Role of Agricultural Extension Services in eliminating child labor in Malawi

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Introduction

Mandate of DAES

• To provide quality agricultural extension services for increased adoption of improved technologies for farmers of all gender categories for improved household and national food, nutrition and income security
Introduction....

Strategies used by the department

- Lead farmers

- Multimedia campaigns

- Farmer groups, cooperatives and associations

- Clusters

- Model villages
Implementation Structure

Department of Agricultural Extension services

- Headquarters (Director)
  - 8 ADDs - CAEOs
  - 28 Districts - DADOs
  - 187 EPAs - AEDCs
  - RTC
  - Farm Institutes (Principals)
  - 2880 Sections - AEDOs

Farmers
Child labor in Malawi’s Agriculture sector

• Manifested in cases where children work in
  – commercial farms
  – family farms

• The work include
  – weeding, tending to seedlings, applying fertilizers
    and pesticides and carrying heavy loads

• Intensity of work increases during peak production
  periods e.g. planting, weeding, harvesting

• It is also a child care issue- where children
  accompany their parents to the fields
Why should we be concerned?

Has negative consequences in both childhood and adulthood

- Children can be injured, contract diseases or even killed
  - Injuries as a result of lack of protective wear
  - Respiratory problems due to tobacco dust and fumes
  - Skin infections due to dangerous chemicals
Why should we be concerned?

• Children have no time to attend school or skill development sessions
  – Have no time to go to school
  – Play with their friends and other socio-cultural activities
  – Worse for girls because of household chores

• Elimination of child labor in agriculture is therefore important to ensure availability of a healthy future agricultural workforce for sustainable development.
Increase awareness of child labor issues amongst farmers

• The department has wide coverage at grassroots
  • 1887 extension workers
  • reaching out to over 2.7 million smallholder farmers
Roles…

Development production and distribution of IEC materials on child labor

• Posters, leaflets
• Video documentaries and radio programs
Working with young farmers clubs

• Create awareness amongst fellow youths

• Platform for lobbying with parents and estate owners to desist from child labor

• Skills development amongst vulnerable youths
Roles...

- Promotion of time and labor saving technologies to reduce labor demand
Gaps

• Limited knowledge amongst extension staff in child rights and child labor issues

• Extension staff work with smallholder farmers where occurrence of child labor is lower as opposed to estates

• Limited collaboration between agriculture extension staff and other institutions working in child rights work at community levels
Recommendations

• Build capacity of agriculture extension staff in child rights and child labor issues.

• Strengthen efforts to create awareness among farmers and the general public on the disadvantages of child labor in agriculture.

• Promote the introduction of social safety nets and agro based income generating projects for vulnerable households.

• Promotion of farm mechanization.
Conclusion

• Child labor in Malawi’s Agriculture sector is a serious social issue requiring urgent action by various stakeholders.

• The department one of the key institutions which can play a critical role in eliminating child labor to ensure a future healthy and vibrant agriculture workforce.
Thank you for your attention