



UNITED NATIONS NATIONS UNIES

U.N. IN ACTION

Week of 10 November 2003

Programme No.878

Duration: 3'35"

PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS IN A MALAWIAN VILLAGE

VIDEO

SUPERMARKET (25")

AUDIO

NARRATION

In a modern supermarket in Lilongwe, the capital city of Malawi in southeast Africa, shoppers are paying premium prices for packs of oyster mushrooms. They're prized for their flavour and nutritional qualities. The increasing popularity of these mushrooms has given a Malawi village hope that it can lift itself out of poverty.

W/S VILLAGE
(17")

Just five kilometres from the Zambian border, Ndawambe is a poor hamlet of 330 households. It barely survived the recent drought, and food security is always a major concern for everyone in the community.

VILLAGERS AT FARM (9")

Besides tilling the land, villagers here have few resources to develop alternative ways of making a living.

NARRATION

VILLAGERS POUNDING MAIZE
(6")

Maize is the principle crop. And traditionally, villagers have used the husks as soil fertilizer.

WOMEN CHOPPING UP &
BOILING MAIZE HUSKS (23")

But recently they discovered that they could use the husks to grow mushrooms. From a training workshop sponsored by the UN Development Programme, UNDP, they have learned to rely on their own resources to breed oyster mushrooms. Zahra Nuru Is the UNDP Resident Coordinator in Malawi.

NURU ON CAMERA
(14.5")

NURU:

“They are also using the husks of maize, cutting them up and growing mushrooms. They know that instead of waiting for the rainy season to get mushrooms once a year, as they usually do here, they can get mushrooms every five weeks.”

WOMEN CARRYING HUSKS
INSIDE MUSHROOM HUT (12")

NARRATION

And it takes farmers only one week to learn the entire process - from building the mushroom houses to creating the bases in which the fungi grow.

WOMEN PREPARING
SUBSTRATES ((16")

It's a profitable business with few overheads. Farmers need only pay for the building materials for the huts and the seedlings. The project is part of a UNDP pilot programme underway in the village to help improve living conditions.

VILLAGERS PREPARING FISH

NARRATION

Aquaculture is another major activity.

POND (13")

Farmers receive training in preparing the ponds, as well as the fingerlings that will grow into adult fish ready for harvest.

VILLAGERS BAKING BREAD AND MAKING JUICE (20.5")

In addition, the village now owns an oven given by UNDP, making food more readily available. Since the pilot project started three years ago, life in the village has greatly improved. People particularly appreciate the knowledge they have gained. Leoson Hara is the village Headman.

HARA ON CAMERA (10")

HARA: (in local dialect)

"The projects have changed our livelihoods. We now know of many things that we never knew before. The village now has more food and more income."

VILLAGERS COOKING MUSHROOM/BAKERY/FRUIT JUICER (26")

NARRATION

Oyster mushrooms have also become one of their favourite foods. The success of the project has encouraged other small enterprises to mushroom too. For these Malawian villagers, the transfer of knowledge and know-how is the best tool they can have to fight poverty, one of the main UN Millennium Development Goals.

UN LOGO (20")

This report was prepared by Kamil Taha and Patricia Chan for the United Nations.