped them to plan how they spend their money and improved the trust between him and his wife. Now that they both have a common understanding of why budgeting is necessary and how to do it, his wife no longer feels that he is trying to control their resources or hiding things from her. Paul feels that this understanding has helped them to strengthen their relationship and brought peace to their home.

They have used the money they received from the programme to buy construction materials, such as iron sheets, and have kept money to keep engaging in the IGA.

While the Umodzi approach in Malawi only focuses on change at the household level, Paul has taken it upon himself to continue discussing what he has learned with other men from Umodzi, particularly around helping with household tasks. While it has been more challenging to engage men who did not participate in Umodzi to discuss such issues, he continues to try to influence others through discussion and by acting as a positive role model.