

WorldFish Center

Fish to feed HIV affected families in Malawi

Reaping the fruits of hard work in primary schools

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Background

The project “**Fish to feed HIV affected families in Malawi**” implemented by WorldFish Center in collaboration with World Vision with funding through Global Giving in southern Malawi, helps HIV and AIDS affected poor families including women and orphaned households to live a better life with nutritious food on the table and money in their pockets through adoption of Integrated Agriculture-Aquaculture (IAA) practices. The first phase of the project targeted primary schools with the idea to improve the educational achievements of children, in particular girls from poor and food-insecure families. The project assists in construction of earthen ponds, stock the ponds with fish and trainings on management of the fish and water use for other crops. Twenty two (22) fish ponds in four primary schools have been constructed and stocked with fish. Other activities of the project include support to elderly mothers with fish ponds. 21 ponds were constructed and stocked with fish for elderly women who shoulder the brunt of caring for the orphaned children in the event of the death of active young mothers and fathers. Communities have also constructed about 3 kilometers of water canals from the Zomba plateau to supply water for fish ponds and crop irrigation.

This report provides successes of the ponds by witnessing the first harvest of fish at one of the schools.

The First Catch

There was joy and laughter as pupils of Ntanangala primary school in Chingale, Zomba tasted the first harvest of fish from their ponds. Some pupils dressed in their blue uniform, with a pink collar, were very happy to see the fruit from their efforts of feeding their fish and managing their ponds for 6 months.

The actual process of harvesting the fish was done by the pupils themselves using a seine net provided by a Mrs. Kanyema, one the experienced fish farmers in the village. This was done as a lesson to the young fish growers to learn all the techniques required in fish farming. Parents and guardians gathered to witness the big occasion in the village. Eighty five (85) kilograms of fish were harvested from only one pond (200sq meters).





“We never thought we could harvest this amount. We fed the fish with maize bran because we enjoyed seeing the fish gasping the feed. Today, we are witnessing a dream come true to see our own fish being harvested” said Fanny Shaibu, the secretary of the “Young Fish Farmers Club” at the school as she looked and smiled at part of the catch in her hands.

Fanny Shaibu – Club secretary

Early impacts extended to infrastructure development

Apart from the big fish that were harvested. Baby fish were also harvested and sold to community members for stocking new ponds. A total of 15,000 Malawi Kwacha (\$107) was realized from sales of the baby fish.

Realizing that a good turn deserves another, the pupils thought of paying back to the school. Using the money realized from the selling of baby fish, the pupils repaired and fixed five doors that were in bad condition.

“The school is our own home and we were feeling uncomfortable to see some of its facilities like doors in a poor state” said the club chairman, Ishmael Kanyangale.

Mr. Manyetsa, the patron of the club and agriculture teacher at the Ntanangala primary school encouraged other schools to emulate the example set by his school. “Global Giving has made the children to becoming responsible citizens” said Manyetsa.

Strong motivation

Many farmers in Zomba are enthusiastic about improving their aquaculture technique and deepening their commitment. They have once more witnessed the possibilities, and their situation in the highlands of Western Zomba provides strong incentive to adopt IAA.

“It is something we never thought it would happen, but today we have seen it with our own eyes. Instead of the children asking money from us, they have asked it from themselves and paid it by themselves. This is a big relief to us parents”, explained Miss Ashatu.



Mrs. Matewe who is one of the school committee members, praised the pupils for the good fruits that came from the ponds. “I thought that these children were just playing and nothing tangible would come out of the ponds. If these children can be encouraged and supported, our families can not be suffering from malnutrition, food insecurity and lack of income. These children, they can do miracles in our communities as witnessed here. They can feed

themselves and clothe themselves and help their aged parents without problems". Mrs. Matewe said.

Local leaders and the school committee expressed satisfaction on the outstanding performance of the fish ponds being managed by the pupils. They all thanked all the contributors to this work which is bringing big impacts in the communities' vulnerable groups while investing in sustainable solutions like promoting life-skills in the education sector.

With your contributions (about \$7,000) through GlobalGiving towards the school project has resulted in the construction of 22 ponds in 4 schools. The challenge is to implement this approach to more schools within the area so that a large number of pupils from the rural poor can benefit from IAA. Any amount of your contributions can do this. However, big investments are required to replicate the successes to a large number of sites and countries with suitable environmental conditions for IAA. How do we therefore engage donors in support of this important work?

Please let us know what you think by providing feedback on our comments section or directly writing to the address below.



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