

In the context of Lilongwe, a "crisis" can be defined as a state of profound disruption and distress, where individuals and communities face a convergence of challenges such as economic hardship (lack of income, debts, poverty), mental and emotional strain (depression, trauma, self-doubt, loneliness), social and cultural conflicts (rejection, betrayal, division, cultural differences, witchcraft), and a breakdown in identity and support systems (loss of identity, lack of support), leading to a pervasive sense of instability and vulnerability.

Here are the similarities and differences between the definitions as per the discussions in Gaborone, Livingstone, Lusaka, and Lilongwe.

Similarities:

1. Emotional and Psychological Impact:

- Across all four locations (Gaborone, Livingstone, Lusaka, and Lilongwe), there is a consistent emphasis on the emotional and psychological toll of crises. Words such as "pain," "stress," "depression," "frustration," and "hopelessness" are recurrent, highlighting the mental and emotional challenges individuals face during crises.

2. Economic Hardship:

- Economic struggles, such as "lack of income," "poverty," and "debts," are commonly mentioned across multiple locations, indicating that financial instability is a core aspect of crises in these communities.

3. Social Disruption:

- Social issues like "division," "rejection," and "betrayal" are noted in both Lusaka and Lilongwe, suggesting that crises often lead to or exacerbate social fragmentation and strained relationships within communities.

4. Overwhelming Challenges:

- The sense of being overwhelmed or facing insurmountable challenges is a shared theme, with words like "overwhelmed," "confusion," "panic," and "disaster" appearing in the definitions across different locations.



Differences:

1. Spiritual and Cultural Elements:

- Lilongwe uniquely highlights cultural and spiritual factors, with words like "witchcraft" and "cultural differences" being part of the crisis definition. This focus on cultural and spiritual crises is less emphasised in the other locations.

2. Severity of Crisis:

- The tone of the crisis in Gaborone and Lusaka appears to focus more on immediate emotional responses (e.g., "fear," "cruel," "panic"), whereas Lilongwe and Livingstone incorporate broader and deeper societal issues such as "loss of identity" and "poverty," which point to more sustained and systemic crises.

3. Resilience and Recovery:

- While resilience is part of the conversation in all locations, the emphasis on spiritual resilience (e.g., "faith," "trust in God") is more pronounced in Lilongwe, where crisis and resilience are intertwined with religious faith and practice.

4. Leadership and Infrastructure:

- In Lusaka, there is a distinctive focus on crises relating to "leadership" and "infrastructure," indicating concerns around systemic and governance-related issues, which are not as prominently mentioned in the definitions from Gaborone, Livingstone, or Lilongwe.

These similarities and differences highlight the complex and multifaceted nature of crises across different contexts, with each location emphasising different aspects of what constitutes a crisis based on their unique social, economic, and cultural realities.

