

ECRP



ECRP Bulletin, March 2014

Enhancing Community Resilience Programme (ECRP)



ABOUT THE BULLETIN

ECRP will be producing bulletins biannually highlighting key achievements, challenges and lessons learnt. This is the first bulletin so it will give key highlights since the start of the programme (2011).

WHAT IS ECRP?

It is an innovative and holistic programme that integrates Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) into a tried and tested package of interventions aimed at improving the livelihoods and enhancing the resilience of vulnerable rural communities. Christian Aid Malawi and Concern Universal are leading two consortia with respective agencies and implementing partners in ECRP. ECRP is funded by a tri-partite, "Joint resilient Unit" which comprises of UK Aid, Irish Aid and the Norwegian Embassy.

PROGRAMME IMPACT AND OUTCOME

Impact: Reduction in extreme poverty and hunger (MDG 1)

Outcome: Increased resilience to climate variability and change.

Beneficiaries: 400 - 540,000 direct beneficiaries and 1.2 - 1.6 million indirect beneficiaries

Period: 2011-2016

SOME OVERALL PROGRAMME ACHIEVEMENTS

- Developed Functional Early Warning Systems in 9 Districts (68 GVHs)
- More than 38,500 households reached with interventions such as conservation Agriculture (CA), Small-scale Irrigation and Livestock, Village Savings and Loans (VS&L), Post Harvest Management (PHM), Disaster Risk Management (DRM), Low Carbon Technology (LCT), Seed Systems and Agro-forestry
- 4 National Climate Change Adaptation related Policies influenced:
 - ▶ Draft National Disaster Risk Management (DRM) Bill
 - ▶ Draft National DRM Policy
 - ▶ Draft DRM Devolution Plan
 - ▶ Draft National Climate Change Policy

TARGET DISTRICTS

- Nsanje
- Chikwawa
- Thyolo
- Mulanje
- Machinga
- Balaka
- Mwanza
- Dedza
- Salima
- Kasungu
- Karonga

ABOUT THE ECRP-CHRISTIAN AID

Enhancing Community Resilience Programme (ECRP) is implemented by a consortium, led by Christian Aid. It works with two other international member organizations, CARE and Action Aid. ECRP aims at supporting and empowering households, communities and leadership to mitigate the effects of climate change through building the capacity of the communities to anticipate and plan to and respond to climate change impacts.

Its goal is to directly enable 61,000 households and 305,000 people in 26 Traditional Authorities (T/A) to developing their capacity to increase their resilience to climatic risk.



Village Head woman Namawunya happily demonstrating her CA field in GVH Ndaona.

PROGRESS TO DATE

VS&L has on average has assisted a household to save up to MK7, 106.00 and provided rare opportunity of borrowing to an average loan size of MK9, 413.

In **DRM**, collaboration with Department of Climate Change and Meteorological Services has been enhanced, capacity building for Civil Protection Committees (CPCs) and communities and development of local level contingency plans and EWS.

Trainings for lead farmers and setting up of demonstrations have been milestones with **conservation agriculture (CA)**, as well as learning and

sharing with other stakeholders on the principles for CA (minimum or zero tillage, mulching, crop rotation or crop association). With seed systems, milestones have been construction of community **seed banks** with emphasis on seeds and training of communities.

On **Small-Scale Irrigation**, **23** sites were identified and are under development where about 5000 households will have access to irrigated farm land.

Post-harvest Management has also progressed well with milestones on procurement and distribution of drought tolerant as well as capacity building of lead farmers and demonstrations for outreach.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

<p>Village Savings and Loans Almost 36,000 people (17,000 women) participate in Village Savings & Loans activities, giving them access to cash for small investments. Cumulative savings have amounted to MK123, 759, 489.00.</p>	<p>Climate forecasting 1,290 farmers receive weekly SMS's with weather forecasts and 67,000 community members receiving weather forecast information improving their ability to make informed decisions about the timing of their agriculture activities</p>
<p>Conservation Agriculture Close to 28,000 farmers are engaging in sustainable conservation agriculture practices through working with lead farmers and are reaping the results from an improved harvest</p>	<p>Early Warning System 76,000 people benefit from Early Warning Systems or Disaster Risk Management related activities, safeguarding their assets from usual seasonal hazards</p>
<p>Agro-forestry About 20,000 farmers engage in agro-forestry activities, which includes reforestation of dry areas</p>	<p>Small-Scale irrigation 23 community-irrigation sites are under development, giving 5,000 people access to irrigated farmland, to supplement their households' food-supply</p>
<p>Post-Harvest Management Almost 20,000 farmers acquired know-how on how to better conserve their harvest, contributing to an improved food-security</p>	<p>Low Carbon Technology Over 6,600 fuel-efficient stoves were made by ECRP communities, helping households to reduce their fuel-wood needs, therefore protecting the environment</p>
<p>Small-Scale Livestock About 2,100 farmers have been supported with livestock initial stocking for a pass-on programme, effectively contributing to resilience building by improving protein intake, increasing availability of organic fertilizers and generating income</p>	<p>Seed Systems 6,400 farmers provided with drought tolerant crop seeds which will further strengthen resilience to shocks</p>

SUCCESS STORIES

Cell Phone – A Weather Advisor (story of Luciano)



Luciano, a Lead farmer accessing weather forecast weather forecast information in Mulanje.

Luciano is a smallholder farmer from T/A Mabuka in Mulanje District. He is one of the many smallholder farmers who are being impacted negatively by climate change and variability as his farming largely depends on unreliable rains. Luciano is one of the farmers in the district whose village falls in the catchment of a Community Resilience programme.

When the program started Luciano volunteered to be a Lead farmer in his village coordinating interventions on agriculture production. He has a cell phone and when an opportunity for access to weather information arose in ECRP, he joined with the aim of using the information for himself and sharing the same to farmers in his village. *“Since December 2012 when my number was entered into the ECRP-Esoko weather forecast dissemination system, my phone has become more of a “weather advisor”.* He has been receiving weather forecasts telling him how the weather would be in the next 5 days twice every week for 7 months.

“I keenly read the messages which are in Chichewa and observe what happens in the days, and the forecasts are always accurate.” He continues *“the forecast is helping*

me plan my farm and off-farm activities well, and I find them more helpful since they are about my District unlike the general forecast we usually get on the radio.” Luciano also shares and advises his community through the village headman of the forecast and what activities to do or not to do in his role as a Lead farmer.

Luciano bemoans old good days when weather was more predictable. He said *“we could easily tell of the onset of rains by indigenous warnings like birds flying over the village from north to the south, which could mean the onset of rains. Such birds are no longer available possibly due to climate changes as well.”*

“In absence of what used to warn us, these SMS forecasts are therefore very important to make us ready. They are actually better since they are more reliable than the flying birds.”

With this innovation, the ECRP program is providing direct tailor made access to information about weather forecasts to beneficiaries in the areas key for decision making about agriculture planning as well as disaster preparedness.

NEW HOPE FOR SMALL SCALE BUSINESS

Kennedy Zuze 36 year old from Village Nedi 1 in Chikwawa district is married with five children. He is a farmer of Sorghum, Millet and Cotton. He adds to his livelihood through seasonal small scale businesses (selling mangoes, sugarcane when they are in season)

“I order things from Dyeratu Trading Center which is almost 11 KMs away from my home and I used bicycle taxi to carry the goods from the Trading Center to my village which was very costly”

Kennedy resolved to cut costs in his businesses in order to maximize profits, but to do so he required funds for buying his very own bicycle, he joined Tioloke VS&L group, as he narrates

“I heard about this project where you save money within the village and you can get loans at a very reasonable interest. I got interested and joined the VS&L group in my village.

Through the loans I accessed from the VS&L group I managed to boost my business and buy food for my household, after saving for a couple of months, my savings plus profit totaled to K43, 000 of which I bought my bicycle at K37, 500.00.”

VS&L members are able to utilize loans obtained at very low interest rates to make investments that allow them to further

improve and also diversify their livelihoods.



Kennedy Zuze showing his new bicycle

“The bicycle has greatly enhanced my business as I do not need to hire a bicycle anymore for my business. If my business meets challenges, I will hire out the bicycle to find money to sustain my family. This year the plan is to buy livestock” narrates Kennedy. To date Tioloke VS&L has added six more members after people observed what old members have managed to acquire through VS&L groups.

ABOUT THE ECRP-CONCERN UNIVERSAL

The goal of DISCOVER programme is to reduce the occurrence and recurrence of extreme poverty and hunger in Malawi. The project outcome is to achieve increased resilience of 62,500 households (298,500 people) in 104 GVHs and 17 Traditional Authorities within the five districts of Karonga, Salima, Dedza, Balaka and Nsanje to climate change vulnerability.

Some of the activities being implemented include VS&L, Small-Scale Irrigation and Livestock, Conservation Agriculture, Crop Diversification, Seed Multiplication, EWS and DRM.

PROGRESS TO DATE

DISCOVER has made tremendous progress from Year One to Year Three as of March 2014. MK129 million has been accumulated through VS&L. VS&L has improved savings for most households. Other successes include Conservation Agriculture (5,544 households), DRM (1,144 trained CPC members), Natural Resources Based enterprises (NRBEs) with 111 groups in bee keeping, fruit tree grafting, herbal plant production, vegetable processing and mat making.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS	
<p>VS&L 13,923 beneficiaries (comprising 80% women) have been mobilized and have accumulated a cumulative savings of MK129million. The savings are enabling the households to meet their needs such as buying food and paying fees for their children.</p>	<p>DRM The program has trained 1,144 CPC members on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction and has assisted all the 5 districts with the development of DRM Plans and Hazard Vulnerability Maps as well as contingency plans for 139 Village CPCs.</p>
<p>Conservation Agriculture A total of 5,544 households have participated in Conservation agriculture. Initially, there was slow uptake of the technology because the practice was new to most people. Communities cite among others labour and time saving and moisture conservation as some of the benefits from the CA.</p>	<p>Improved Extension Systems The program has trained 1,311 Village Extension Multipliers (VEMs) in various subjects such as agriculture extension methods, crop and livestock management, soil and water conservation and conservation agriculture as part of effort to reach out to more farmers with extension messages. The VEMs subsequently reached out to a total of 28,021 farmers with various agricultural extension messages.</p>
<p>Promoting Natural Based Enterprises Formation of 111 groups in various NRBEs such as such as bee keeping, fruit tree grafting, herbal plant production, vegetable processing and mat making.</p>	
<p>Small-Scale irrigation Identification of irrigation sites and development of the schemes which involved construction and rehabilitation works of the sites. Crops cultivated include rice, maize, sweet potatoes and various vegetables. 517.15 hectares of land has been developed and 3,170 beneficiaries are growing various crops mentioned above.</p>	<p>Post-Harvest Management Almost 23,826 farmers acquired know-how on how to better conserve their harvest, contributing to an improved food-security from the post harvest loss.</p>
<p>Low Carbon Technology-ChitetezoMbaula 16,661 households purchased the energy efficient cooking stoves and are using them. 3, 195,765 trees were planted in the targeted districts as a way of assisting the communities in establishing woodlots and community forests.</p>	<p>Small-Scale Livestock 3,754 livestock distributed to 1,736 households. 168 households have benefited the livestock through the pass on system from 232 goats and 139 pigs. Livestock play an important role in cushioning households from some short term shocks.</p>

SUCCESS STORIES

“NAMBUNA IRRIGATION SCHEME BREATHES LIFE INTO LOCAL FARMERS” DEDZA DISTRICT

Nambuna Irrigation Scheme is situated approximately 25Km from Golomoti Trading Centre towards Monkey Bay road. It is situated in Stolo Village, within Senior Chief Kachindamoto’s area in Dedza, the scheme was designed to irrigate 100 hectares for rice production during the rainy season and 20 hectares during winter production with the water source of Nambuna River.

Even though farmers began work on this scheme in September 2011, Concern Universal’s DISCOVER Project stepped in to offer much needed support in June 2012 to support expertise and financial resources.

Presently, the scheme is at 80% completion but farmers have already harvested their first crops under the guidance of the DISCOVER team. The rice fields spread out into the horizon in an impressive sea of green, intermingled with tunnels which carry water to



Nambuna Irrigation scheme.

the plots. To the people that farm this land, this green is not just a colour, it is also a symbol of life, stability, improved livelihood and hope for a brighter future. It spells out education for their children and access to basic needs such as food and clothing.

According to Joseph Tayifod, the scheme’s committee member, in the one year 100 of the 262 farmers that cultivated rice have harvested more than double the quantity of rice they acquired in previous years. Tayifod himself has harvested 83 bags of rice, up from 16 bags in previous years.

“To be honest with you, harvesting 83 bags of rice was a miracle for me as I previously had no land to cultivate. My family and I would rent land from the nearby Chagunda village and even so, with the unpredictable rainfall patterns, we barely had enough to take us through the year. Concern Universal has trained us on basics such as how to look after our crops and how to ensure that the soil retains nutrition and I believe this has helped scheme members tremendously,” says Tayifod, who is currently holding onto his rice until the market price goes up from the current K5, 500 per bag.

The Christopher’s are perhaps the Scheme’s model family. Christopher is always out in the rice fields but his wife, Lester Christopher, who is manning the family grocery, welcomes visitors with a warm smile on how the irrigation scheme has worked on her family.

As she goes about her daily business and informs her customers that she has to step out for a little while, one can’t help but notice an air of calm confidence around her that comes with being financially empowered.

She smiles having harvested 91 bags, an unimaginable improvement from the 15-20 bags that the family has previously realized from same piece of land.

“Our previous yields were often affected by the erratic rains in this area. Once we harvested our rice, we would exchange some of it with maize and sell off the rest. In a year, we would make about K40, 000 to K50, 000 and with the recent devaluation of the Kwacha, this money was not enough to feed and clothe a family of eight.”

“This year, we have sold off 30 out of the 91 bags that we realized at K6000 per bag. From the K180 000 that we got, we bought a few bags of maize. We also ordered items such as soap, cooking oil, biscuits and sweets and set up this grocery which is generating income for the family. Since we started operating the grocery, we sell items worth approximately K14, 000 in each week, with a K4, 000 profit,” Christopher explains.

She further outlines that the family intends to hold on to the remaining bags of rice until February 2014 when market prices are high like K10, 000 per bag. They have planned on buying livestock and growing their grocery into a village wholesale shop once this money comes through. “Paying school fees for their six children is also a top priority” Christopher says.

DISCOVER has breathed new lease of life into the Nambuna Irrigation Scheme, consequently empowering its members with the knowledge, skills and material needed to improve their livelihood. Going forward, things can only get better for scheme members if they continue tilling the land with dedication and apply knowledge gained from the ongoing training sessions.

Policy and Advocacy is informed by the advocacy objectives below as outlined in the ECRP/DISCOVER advocacy strategy

1. Government to enhance coherence between climate change and DRM policy instruments and implementation by 2015;
2. Government to increase budgetary allocations for climate change and DRM from 0.9% to at least 2% by 2015
3. A revised Energy Policy by 2015 that reflects an integrated approach to rural energy provision, combining different renewable, efficient and equitable solutions to provide village energy supply systems to meet both domestic and small and medium enterprise resilience-building needs;
4. An enhanced climate forecasting service that supports resilience-building by 2014;
5. Government to provide significant profile and priority to CA the draft NAP to provide direction and guidance by 2015; and
6. Climate change adaptation and DRM plans and interventions at national, district and community level are gender sensitive.

ABOUT THE ECRP-CEPA

Centre for Environmental Policy (CEPA) is a technical partner to both Christian Aid and Concern Universal ECRP led consortia. Its main role in the consortia is to implement advocacy and policy as well as information and knowledge management.

In the first year, CEPA developed a climate change and DRM advocacy strategy which outlined the six advocacy issues to be implemented to achieve strengthened information sharing by different stakeholders on DRM and climate change adaptation (including district and national level governments, research institutions and CSOs) and strengthened disaster risk reduction and climate change policy and programmes and delivery structures of key Government Ministries and Departments.

CEPA target audience such as duty bearers/policy makers/decision makers as well as non state actors. Policy and advocacy is also implemented at district level through implementing partners, especially with emerging issues.

PROGRESS TO DATE

To strength information sharing; developing policy briefs, posters, website and engaging media in effective climate change and DRM reporting were activities implemented. Through media practitioners the programme has gained more recognition from other stakeholder who engages same trained media personnel. To date, the media roster has about 40 media practitioners from both electronic and print media.

Significant progress was also made on the advocacy on climate change policy, where a position paper

proposing elements was developed and presented to the consultants developing the policy through Civil Society Network on Climate Change (CISONECC). In



Participants at the media induction, Kumudzi Recreation Centre, Lilongwe.

the draft policy all the proposals were adopted. In addition, through CISONECC, a review of the draft National DRM bill was conducted and consultants were engaged as well, some proposals are still seen in the draft. Furthermore, although significant change has not been seen on the national budgetary allocation, the advocacy the programme has been conducting has increased awareness and debates amongst stakeholders and decision makers on the need to have adequate national budgetary resources towards CCA and DRM. As of march 2014, the climate change policy had been approved at department level awaiting submission to Office of President and Cabinet, Policy unit and the National DRM policy had been approved at cabinet sub-committee on social protection, HIV and Aids, waiting for the full cabinet committee.

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