



Organization: Action for Environmental Sustainability

Location: Blantyre, Malawi

Solution: Improving food security by integrating climate-resilient production through a school farm

Factsheet Period: First round of UNDP AFCIA funding (16 months)



Demonstrations at a farmer school, showcasing initiatives that enhance climate resilience @AES

Malawi is highly prone to climate hazards, such as dry spells, droughts, intense rainfall and floods. Floods and droughts are a leading cause of food insecurity in the country (World Bank Climate Change Knowledge Portal, 2024). Action for Environmental Sustainability (AES) has observed that these challenges have led to increased tree cutting, monoculture farming and the use of chemical pesticides. To address these issues, AES has developed a school farm initiative that empowers smallholder farmers with the knowledge and skills to implement responsible farming practices such as sustainable livestock management and climate-smart agriculture.



Key achievements

- Established a 10-hectare farm, equipped with greenhouses, water supply and irrigation systems, piggery and goat housing, and livestock purchases
- Planted 6,500 vegetables and seedlings, with 1,500 (including local tomatoes and mustard) harvested and sold to farmers and community members
- Trained 75 farmers (45 women) in organic farming and climate-smart techniques, who subsequently trained 150 additional smallholder farmers
- Improved food security and nutrition for 25 smallholder farming families (125 people), resulting in a 7% income increase monthly for participating farmers
- Enhanced climate adaptation practices by implementing natural solutions to mitigate the impacts of climate change and ensure resilient food production



Social impact

- Increases access to indigenous seedlings and crop varieties.
- Promotes the adoption of organic and climate-smart farming practices.
- Improves living standards through better diets and increased income.



Funding snapshot

- UNDP-AFCIA grant: US\$125,000 (initial grant)
- World Centric grant: \$7,500
- Crick Foundation grant: \$12,000



Adaptation benefits

- Provided training for smallholder farmers in climate-smart livestock management and organic farming techniques, promoting sustainable agricultural practices
- Developed a business model to strengthen farmers' capacity to produce Indigenous crops, seedlings, and livestock, enhancing resilience to climate change



Innovation

- Establishes a school farm that serves as both a training hub and a revenue-generating asset.
- Generates income through the sale of Indigenous vegetables and crop seedlings produced on the farm
- Provides agribusiness training to farmers, enhancing their skills and improving the marketability of their products
- Facilitates connections between farmers and both local and international markets, expanding their reach and opportunities.



Replication potential

- The solution uses a field school farm model for monitoring, with the "lead farmer" approach offering potential for future expansion and long-term knowledge transfer
- The business model enables revenue generation, supporting the sustainability and continuation of the activities over time

Investability

Revenue per year	\$78,000 annual revenue (38% livestock, 36% fish farming, 26% crops), with strong growth potential in all areas
Sustaining criteria	<p>A farmer field school approach with "lead farmers" fosters knowledge sharing and long-term sustainability</p> <p>Training in livestock management, organic farming, and climate-smart practices equips farmers to adapt and improve livelihoods</p>
Financial innovation	<p>The innovative approach establishes a farm as a social enterprise, providing training, generating revenue, and serving as a model for replication. Farm revenue supports activities of the initiative and future expansion</p> <p>Prioritizing livestock, Indigenous vegetables and crop seedlings fosters biodiversity conservation and potential niche market development</p>
Expected return	US\$300,000 annual revenue once all livestock, fish and crops are mature and ready for sale