

# SAFE-World Project/Initiative Summary

**Country: Malawi**

Project/Initiative Title: CSC - Agricultural Extension Project, Malawi

Nos. farmers: 30

Hectares: 24

Agro-Ecological Zone: III

Improvement types

1x	2	3x	4	5	6x	7	8	9
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Success and Limits to spread

Success	Limits
1a,1b,3e	3a,3d,3e,6a

## A. Key Impacts

### ***A2 – Impacts on natural capital***

- ?? The agriculture extension program is educating farmers as to the need for soil conservation (soil erosion control) using A-frame. Our target areas have mainly been in those places whose slopes facilitate erosive run-off. The message has been well adopted because of (i) the problems incurred in those areas, (ii) the use of A-frame is very simple and cheap for the resource poor farmers.
- ?? Vetiver grass has widely been planted on contour ridges and the impact of vetiver grass on the reinforcing of contour ridges is also obvious to farmers.
- ?? Because of the obvious impact our project does as regards to soil conservation, the World Bank asked our organization to set up a soil conservation demonstration plot along the Highway and to capture the attention of even motorists.

### ***A3 – Impacts on local community (social capital)***

- ?? The use of sustained agriculture practices is deemed as very slow in producing substantial results. This being the case, I cannot boldly say on the levels of incomes and savings.
- ?? However, several training sessions have been conducted on agricultural problem analysis and sustainable agriculture practice.
- ?? About 382 extension multipliers (see overleaf) have been trained and each extension multiplier is in contact with 8-15 farmers on sustainable agriculture technologies.
- ?? The project has in a way empowered the communities to the extent that some communities have come up with their own ideas on sustainable agriculture activities. (For example, in a certain area called Ntonda, about 17 farmers got together and decided to set up a sustainable agriculture demonstration farm. The farm is called Lipangwe Organic Demonstration Farm (LODF) whose objective is to demonstrate to the community the benefits of using organic inputs as opposed to conventional inputs. The activities at the farm include: application of organic manures, growing of leguminous crops, soil conservation using A-frame, agroforestry and the raising of goats for the supply of manure. The farm was supported by funds from Christian Service Committee

(agriculture extension program) and the farm now is self-sustaining. Field-camps are organized by project holders of people from near and far come to witness the success of the farm, the size of this farm is around 10 ha.

?? With the prevailing circumstances in Malawi, the agricultural problems mostly mentioned are drought, soil infertility, soil degradation in some areas and poverty. The technologies mentioned above are a response to these expressed problems. We have also trained volunteers in the rural areas whom we call Extension Multipliers (EMs). The trained EMs assist fellow farmers in communities with messages from the technologies. The EMs are also involved in Participatory Technology Development. This is done to build the rural capacity in handling agricultural issues.

**A5 – Key changes in farm / regional system**

?? The food security situation worth mentioning here is with regard to diversification of crops grown. Previously, the government used to advocate the growing of maize on sole stand as opposed to inter-cropping.

?? But due to erratic rains in three successive years the experience has ended up being sour.

?? Our project has promoted the growing of a variety of crops (legumes, cereals, tubers, etc.) on the same piece of land to ensure sustained productivity. The farmers are therefore well buffered in terms of yields from the various crops.

?? The project has just (in July) conducted an animal survey to assess the impact of project activities in terms of changes in yields, changes in incomes, farmer perceptions. The data is still being analysed and concrete figures on the above will probably be ready by early next year.

?? It is estimated that over 24 ha. of land has been conserved using contour ridges of vetiver grass. The hectareage might even be more and the impact is steadily diffusing to neighbouring communities.

**B. Types of Sustainable Agriculture Improvements**

Type 1: Better use of available renewable natural capital

Type 2: Intensification of single sub-component of farm system

Type 3: Diversify by adding new productive natural capital and regenerative components

Type 4: Better use of non-renewable inputs and technologies

Type 5: Social and participatory processes leading to group action for making better use of natural capital

Type 6: Human capital building through training-learning programmes

Type 7: Access to Finance

Type 8: Add value by processing to reduce losses and increase returns

Type 9: Add value by direct or organised marketing of produce to consumers

	Yes/No	Narrative
Type 1	x	<p>?? Soil fertility improvement using agroforestry species such as F. albide, glicidia, serbania sesbani, Tephrosia vulgari, etc.</p> <p>?? Growing of drought tolerant crops such as cassava, sweet potatoes, sorghum, pearl millet to alleviate the problem of erratic yams.</p> <p>?? Soil conservation using A-frame and vetiver grass.</p>
Type 2		

Type 3	x	Growing of leguminous plants such as soya beans, g/nuts, pigeon peas, etc. to improve soil fertility and nutritional status of households.
Type 4		
Type 5		
Type 6	x	<p>?? Our approach has always been participatory. Before these technologies are introduced into a community, extension staff organize training session for rural communities where farmers analyze agricultural problems faced in the rural areas, causes of problems as well as possible solutions to the problems. Then farmers draw an action plan from those sustainable possible solutions. The extension worker then imparts skill training on technologies that can address the most pressing problems.</p> <p>?? We have also trained volunteers in the rural areas whom we call Extension Multipliers (EMs). The trained EMs assist fellow farmers in communities with messages from the technologies.</p> <p>?? The EMs are also involved in Participatory Technology Development. This is done to build the rural capacity in handling agricultural issues.</p>
Type 7		
Type 8		
Type 9		

### **C. Key Lessons: Success, Spread and Constraints**

#### ***C1 – Key Lessons Learned***

Simple agricultural messages can be passed on to resource-poor farmers, identifying and developing simple, low-cost agricultural messages which are responsive to farmers' needs e.g. ways of conserving soil fertility, better ways of animal husbandry. Other projects include afforestation, poultry-keeping, fish-farming, credit schemes, and income-generating project.

#### ***C2 – Aspects of local/national context contributing to success***

- ?? The sustainable agriculture technologies are now gaining ground considering that of late fertilizers and other input prices have extremely gone up since the government had to remove subsidies.
- ?? The message has been well adopted because of (i) the problems incurred in those areas, (ii) the use of A-frame is very simple and cheap for the resource poor farmers.
- ?? We have managed to get positive impacts because the innovations used are low-cost and therefore are quickly adopted by the resource -poor farmers who are the majority in the rural areas of Malawi.
- ?? Christian Service Committee (CSC) is a development arm of both protestant as well as catholic churches - it therefore channels all development activities through churches. The agriculture extension program is equally channeled through already existing churches. At the meantime, the church is a local institution that really binds the people together in Malawi than any other institution. CSC's affiliation with churches makes the

organization strong and effective.

- ?? The Extension Multipliers mentioned above are identified from churches and they execute their duties in the noble cause of being servants of God. Actually the EMs program tries to build the capacity of churches in executing agricultural programs.
- ?? Christian Service Committee has several extension field staff (well trained) in to interact with farmers at grass root level.
- ?? There is strong collaboration between the Agriculture Department of CSC

***C3 – Limitations preventing spread***

National factors:

- ?? Political promises for free supply of inputs such as fertilizers, seed, etc.
- ?? Inadequate support by government institutions on sustainable agriculture activities.
- ?? Biased agriculture research focus - oriented towards conventional type of inputs as opposed to organic technology.

Organizational:

- ?? Inadequate human resources within the organization to effectively contact more vulnerable areas/groups.

***C4 – Policy issues***

- ?? Political promises for free supply of inputs such as fertilizers, seed, etc.
- ?? Inadequate support by government institutions on sustainable agriculture activities

**D. Contact Point for Project/Initiative**

Nobel S Z Moyo Agriculture Training Officer Christian Service Committee CSC PO Box 51294 Limbe Malawi
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