

WORLD FISH CENTER

Fish to Feed HIV Affected Families in Malawi

Fish for the elderly and orphaned children: The story of Asiyatu Kili and her fish pond

March, 2012.

The road to Chingale is now wet and slippery. The scenery is beautiful as it is still receiving rains - a resource that is currently becoming unpredicted in Malawi. For example, the road to Chiunda Village passes through green maize and rice that is anxious to receiving more rains to ensure their maturity. Following a small path that only



allows one person to walk through, one finds a house where Asiyatu Kili stays. Asiyatu is an old lady who stays together with her grand-daughter. Born in the late 1930s, Asiyatu Kili is one of the beneficiaries of the project “Fish to feed HIV affected families in Malawi” implemented by WorldFish Center in collaboration with World Vision with funding through Global Giving Fund in southern Malawi. The fund is helping the elderly and orphaned children to have easy access to nutritious fish from fish ponds.

A 200m² pond was constructed for her and stocked with Tilapia (*Tilapia rendalli*) with contributions to the Global Giving Fund. She is now integrating fish farming with vegetables grown close to the pond. She uses water from the pond to irrigate the vegetables. Asiyatu believes her life is now being transformed because of the harvests from fish and vegetables. Asiyatu says that her health is improving because of the fresh fish she frequently eats from her pond and the different fruits and vegetables planted on the dykes of her pond. “I normally love my meals which are always delicious when they are complimented with my farmed fish”, Asiyatu further says “a few years ago I could gaze on the rising and setting of the sun with little hopes of having a meal but now it’s a changed story”. Two years ago, Asiyatu used to beg for food from her neighbors. She could not go out to do piece work, let alone work effectively in her gardens to ensure food security within her house due to her age.



Asiyatu Kili feeding her fish and irrigated vegetables close to her fish pond

When she sells some of the harvests, she is able to meet her different daily basic needs and even for her grand children. During her first full fish harvest, Asiyatu recalls to have sold fish worth Mk19 000.00, a thing which had never happened to her senior years before. Realizing that all her life had been spent in a glass thatched house, with unburnt bricks, she used these funds to buy few iron sheets in readiness to building her dream house. From her second partial fish harvest, she earned herself Mk7 000.00. She used the money to buy improved maize seed, the government subsidized fertilizers and part of the money was used to employ causal workers who helped to work in her gardens.

Providing fish ponds as a safety net for the elderly people seems to provide sustainable household food and incomes especially for the underprivileged group. Village headman Chiunda says that elderly people are considered among the poorest of the poor the villages. *“Being elderly is associated with being unproductive in a society. Normally people do not expect something good from them. Enhancing the ability of the elderly people to produce food can help in the reduction of poverty and food insecurity amongst themselves and their communities I would like to thank the donors to this initiative for their kindness,”* Says Village Headman Chiunda.