

CASE STUDY

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World Vision



Heart, Mind and Pocket: Inspiring Environmental Change and Poverty Alleviation Through Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration





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Matope; a Community at the Mercy of Seasons

Matope, is a dry land. With Malawi's population now over 17 million, the same can be said about Matope community with the impact visible on the bare land. Most of the trees have been cut for charcoal.

Often dry, the community is approximately 40 km north east of Blantyre City. Some 15 years ago, in 2002, hunger hit most of Malawi. Matope community was not spared. Being in a rain shadow, many people did not produce adequate food to last them all year round.

In a community where opportunities are difficult to come by, life is difficult to make, food is hard to come by. World Vision has been working in Matope since 2013 in areas of food security, health and education.

Innovation Overview

World Vision started working in the area in 2013 with support from World Vision Hongkong with an aim of joining efforts with the people and government in giving children a future, full of hope and optimism through a food security project which emphasised on empowering communities economically.

When World Vision introduced Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) in Neno, the goal was to restore the forests that had been lost to charcoal burning as a poor community was trying to survive. Little did the organisation know this would be a springboard for long term development and transformation for the community.

Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration

To save the situation, World Vision in Malawi trained 31 villages of Matope in Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR), as one way of returning the vegetative cover of their communities.

Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) is a low-cost land restoration technique used to combat poverty and hunger amongst poor subsistence farmers by increasing food and timber production and resilience to climate extremes.

What is FMNR?

In practice, FMNR involves the systematic regrowth and management of trees and shrubs from felled tree stumps, sprouting root systems or seeds. The regrown trees and shrubs – integrated into crops and grazing pastures – help restore soil structure and fertility, inhibit erosion and soil moisture evaporation, rehabilitate springs and the water table, and increase biodiversity. Some tree species also impart nutrients such as nitrogen into the soil.

As a result, FMNR can double crop yields, provide building timber and firewood, fodder and shade for livestock, wild foods for nutrition and medication, and increased incomes and living standards for farming families and their communities.

Trees and crops grown in combination like this is called agroforestry and provides multiple benefits to farmers, crops, climate, and wildlife.

Venture into Bee Keeping

With trees flourishing, in over 297 hectares of land, the community had other ideas. Individually, they started bee keeping in their traditional way. Farmers bought beehives from local makers and through this produced honey.

Each farmer, did it their own way, but markets were scarce and the rewards not so convincing.

Pooling Power into Small Circles

In 2016, 650 beekeepers from Matope formed 39 bee keeping clubs, thanks to the guidance they got from World Vision. WV supported the groups with training in modern beekeeping techniques and provided beekeeping equipment/kits (bee boxes, protective suits etc).

More importantly, WV, trained the cooperative on the processing of honey and its derivative products.

Roots of Hope

Pastors fraternal underwent Empowered Biblical training which focused on mind set change and thinking differently on financial issues as a church. The idea emerged within Matope Pastors Fraternal after attending training on Empowered Biblical World View.

Mindset of the Old Church

Most of the time Matope Pastors Fraternal were conducting meetings and mass rallies without focusing on financial issues which made churches most



Catalysing the Church for Change

To avoid leaving the Church behind, in 2017, World Vision invited the pastors. The organisation trained pastors from the community in the Empowered Biblical World View. Pastors got challenged.

Empowered World View helps people to find value in their own identity, create a vision for their future and nurture family as well as community relationship while demonstrating compassion. A richer understanding of their faith changes how they see the world and their ability to have an influence on their own circumstances.

vulnerable financially.

However, after going through Empowered Biblical World View training in June 2017 pastors realized the need to start small scale businesses as such they come up with an idea to produce Holy Wine production which not only brought revenues to churches but also solved the problem of the scarcity of Holy Wine during Holy Communion in the community churches and beyond.

The product made pastors fraternal members to raise money for the church as well as their families to pay school fees for their children and food sustainability at household level.

Holy Wine saves community from effects of prone disasters

For over a decade, 53 year old Fagg Harawa of Chikapa Village, Traditional Authority (T/A) Saimoni in Neno district has been relying charcoal as her major business to assist four children in the house. This illegal trade in forest products has been a source of income for the whole family.

To Harawa, the charcoal business has been the only last solution since Neno district experiences acute food shortage every year due to prolonged dry weather coupled with deforestation and worsening effects of climate change.

She is well known with the charcoal business and you wouldn't miss her along Blantyre-Lilongwe road near Kam'mwamba trading centre. But now coming from Lilongwe nowadays you cannot find her where she usually plies trade along the road and being my customer I traced whereabouts and immediately I got her home near the road.

When I tried to enquire why she is not selling charcoals along the road and if she can sell me a bag of charcoal, Harawa said, "I stopped selling charcoal and I am member of Matope pastors fraternal and the group is now into holy wine production.

"Through the production of wine in Kasenjere holy wine production group I am getting more money than charcoal burning. This is a viable business unlike charcoal which brings a lot of effects in our lives.

The group of Kasenjere holy wine started in July 2017 when 23 pastors from different denominations under the banner Matope pastors fraternal received empowered biblical world view training from World Vision Malawi.

Reverend Martin Malikebu who is the chairperson of the Kasenjere holywine production group says the training mainly targeted issues to do with mindset change and immediately thought of coming with the holy wine production initiatives which is now facilitating economic development in the area.

"Neno is well known with dry spells every year and cutting down of trees for charcoal production is also a major challenge. The establishment of this small holy wine brewery has made many people to stop cutting down trees for charcoal business and in so doing the forest generation is picking," said Malikebu.

According to the pastor, so far the group is selling wine to over 80 churches in Neno including CCAP churches and assemblies of God saying they are still exploring more markets countrywide in order to reach more churches.

He added, "The wine that we are producing is strictly for churches because this is a communion holy wine. We started our business with Mk10,000 and now our capital is at Mk5 million. So far we have produced 790 litres and we have capacity that we can produce more depending on the market.



Reverend Malikebu who is CCAP pastor in Neno said most wine found in Malawi is imported from outside countries and the coming up of the holy wine is a relief to many churches since such liquid is found in places like bars where men of God cannot go and buy.

“On average monthly we make Mk450, 000. By 2022 we want Kasenjere to be a major holy wine producer so that we can export to other countries taking advantage of our country which is well positioned to other countries.

“Let me say here that we are helping a lot of children through the holy wine production business and we shall continue to do so because it has always been the wish of our group to reach more children with our support,” he said.

The pastor said the most interesting thing is that they use local products to make holy wine saying honey, fruits and yeast is enough to make final product. He added, “because we use local resources to make wine we have over 30 fruits farmers as customers we buy fruits from and also we buy honey from 630 bee keeping farmers who also support their families.

Eleson White is one of the bee farmers under Midzembra bee farmers group who sells honey to Kasenjere holy wine production group and says he is now able to take care of his family unlike in the past when he relied on charcoal business as a source of income.

“Bee farming is a game changer. I am completely financially independent because the market for the honey is within Neno district and we are well linked,” he said.

Ivy Chamaza who is the chair lady for Midzembra bee keeping farmers said there are 39 groups of people doing bee farming in the area and that in total there are 630 farmers who are supporting over 2,500 children in the area.

She said, “It is through the bee farming that everybody is able to contribute in 116 Village Savings groups that we have here with 2964 people participating and in the process close to 9000 are benefiting from Village Savings groups.

Chazama said after being successfully been trained in bee farming by World Vision, the organization do-

nated 500 beehives that groups are currently using in bee farming and the group makes Mk36 million per year of which 10 percent of the money is used to help vulnerable children.

Village Headman Kandoje from Traditional Authority Saimoni in Neno district has since commended World Vision for the initiatives that continues to change the lives of people in his area.

Kandoje said other organization should emulate such gestures saying economic empowerment is crucial if a person is to contribute positively to the social economic development of the country.

Abels Tembo who is World Vision Malawi Neno-Mwanza programme Manager feels the two projects is a milestone in as far as food security and economic empowerment is concerned. Tembo said the two areas were chosen because they are prone to disasters

He said the two projects of holy wine production and bee keeping fall under food security programme which his organization has been conducting in the area programmes of Midzembra and Matope in Neno district.

Tembo said, “both programmes mainly targeted skills development that is key for sustainability of the activities once World Vision phases out its programmes.

The bee farming at Midzembra phased out in September, 2018 though we are still finalizing other issues while as the holy wine production shall continue to 2023.

World Vision gives skills so that in our absence they should still produce even more.

Tembo said Kasenjere holy wine group and Midzembra bee keeping groups relationships is beneficial in food security and economic empowerment saying at the end his interest is to see that nobody is involved in charcoal production in so doing farm management natural resources regeneration is achieved with a view to bring back natural forest that is also suitable for bee keeping.

The implementers are pastors fraternal members and are working collaboratively with honey producers. These are community structure immersed from World Vision capacity building trainings and are driven by the community themselves.

A Poor Community now dreams of a company

Incremental change is not enough to solve the problem of poverty. Transformative, exponential change requires unlocking an individual's potential to be part of the solution. And that potential can't be realized unless each person sees the world as a place where they are valued and capable.

Community development often ignores the vital role that faith plays in people's lives and how they view the world. Globally, more than eight out of 10 people claim a connection with a specific religious belief, so ignoring this element of people's lives means we are missing a vital key to effective development.

Empowered Worldview fills this gap through an approach that is faith based and reaches deep into people's core beliefs, transforming their view of the world so that the cycle of chronic poverty and hopelessness can be broken.

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Big Things Start Small

Today, the simple intervention that started with taking care of trees has given birth to hope. Matope community has a company in the making- Kasenjele Holy wine.

2017 was a great year for bee keepers. Their production went up to nearly 4,000 bottles, each sold for 3,000 kwacha.

The grouping, that now buys honey from all farmers within the community, is producing and selling holy wine to over 150 Churches in Malawi.

Progress so far

The production level has reached 1,000 bottles (500 milliliter bottle) per month which is sold at K3,000.00 each giving the total sales of k3,000,000.00. This is known from the weekly updates reports shared to stakeholders including World Vision office.

