



USPG in partnership with Anglican Council in Malawi

Improve food security and nutrition of small holder households in Malawi

Report up to December 2021



Background Analysis

Improve food security and nutrition of small holders in Malawi programme implemented by the Anglican Church in Malawi aim was to improve food security and nutrition of vulnerable families that will help create improved education opportunities for their children in four dioceses of the Anglican Church.

The program intended to reach out to 2060 poor, small-holders, and 2,500 nutritionally vulnerable children in the rural communities. Currently, rain-fed agriculture is severely challenged by persistent dry spells leading to low cash and food crop production due to climate change challenges. This in part is attributed to the negative effects of environmental degradation due to cutting down of trees for firewood and charcoal, continuous farming, loss of organic matter, broken down soil structure and soil compaction. For instance, current maize (main staple food) yield production is at 371kg/Ha as compared to 3,000 KG/HA potential yields production when using improved varieties. Consequently, majority households are food insecure due to inadequate food production and low household food purchasing power due to low household incomes. Key activities to achieve food security include supporting households to purchase high-yielding, drought tolerant seeds and irrigation kits, creating seedbanks, and provision of skills in climate smart agriculture techniques such as conservation agriculture, farming skills and organic compost manure making. Provide training on small business enterprise and capital generation and how to grow and preserve food so that the beneficiaries continue applying the knowledge even after funding is phased out.

This report covers background analysis, executive summary, achievement, conclusion, and change stories.

Executive summary

The project's goal is to improve food security and nutrition for 2,000 low resourced, small-holders, and 2,500 nutritionally vulnerable children in rural communities that will lead to improved school enrolment and completion, because children will no longer go to school hungry, and the families will be able to support education needs of their children. So far 2060 vulnerable small holders were identified and enrolled in the project, organized into

40 farmer groups, 10 groups in each district, which formed an entry point for all project related activities. Key activities during the period included provision of farm inputs, irrigation kits, establishment of seedbanks, training on climate-smart agriculture techniques and management of the environment and establishment of food gardens. The project established 40 farmer groups and initiated Village Savings and Loan (VSL) activities, trained on small scale business and initiated livestock pass-on-the-gift for sustainability.

Despite the negative impact of COVID-19 outbreak that affected the rollout of the program and subsequent implementation of activities because of many restrictions, significant progress was made. The programme benefited 2400 (B-503 G- 1897) vulnerable children with at least 2 meals per day. Out of the 2060 households that were supported with farm inputs (hybrid maize seeds and fertilizer), 1030 (50%) households increased maize crop yields from 3 bags to an average of 8 bags and 50 % increased from 3 to an average of 6 bags production on same acreage. This is change is attributed skills gained from climate smart agriculture training, use of compost manure, drought resistant seeds, irrigation kits and farm input support. Farmer groups were supported with irrigation equipment (watering canes, treadle pumps, and water pumps), vegetable seeds, and maize seeds to grow during the winter season. Farmer groups sold food surplus and deposited funds in VSL accounts which increased their savings and income. Refer to stories of established farmer groups in Nkhatabay (Chilambwe parish), and Balaka (Lisungwi parish) where farmers can sell their crops and have enough vegetables for family food security.

Through participation in VSL, over 650 people (F446, M204) have invested their loan in a small-scale business and increased their incomes 10 times, refer to a case story from Ntchisi (Chinthembwe parish). One group called Kalowa 2 in Chilambwe parish started contributing K250 per week for their village savings group. Because they had been able to access loans and invest in small-scale businesses, the contributions increased to K500 and now members can contribute K2,500 per week. The highest loan so far accessed by group members is K40,000. Members can finance their small-scale businesses and farming activities. One such member from the same group after accessing a loan of about

K30,000 managed to buy a push bicycle, hires it out and carrying goods to the market. He makes an average K15,000 on average per day. 2000 families were provided with training in small business enterprise and how to manage village savings.

Goac contribution: GOAC contributed £40,500 - expenditure was £40,629.90, with an over expenditure of £129.90, covered by the partner.

Program achievements

The project implementation started late because of the outbreak of Covid-19 which restricted movements. However, despite late start, 40 farmer groups were formed and 2,060 small holder farmers received 2kilograms of hybrid maize seed, and 20 kilograms of fertilizer which they multiplied. In addition, the groups received training in the production of Mbeya fertilizer/manure after which 60% of the households produced 2 bags of 50 kilograms and others 4 bags of manure that they applied to their gardens. The hybrid seed planted on a half-acre land for it to be more effective.

Farmer groups from were supported with irrigation kits, (treadle pumps and watering canes) to implement irrigation farming so that families have adequate food throughout the year. In Ntchisi , the group sold vegetables, deposited income in VSL account as startup capital for small businesses. In Nkhatabay , one group called Kalowa harvested 30 bags, sold and deposited income in the group account which grew the fund and members are able to purchase own seeds and start small business. The group bought additional fertilizer, pesticides, and seeds from the profits they.

Outcome 1.0: Improved household food security and income of 80% of the targeted vulnerable households in the four targeted communities

Indicators: % increase of vulnerable households that have adequate food throughout the year.

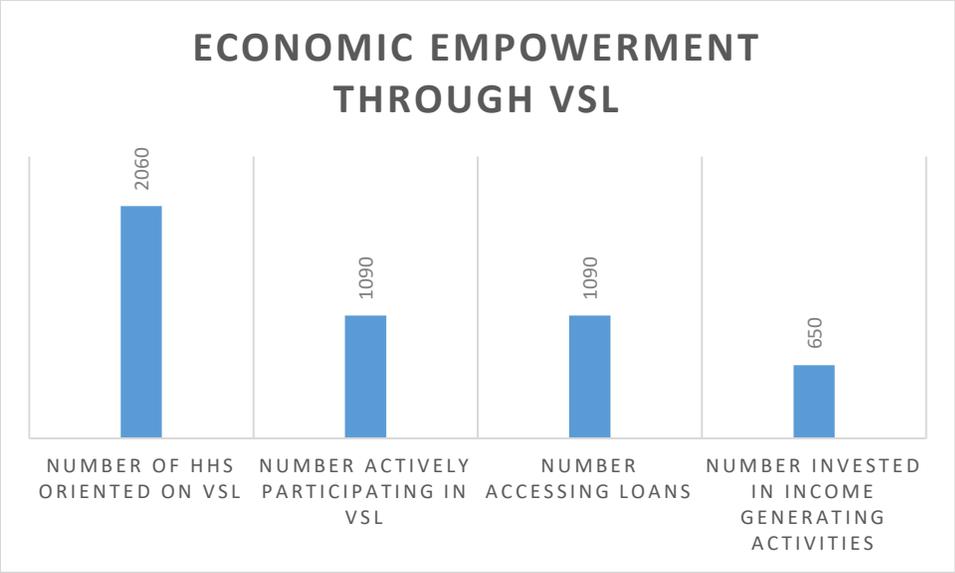
% Increase of vulnerable households that are resilient

Output 1.0: 2000 small holder famers have increased crop yields per year.

Through the established groups, the program offered training to 2060 vulnerable households on fertilizer multiplication, climate-smart agriculture techniques, and post-harvest handling. 2060 household were supported with farm inputs. They were each given 20 kilograms of fertilizer, which when multiplied produced either 2 bags of 50kilograms or 4 bags of 50kilograms inorganic fertilizer which is equivalent to 50kilograms of organic fertilizer which costs about MK20,000. They were also provided with 2 kilograms of hybrid seeds to be planted on a half-acre land which if well cared for can produce close to 20 bags of 50kilograms maize. Despite having scanty rainfall and worm infestation in some parts of Chiladzulu, and Lisungwi, households increased their crop yield in the year. For example, a household in Ntchisi harvested 25 bags of 50kilograms maize on the same piece of land. This is because of the skills gained from the compost manure-making training programme conducted and the farm inputs she received.

Output 1.3: 2000 identified vulnerable Households have diversified their sources of income

Low household income has serious negative effects on wellbeing of vulnerable households as they fail to access basic necessities and also fail to support education of their children. The causative factors were mainly found to be lack of entrepreneurship skills and also lack of access to small loans to finance small businesses. Therefore, the project conducted several activities to empower vulnerable communities economically so that they can support their families and invest in income generating activities and climate smart agriculture. The identified 2060 small holders were introduced to village savings and trained on management of small-scale business. This has been so because of financial hardships as many depend on casual labor which has been scarce because of Covid-19 which also negatively affectively economic activities of smallholder farmers. Over 650 households can invest their loan into income generating activities as per success stories shared.



Sustainability

The programme envisages to benefit targeted rural communities in the long-term as improved food security will result in households being able to have three nutritious meals per day and being more resilient in periods of drought. Household income will be increased through the development of small business enterprises making vulnerable households self-sufficient, and access to varied nutritional food will improve their health and well-being further reducing the need for overseas aid. Inequalities among women and men will be reduced as both will be actively participating in economic activities and therefore reduce gender-based violence.

The project will be self-sustaining as the households are trained in how to develop and manage their small holdings, make their own compost manure, and prevent soil erosion. In addition, community volunteers have been trained as Field Facilitators to mentor and support households to develop their small-holdings over the long-term. The village savings and loan groups will help households access financial services at local level in times of need.

The 40 established Smallholder farmers groups capacity is further strengthened through livestock pass on activities of goats and pigs. Each small holder famer group received 5

goats and continue to distribute to members through “**Pass- it -on- Gift** “. This activity is being supported by the Anglican Council in Malawi

Conclusion

ACM is gratified for the financial support it received to implement this project in the said four districts and Anglican dioceses. To date, 2060 small holder farmers have been reached with climate smart agriculture techniques and farm inputs and over 2,400 vulnerable children from these families are being protected from effects of hunger. ACM will continue implementing the project and report progress being made.

Programmed Change stories

story 1

Story of: Tikondane Nthawisa farmers group

The domain of change: Food security and household income

What happened thanks to the Anglican Church.



At the inception of the community program, the community volunteer together with local leaders from Nthawisa village identified vulnerable families that needed support. They were organized in a group called Tikondane with 25 members(M6F19). The group was

established in December 2020 and 22 members(M4F18) have been actively participating in VSL and other program-related activities. The group received training on how to make compost using locally available resources and only 12 members applied the knowledge they gained. They were also trained on how to manage small-scale businesses, trained in VSL, and were encouraged to establish small businesses to increase their incomes. In January 2021, the group members started contributing shares for their village bank and each member was contributing K200 weekly. The group was also trained on environmental management given that the catchment areas are suffering the effects of climate change year and year. The group planted 500 trees on a community forest with a 50% survival rate because of too much heat. 20 members from the group also received training on how to make briquettes and environmentally friendly stoves.

Changes in the life of the beneficiaries

There has been a significant change in the lives of the beneficiaries who are benefiting from the increase in income. Group members contributed shares amounting to K382,000 by June 2021 (6 months), they closed the cycle and shared the dividends among the 20 active members. The Group started the second cycle with an increase in the amount of weekly share contribution for each member.



The group also received farm inputs, fertilizer, maize seeds, vegetable seeds, watering cans, and pesticide sprayer from the project which has helped the group to start irrigation farming. One group member offered her garden and together they planted 220 beds of vegetables and 200 beds of maize (half acre land). For the maize crop, the group sold green maize and total sells were about K250,000 which was deposited in the group account to grow the funds.

Some of the group members harvesting vegetables for home consumption.

The group had been selling the vegetables. They sell 8 leaves at K50.00. They do their selling on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Friday, but for household consumption, members harvest daily so that they don't buy from the market. The members were happy that they stopped buying vegetables and are eating fresh vegetables from their garden. The proceeds from the sales are shared on daily basis once sold so that everyone benefits equally and some are investing the money in small-scale businesses. Like the story of

Janet Lucio. Janet is one of the beneficiaries and is running a small shop in her community after accessing a loan of K5,000 from the group and also K5,000 from the proceeds of selling vegetables.

The challenges that the group face

The group has been facing a problem of pest attacks and they have managed to spray pesticides to contain the spread.

Change Story 2

Kalowa 1: Group Members

The domain of change: Food security and household income

What happened, thanks to Anglican Church's support.

When the program with the support from Anglican Church came to Kalowa Village, the volunteer from their community identified vulnerable men and women, some of whom are widows, single mothers while others are from very poor families.



The beneficiaries were organized into a group of 25 people (4 men, and 21 women) though 3 members are not actively participating in the program activities. They received training on how to make manure fertilizer and conservation agriculture and were given farm inputs. They were also oriented on village savings scheme and received training on the same. The group started contributing their shares in November 2020 and together they have been doing village savings.

Part of the maize field that they grew maize using irrigation farming.

The group managed to rent

2 hectares' farmland at K18,000 from the proceeds of VSL groups. The project assisted them with hybrid maize seeds and fertilizer, and this time they utilized the knowledge they received on manure making. They grew maize on 1.5hactres and sold the green maize amounting K350,000 which was deposited in the group account to grow the fund. The group was also supported with livestock for the pass-on-the-gift program (1 male and 4 female piglets). The pigs are due for reproduction and members are dedicated to the objective of the program seeking to strengthen their resilience to future climatic shocks.

Changes in the life *of participant*

Since the program began in October 2020 in Cimambwe parish, the group was one among the groups which were not performing very well. Most of the members had handout syndrome and were not willing to adopt strategies.

However, when the village savings and loans group was introduced and established in the village, the highest amount one could contribute as share capital in November 2020 was K200 only, but the situation has greatly improved among these households. All the 22 members are actively participating in the village bank and are accessing loans from the village savings group. Because their incomes have grown, all members can contribute a weekly share amount ranging from K500 – K1000 an increase from the initial share of K200 per week. The members had invested in a small-scale business, like selling rice, tomatoes, bananas, and others have managed to grow their maize gardens. The Highest loan so far taken by group members was K40,000.00. One member took a loan of K30,000 and he bought a push bicycle which he uses for hiring and transporting goods to the market. He makes on average K17, 000 daily income.

Being part of this program has changed their lives given that their children are now going to school daily with a smile because they have enough exercise books and are putting on school uniforms. The diversity of economic empowerment activities like growing and selling vegetables and small-scale businesses have enabled families to provide the basic needs of their children who are no longer going to school hungry.

