Malawi



Organization: Action for Environmental Sustainability
Location: Blantyre, Malawi
Solution: Improving food security by integrating climate-resilient production through a school farm
Factsheet Period: First round of UNDP AFCIA funding (16 months); Second round of UNDP AFCIA funding (12 months)



Demonstrations at a farmer school, showcasing initiatives that enhance climate resilience @AES

Malawi is highly prone to climate hazards, such as dry spells, droughts, intense rainfall and floods. Floods and droughts are a leading cause of food insecurity in the country (World Bank Climate Change Knowledge Portal, 2024). Action for Environmental Sustainability (AES) has observed that these challenges have led to increased tree cutting, monoculture farming and the use of chemical pesticides. To address these issues, AES has developed a school farm initiative that empowers smallholder farmers with the knowledge and skills to implement responsible farming practices such as sustainable livestock management and climate-smart agriculture.

Key achievements

- Trained 450 smallholder farmers from Ntenga village in climate-smart techniques (regenerative agriculture, water/soil conservation and planting early maturing varieties)
- Enhanced farmer resilience through diversification into high-value crops (e.g., vegetables, tomatoes), increased farm assets and improved food sovereignty
- Increased the average annual income of beneficiary farmers by 30%, from a baseline of $634.8 to $825 after 12 months, driven by improved productivity and diversification
- Established multiple revenue streams for farmers from fish farming, livestock, crops/vegetables and the operationalization of a maize mill

Social impact

- Increases access to indigenous seedlings and crop varieties
- Promotes the adoption of organic and climate-smart farming practices
- Improves living standards through better diets and increased income

Funding snapshot

- UNDP-AFCIA grant: US$235,000 (initial grant: $125,000; scaling grant: $110,000)
- World Centric grant: $7,500
- 3rd Crick Foundation grant: first grant: $12,000; second grant: $13,000





Adaptation benefits

- Provided training for smallholder farmers in climate-smart livestock management and organic farming techniques, promoting sustainable agricultural practices
- Developed a business model to strengthen farmers' capacity to produce Indigenous crops, seedlings, and livestock, enhancing resilience to climate change

Innovation

- Established a solar-equipped school farm that functions as both a training hub and a revenue-generating asset, featuring three solar egg incubators and solar fridges
- Generates income through the sale of Indigenous vegetables and crop seedlings produced on the farm
- Provides agribusiness training to farmers, enhancing their skills and improving the marketability of their products
- Facilitates connections between farmers and both local and international markets, expanding their reach and opportunities

Replication potential

- The solution uses a field school farm model for monitoring, with the “lead farmer” approach offering potential for future expansion and long-term knowledge transfer
- The business model enables revenue generation, supporting the sustainability and continuation of the activities over time

Investability	
Revenue per year	$28,000 annual revenue (36% livestock, 28% fish farming, 36% crops), with strong growth potential in all areas
Sustaining criteria	A farmer field school approach with "lead farmers" fosters knowledge sharing and long-term sustainability Training in livestock management, organic farming, and climate-smart practices equips farmers to adapt and improve livelihoods
Financial innovation	The innovative approach establishes a farm as a social enterprise, providing training, generating revenue, and serving as a model for replication. Farm revenue supports activities of the initiative and future expansion Prioritizing livestock, Indigenous vegetables and crop seedlings fosters biodiversity conservation and potential niche market development
Expected return	US$28,000 annual revenue once all livestock, fish and crops are mature and ready for sale

ADAPTATION FUND Climate Innovation Accelerator

ADAPTATION FUND

To read their story, visit UNDP-AFCIA

To watch their video, click here

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