

Empowering poor rural communities with labour saving technologies for increased labour productivity, food production and income generation



UN Trust Fund for Human Security



Fast Facts

Country: Malawi

Duration: June 2005 to June 2008

Implementing UN Agencies: UNIDO

Other Implementing Partners: Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security

Budget: \$1,193,183.95

Key Words: Rural communities; food security; agricultural development

BACKGROUND

At the time of this project, 65 percent of Malawians lived below the poverty line, and the majority of the population practiced subsistence farming using antiquated production methods and outdated technologies that resulted in low rates of productivity. At the same time, agricultural productivity was further compromised by high rates of infectious diseases such as malaria and HIV/AIDS that debilitated workers and resulted

in labour shortages. Since livelihoods depended on small-scale family farming, the disability of one family member could severely impair the entire household's ability to produce sufficient amounts of food. The situation was particularly dire for female-headed households who were trapped in a vicious cycle of perpetual ill health and poverty.

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The project sought to increase agricultural productivity and diversify livelihoods in impoverished rural communities in the Salima District in Malawi. To this end, the project focused on (i) enabling vulnerable farming households to engage in income-generating

activities centred around food processing and the production of local products; (ii) introducing and distributing low-cost technologies for higher agricultural productivity; and (iii) upgrading the skills and capacities of local artisans specialized in metal and woodwork.

BENEFICIARIES

The project targeted 17 rural communes in the Salima District where the viability of agricultural livelihoods was the most seriously threatened. The interventions benefited approximately 19,200

people, of which 7,300 were orphans and members of female-headed households, who received training on horticulture, bakeries, maize mills, ox-cart transportation and ploughing.