

Malawi

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Project title

Building sustainable livelihoods through on farm conservation

Overall objective: Improve livelihoods of local communities in semi arid zones of Malawi through identification and promotion of climate change ready crop varieties of sorghum, yams, finger millet, pearl millet and cowpeas

Crops addressed: Finger millet (*Eleusine*), sorghum (*Sorghum*), yams (*Dioscorea*), pearl millet (*Pennisetum*), cowpeas (*Vigna*).

Main activities

- Identify drought-resistant crop varieties and their promotion at local level
- Safeguard genepool of yams, sorghum, pearl millet, finger millet and cowpeas in the face of climate change
- On- farm and *ex situ* conservation of genetic diversity
- Increase farmers' productive capacity and strengthen local seed systems
- Build and strengthen local seed system through on-farm conservation of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture
- Training and awareness raising

Implementing institution

Malawi Plant Genetic Resources Centre, Chitedze Research Station

Related website

www.sdn.org.mw/darts/research/chitedze/chite.htm

THIS PROJECT AIMS TO REINTRODUCE strategic crops in semi-arid zones of Malawi such as yams, sorghum, finger millet and cowpeas. These crops have a high market and nutritional potential, but have been progressively lost and now germplasm is available primarily in genebanks. By reintroducing these crops in farmers' fields, the project aims to benefit poor, food insecure and small-scale farmers.

Sensitization meetings have been organized in 14 project sites to achieve a common understanding and common goals among farmers, scientists, extension officers and governmental officials, one-third of whom are women. Farmers are experimenting with drought tolerant crops and varieties in order to cope with recurrent droughts and contribute to more efficient water management.

In collaboration with all the key stakeholders, production demonstrations have been mounted in all project sites covering 2 crops per site. The demonstrations are being managed by local communities under the close supervision of local agricultural officers, and are acting as learning sites for the production of crops that are not commonly grown in the areas. The major aim of the demonstrations is to impart and share knowledge on cultivation and production practices of the target crops (Farmer Field School Concept).



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This project is working to ultimately improve the livelihoods of 2000 farming families through the identification, production and reintroduction of strategic crops and varieties into local farming systems. In addition to identification of germplasm, the project will accelerate seed production of the identified crops, strengthen local seed systems and traditional seed storage practices, train farmers in participatory variety selection and seed production, and raise awareness on the effects of climate change and how local crop species can contribute to climate change adaptation.